

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

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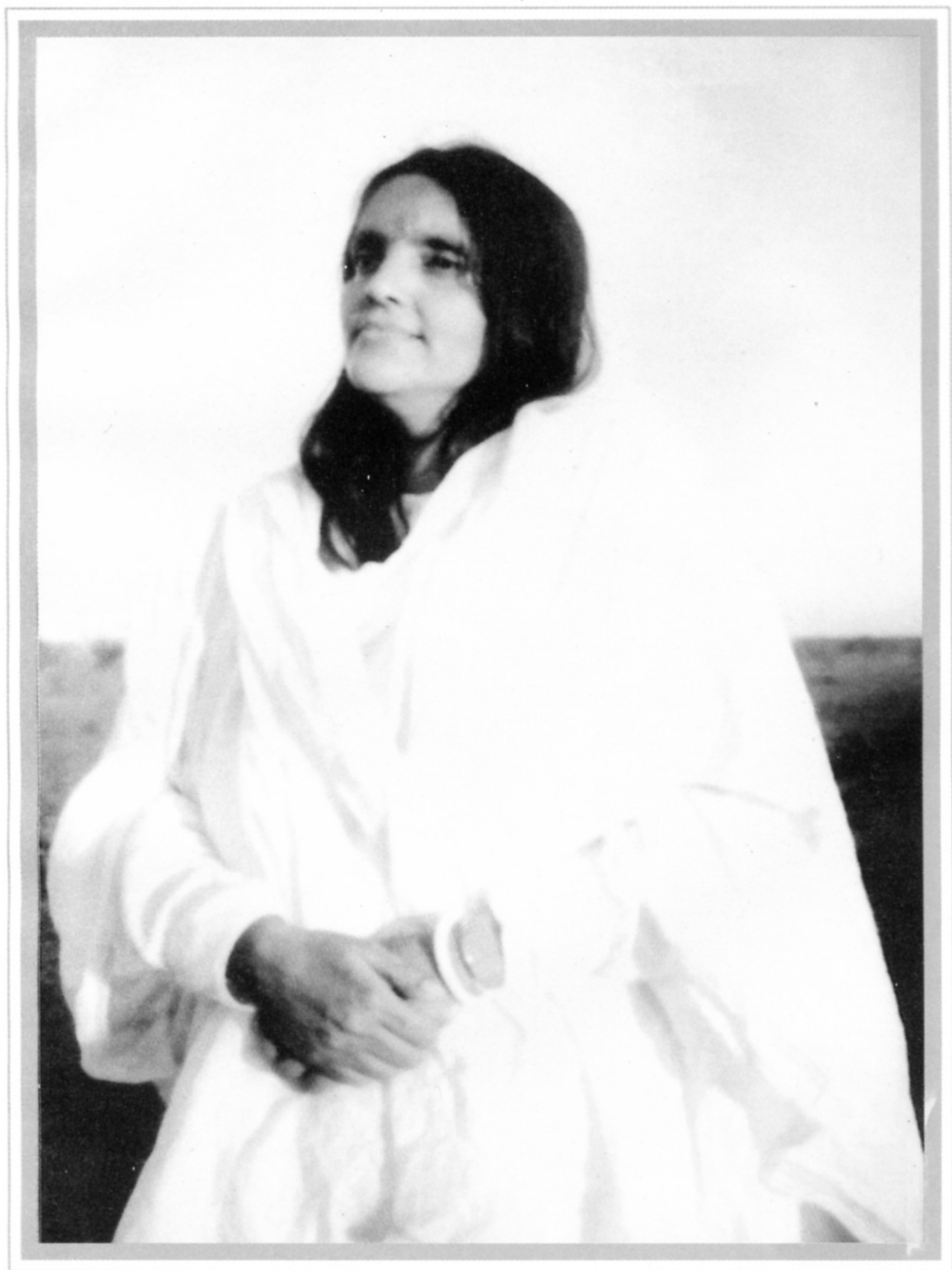
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MATRI VANI

It is by seeking to know oneself that the Great Mother of all may be found.

* * * * *

God's holy Name is in itself the rite for exercising undesirable influences. In the presence of God's Name, ghosts and evil spirits cannot exist.

* * * * *

Life's journey is bound to proceed inevitably in the manner you describe. Search in every home and see how many people can be found who have never known bereavement. This is why the one and only the way out of the misery is the path toward Self-realization.

* * * * *

A person who does not, for the love of God and with a cheerful heart discharge himself of whatever responsibility that may fall to his lot at any time, will find life excessively burdensome and never be able to accomplish anything. Man's duty – more especially for those who have made the Supreme Quest their one and only aim – is to work joyfully for the uplift of the world, with the conviction that all service is His service. Work done in such a spirit helps to purify the mind and heart.

* * * * *

Write to him, that his condition very often indeed occupies this body's *Kheyal*. He himself, by his own effort of will, must become strong-minded and drop his negative attitude, which makes him imagine that he cannot and will never be able to succeed. On the contrary he must be determined that it will be possible, that achievement will most certainly be his. He should say to himself: "In whatever condition pleases God to keep me, to that I resign myself, surrendering to Him whose creature I am, whose body this is." That is all. With perfect calm and tranquility he should pass most of his time lying straight on his back in what is called the "deadpose" (*Shavāsana*) and silently repeat his *mantra* in rhythm with his breathing. *'There is only one Brahman without a second'* – this is what he has to realize. Write to him in plain language that for him there is no need of an intermediary.

* * * * *

Mataji said : Write to him, to tell the truth. Some people undoubtedly do approach this body in quest of Reality; but very many come to get their desires and longings fulfilled.

Although he has had such unmistakable proof of what is the true nature of the world, his heart is still in it ? At this juncture he should try his utmost to engage himself solely in doing service; regarding whatever he does as service to the Lord. Ask him, at all costs to make a resolute effort against letting his mind become entangled in anything pertaining to this ocean of sorrow. It is his attachment to the world, which has brought such deep distress to the unfortunate man. Nothing but ignorance is at the root of it all. He should continue to give news of himself to this body in any way he is able, for he has no one to whom he can confide his troubles and afflictions, which — one and all — are but the fruits of his past actions.

* * * * *

By sorrow does the Lord dispel sorrow and by adversity does He destroy adversity. When this is done He sends no more suffering — this must be borne in mind at all times.

In very truth the Eternal's offspring must focus their thoughts on Him. Divorced from God there cannot be even a prospect of peace - never, never, never. By abiding in God man will find peace, the veil will be rent, and the Dispeller of Sorrow will stand revealed. He alone is the conqueror of evil. He is yours, the sole treasure of the human heart.

* * * * *

They imagine this body to be far away, but actually it is always very, very near. How could it possibly leave anyone ? The question of distance arises solely from their point of view.

* * * * *

No matter what work one undertakes it should be done well. If one cultivates the habit of doing everything well, there is fair promise of one's doing likewise also on the spiritual path. The action is He and the doer of the action is He and no other. At all events one should make an attempt to develop this attitude of mind. Truth - in the presence of which illusion is recognized as illusion - Truth, THAT which IS, has to be made one's own.



ON ŚĀKTA PHILOSOPHY*

by

M. M. Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj

The soul as a spiritual atom thus makes its first appearance when the freedom of Divine will be lost behind its own self-created veil through the transition of Śakti from *parā-kunḍalinī* to *prāṇa-kūṇḍalinī*. This transition is effected by a graded process in which *Śakti-kunḍalinī* coils itself more and more tightly through the evolution of *mātṛkāś* and *varṇas* and reaches the level of *prāṇa* and *sūnya*. It is a truism that *Sāṃvit* is first changed into *prāṇa* before the regular course of subsequent creation represented by the first principles or *tattva* can possibly take place.

The universe of experience consists of a number of *bhuvanas* or planes of life and consciousness made up of *tattvas*'. In the Śākta Śaiva Āgamas thirty-six *tattvas* are recognized, out of which twenty-four counted from below are considered as impure, the next seven as mixed and the remaining five as pure. In this scheme *prakṛti* (24) marks the end of impure, *māyā* (31) that of mixed, and *Śiva* (36) that of pure *tattvas*. Each *tattva* has a series of *bhuvanas* affiliated to it¹. The *bhuvanas* inspite of their mutual differences in detail have the common characteristics of the *tattvas* concerned as predominant, though it is recognised as in the Patañjala school that everywhere everything is to be found (*sarvam sarvātmakam*).² The *bhuvanas* are the abodes of living beings, endowed with bodies and organs made of the substance the materiality of which corresponds to the nature of their *karman* or *jñāna* and the degree of their perfection. The *bhuvanas* of the *pṛthivītattva* represent the sphere, known as *brahmāṇḍa*, the *bhuvanas* of the *tattvas* up to *prakṛti* form the *prakṛtyāṇḍa*, those of the *tattvas* up to *māyā* represent the *māyāṇḍa* and the *bhuvanas* of the *tattvas* up to Śakti beyond *māyā* constitutes the *śaktyāṇḍa* which is the widest sphere. Beyond *Śakti-tattva* there is no limitation and

* . Extracts from "Selected writings of M. M. Gopinath Kaviraj".

1. For the *tattvas* and the *bhuvanas* related to them, see *Mrgendra-Āgama*, Vidyāpāda, pp. 344-456 (Ed. Kṛṣṇa Śāstrin and Subrahmanya Śāstrin); *Bhogakārikā* by Sadyojyoti, VV. 109-13; *Ratna-traya* VV. 89-118 Cf. T. A. Gopināth Rao : *Elements of Hindu Iconography* II (Pt. 2) pp. 392-7 *Mātṛkācakra-viveka*, IV. pp. 86-93.

2. Cf. Vyāsa-bhāṣya under *Yoga Sūtra*, III. 14.

consequently no sphere, though *bhuvanas* are said to exist even in *Śiva-tattva* which is identified with *bindu* and *śāntyatīta kalā*.

The *tattvas* are generally supposed to be the ultimate principle, but they are not so, as they are constituted by *kalās* and *śaktis* which represent the multiple units of energy underlying the entire creation, and which considered in their totality represent the ground of self-expression of the transcendent Śiva. Thus the stuff of the universe is Śakti and in the manner shown in the earlier pages, *prakāśa* with *hārdha-kalā* constitutes the substance out of which the *tattvas* are formed.

The divine attributes of the Self are all diminished, in its atomic condition, when the *cit* appears as *citta*. Of the three well-known impurities or *malas* this is the first, called *āṇava*. It is the state of a *paśu* in which the sense of limitation is first manifested. This limitation makes possible the rise of *vāsanās*, as a result of which the assumption of physical body for a certain length of time becomes necessary to work off these *vāsanās* through experience. These *vāsanās* constitute *kārmamala*. The *māyīya-mala* is the name given to the source of the triple body, namely, (i) the causal or the *kalā śarīra*, (ii) the subtle or *purya śṭaka*, i. e. *tattva-śarīra*, and (iii) the gross elemental or the *bhuvanaja-śarīra*. In fact everything which reveals itself in our experience as knowable and objective comes under *māyīya-mala*. The function of this impurity is to show an object as different from the subject (*sva-rūpa*). All the principles from *kalā* down to *pṛthivī* represent the fetters of *māyā* or *pāśas*. These give shape to body, senses, *bhuvanas*, *bhāvas*, etc. for fulfilling the experience of the soul.¹ Hence what is popularly known as *saṁsāra* extends from *pṛthivī* upto *kalā*, and not beyond the latter. These three impurities persist always in the worldly soul.

This worldly soul is technically known as *sa-kala*, being endowed with body, senses, etc. corresponding to the *tattva* or *bhuvana* to which it belongs. Such souls range from the lowest plane to the plane of *kalā* and migrate from plane to plane according to their *karmans*. There is another state of the soul in which the *māyīya-mala* as described above is absent, but the other two *malas* continue as

1. As regards the three *malas* see *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya* pp. 21-2; *Saubhāgyabhāskara* p. 95; *Śiva-sūtra-vārttika* (1-2-3), *Śiva-sūtra-vimarśinī* (1-2-3). The *āṇava* is two-fold according as it refers to the loss of pure *aharṁtā* in the self and appearance of impure *aharṁtā* in the not-self. the self loses *svātantrya* and retains *bodha* or it is as *bheda* representing the appearance of multiplicity in unity. It consists of *māyā* and the thirty-one *tattvas* produced from it. *Kārmamala* is *adṛṣṭa* and may be regarded either as merit or demerit (*puṇya-pāpa*).

before. This is a state of *pralaya* or dissolution in which the soul is free from all the creative principles, is in a disembodied condition and remains absorbed in *māyā*. Such souls are called *pralayākālas* or *pralaya-kevalins*. These are bodiless and senseless atoms with *karmasatīskāras* and the root ignorance clinging to them. When, however, the *karmans* are got rid of through discriminative knowledge, renunciation or such other means, the soul is exalted above *māyā* though still retaining its atomic state. It is then above *māyā* no doubt, but remains within the limits of *mahāmāyā* which it cannot escape unless the supreme grace of the Divine Master acts upon it and removes the basic Ignorance which caused its atomicity and the limitation of its infinite powers. This state of the soul represents the highest condition of the *paśu* known as *Vijñānākala* or *Vijñāna-kevalin*. This is *Kaivalya*. Among these souls those which are thoroughly mature in respect of their impurity are competent to receive divine illumination at the beginning of the next creative cycle. The dawn of divine wisdom which is the result of divine grace (*anugraha*) acting upon the soul is the origin of the so-called *śuddha-vidyā*.¹

The states of the soul which follow are not those of a *paśu* but of Śiva himself, though certain limitations still remain. These limitations are those of *adhikāra*,

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1. The illumination of mature *vijñānākala* is either intense or mild according as the *kaluṣa* or original taint attached to the soul has run its course completely (*samāpta*) or otherwise; the former types of souls are raised to the status of *Vidyēśvaras* and the latter become mantras. The *sakala* and *pralayākala* souls, too, in which the *mala* is mature, are favoured with divine grace and raised to the position of (i) *Mantreśvaras* and placed in charge of the different division of *Brahmāṇḍa* or the planes belonging to *pṛthvī-tattva*, and of (ii) *Bhuvaneśvaras* or *Lokeśvara* with powers over the planes belonging to the higher *tattvas* beyond *pṛthivī*. The *Pralayā-kalas*, however, where *mala* is immature but *karma* mature, are associated with subtle bodies called *puryuṣṭaka* at the beginning of the next cycle and made to assume physical bodies and migrate from life to life, thus maturing the *mala* through experience. The Śākta or Śaiva belief in three-fold nature of the soul is comparable to the conviction of the Ophites and their predecessors the Orphical in the West—it presupposes a faith that the division corresponds to the degrees of grace and does not imply any essential difference. It is true however, that according to the dualists some difference does exist between Śiva and Parama-Śiva. The Valentinian conception of essential distinction in human souls has also its parallel in India as evident from the views of a section of Jaina, Buddhist and Vaiṣṇava writers, but finds no recognition in the Āgamās.

bhoga and *lava* according to the dualists.¹ They are removed in due course of time through fulfilment of experiences, etc., in the *pure order*.²

The successive stage of spiritual perfection consequent on the dawn of wisdom are represented by the *tattvas* to which the souls are attached. Thus the lowest stage is that of a mantra which corresponds to *Śuddha-vidyā*. The higher states are those of *Mantraśvaras* corresponding to *Īśvaratattva*, of *Mantra-maheśvaras* corresponding to *Sadā-Śiva*, of *Śiva* corresponding to the *tattva* known under that name. The state of *Śiva* is really transcendent, being that of pure and absolute consciousness, but the true Absolute is *Parama-Śiva*, where identity with all the *tattvas* as well as their transcendence are present simultaneously³.

Due to the limitation of its powers the Self is bound. The Śāktas hold that there are certain hidden forces latent in *cidākāśa*, known as *mātrikās* (lit. mothers of the world), which preside over the *malas* referred to above and over the *kalās* or the letter-sounds of the language. The supreme *mātrikā*, known as *Ambikā*, has three aspects, viz. *Jyesthā*, *Raudrī* and *Vāmā*, each of them having a specific function. The *kalās* are the ultimate units of human speech with which thought is inextricably interwoven. The *mātrikās* beget in each soul in each act of its knowledge, determinate or indeterminate, and inner cognition (*antaḥ-parāmarśa*) and produce a sort of confusion there on account of intermingling with *śabda*. Knowledge in this manner assumes the form of joy, sorrow, desire, aversion, conceit, fear, hope, etc., under the influence of these forces. This is how *bhāvas* originate and govern the unregenerate human soul. *Mātrikās* are thus the secret bonds which bind down a soul, but when they are truly known and their essence is revealed they help it in attaining *siddhis* or super-normal psychic powers.

These forces function in *cid-ākāśa* so long as the so-called *brahma-granthi* is not rent asunder. This *granthi* is evidently the node of identity between spirit and matter and is the spring of ego-sense in man. The moral effect of *kuṇḍalinī* is so far clear. It is maintained that if the *mātrikā* is not propitiated and if the node is not removed, it is likely that even after the rise of truth-consciousness the soul may, owing to inadvertence (*pramāda*), be caught up in its snares, get entangled in the meshes of *śabda* and lapse into ignorance or go astray.

1. See *Ratna-traya* by Śrīkaṇṭha, vv. 276-95.

2. The pure order of *śuddha adhvān* represents the higher world of pure matter beyond the influence of *māyā*.

3. See *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya*, P. 8.

The Divine Will is one and undivided, but it becomes split up after the origin of the *mātrkāś* which evolve out of the *nāda* co-eternal with this Will. This split in *icchā* or *svātantrya* caused a separation between *jñāna* and *kriyā*, its constitutive aspects. This is practically identical with what is described as a divorce between *svātantrya* and *bodha* or *vimarśa* and *prakāśa*, which takes place on the assumption of atomic condition by the Supreme Self. In this condition *jñāna* evolves into three inner and five outer senses, and *kriyā* into five *prāṇas* and five motor-organs connected respectively with the vital and reflex activities of the organism.

[To continue]

Ma – Playing Hide-N-Seek

— Mohua

The time is so quiet and dark
 With the eerie calls of insects giving evidence of life.
 I look up at the sky.
 There is only a thick blanket floating by,
 Sometimes breaking in with a soft rumble.
 It's so lonely and scary;
 And even as I look up at the sky
 Thinking of You, Ma,
 I see You !
 I find You shimmering down at me
 Through the irregular holes in the blanket.
 You disappear after a moment,
 As the holes cover up.
 Time again grows lonely.
 But it brightens up,
 As You reappear through the irregular holes.
 And only then I realize
 That You are never away from us.
 You are only showering Your infantile humour
 As if playing hide-n-seek with us.

PAGES FROM
"Ma Anandamayee Prasang"

by

Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta

[Translated from Bengali]

Dehradun, Kishenpur Ashram, 19th May, 1941

Ma's Lila of Sadhana

There was a Gujrati lady amongst us named Miss Maniben. She asked : "Mataji, you have just referred to your visions of the past and the future. How do you have them ? Do you see them with your two physical eyes or (pointing at the space between the two eye-brows) with the third eye that is here ?"

Mataji : How do I see them ? Why, the eyes are all over the body. Don't you know that everything has within it all other things ? Hands, legs, hair, in fact every part of the body can be made the instrument of sight. Of course, it is quite possible to see through the two eyes which all possess; and the existence of a third eye of which you speak is also true. Persons do possess such eyes. This may sound strange to you, but nonetheless it is true.

"Once this body lived only on three grains of rice daily for four or five months. Can anyone live for so long on such a meagre diet. It looks like a miracle. But it has been so with this body. It has been so, because it can be so. The reason for this is that what we eat is not all necessary for us. The body takes in only the quintessence of the food, the rest is thrown out. As a result of *sadhana* the body becomes so constituted that though no food is taken physically, it can accept from the surroundings whatever is necessary for its maintenance. In three ways the body can be maintained without food : One way has just been referred to viz. the body can take from the environment the nourishment necessary for its maintenance. Secondly, one can live on air alone. For I have just said that in everything there are all other things; so that the properties of other things are in the air in some measure. Therefore, by taking in air alone we get the essence of other things. Again, it may so happen that the body is not taking anything at all, yet it is being maintained unimpaired as in a state of *samadhi*. Thus you find that as a consequence of *sadhana* it is quite possible to live without what we call food. In a similar way

sadhana can effect such transformation of the body, that by virtue of it any part of it can discharge the function of the eye."

Shyama Charan : We hear that sages can take upon themselves the sufferings of other people.

Mataji : This is quite true. Sages can mitigate the sufferings of other people in three ways : they can take the suffering upon themselves and thus relieve the sufferer : or without taking those sufferings upon themselves, they may distribute and apportion them amongst some other persons. This lightens to some extent the intensity and acuteness of the suffering. It may so happen that sages out of Supreme Grace can relieve an individual from all the consequences of his actions and restore him to Life Divine, which is his true Self. But such incidents are very rare. Hence it is said that purification comes through suffering.

Myself : Mataji, how is it possible to distribute sufferings amongst others ? This looks like sheer injustice.

Mataji : No, there is nothing wrong in it. Sages could divide the sufferings only amongst those who are only too willing and anxious to share them.

Shyama Charan : Why should I allow a sage to bear my cross ?

Mataji : That is well said. A *bhakta* would speak in this way. A devotee would not have the object of his devotion share his sufferings. He would rather bear the same. But sometimes such sufferings are too much for him, and his only concern then becomes how to get rid of them. In such cases only the question of mitigation or extenuation arises. With this body, however, everything has happened spontaneously. I have seen that this body has taken upon itself the sufferings of others, not purposely, but without any intention. Once I went to see a patient who was attacked by a severe type of dysentery. On my return I found myself attacked by that very disease. I had frequent motions and passed blood and mucus. This went on for twelve hours. Then I was all right again. For some time something like a blizzard the passed over this body, then everything was quiet. The man who had originally the attack came round as soon as this body had the disease.

"At another time this body took upon itself the fever from which another person had been suffering. Every third or fourth day I used to have a violent attack of fever which lasted for three hours. The temperature shot up to 103° or 104°. We were then at Cox's Bazar. The nature of the fever convinced Dina Bandhu Babu that it was nothing but malaria. Bholanath was also of the same opinion, and was anxious to administer quinine. But I flatly refused to take the drug. Dina Bandhu Babu had an almost paternal affection for this body, which used to address him as 'father'. He often used to humour me by complying with my requests. Though a Brahmin

himself, he had given up the Brahminical practice of uttering *Gayatri Mantra*. But I induced him to resume it."

"However when he found me suffering from repeated attacks of fever he lost all patience and woefully declared : "These devotees have conspired to kill my daughter. I won't listen to anybody. I intend to administer by force, if necessary, quinine this very night." I heard all this, but said nothing. In the afternoon this body fell into a trance-like condition. True to his words Dina Bandhu Babu came with quinine at night. Seeing me in a state of trance he shook me hard. Though his shaking and hustling made me open my eyes, they remained unmoved in a fixed stare. This pricked his curiosity. He examined me by focussing the light of a torch on my eyes and even thrusting his finger into them to see whether they would wink. When all his endeavours failed to restore me to a state of normalness, he gave up the attempt to administer quinine that night. But he could not abandon the idea of giving the drug to me. Of course I knew how long the fever was to last. So I told him that if the fever persisted beyond a certain period I would take the medicine. But I had not to take it, because within the specified period I was all right."

"I have referred to the incident of my living only on three grains of rice per day for four or five months. That is an illustration of how the physical needs can be overcome by renunciation. I have not had that sort of renunciation which you understand by the word in its ordinary sense. For this body has lived with father, mother, husband and all. This body has served the husband, so you may call it a wife. It has prepared dishes for all, so you may call it a cook. It has done all sorts of scrubbing and menial work, so you may call it a servant. But if you look at the thing from another standpoint you will realize that this body has served none but God. For when I served my father, mother, husband and others, I simply considered them as different manifestations of the Almighty and served them as such. When I sat down to prepare food I did so as if it were a ritual, for the food cooked was after all meant for God. Whatever I did, I did in a spirit of Divine service. Hence I was not quite worldly, though always engaged in household affairs. I had but one ideal, viz. to serve all as God, to do everything for the sake of God."

"At that time I lived as one who had taken a vow of silence. I found enough time at my disposal even after the completion of all my household work. A girl named Usha lived near our house. She used to read out the Mahabharata at noon. One day she handed over the book to me for reading. I took it in my hand but could not read; because at that time God's Name always bubbled out of me as from a

spring. Somehow it got itself tucked to my natural respiration. Hence I found that any attempt to read the book only resulted almost in my suffocation. Moreover, you have some idea as to the range of my education. In order to read I had to spell through every word. When I attempted to read I found that I could not take in two syllables at a time. Suppose I was to pronounce 'ami'. I could pronounce 'a' all right, but when it was time to pronounce "mi" I found that I had cleanly forgotten the 'a' and the effacement was so complete that I could not even trace its existence in me. In this condition no intelligent reading was possible. But when I sat down to spin, I found that it was not an hindrance to repeating God's Name. Both could go on simultaneously. I have spun a good deal of yarn. When I was at Bajitpur I myself prepared a towel and, with the help of a weaver, a pair of *dhotis* also with my own hand-spun yarn."

At this stage a lady remarked : "Ma, once I have seen you singing and weeping."

Mataji : There is nothing like uniformity with this body. *Svabhava* (Nature) takes its unhampered course. The singing and weeping you mention are possible at a certain stage of *sadhana*. Suppose I sat down to sing. At that time my idea was that it was through God's Grace I was uttering His Name. As I went on repeating the Name, another idea took hold of me, and I thought : "Alas ! I am praying so fervently and for such a long time, yet God is not revealing Himself to me !" This sense of frustration created a pang in my heart, and at once tears would trickle down my cheeks. These are, of course, stages of ignorance, for with the dawn of Knowledge even prayers and *sadhana* cease.

"When the different stages of *sadhana* were being manifested through this body, what a variety of experiences I then had ! Sometimes I used to hear distinctly: "Repeat this mantra". When I got the mantra a query arose in me : "Whose mantra is this ?" At once the reply came from within: "It is the mantra of Ganesha or Vishnu" or something like that. Again the query came from myself : "How does he look ?" A form was revealed in no time. Every question was met by a prompt reply and there was immediate resolution of all doubts and misgivings."

"One day I distinctly got the command : "From to day you are not to bow down to anybody." I asked my invisible monitor : "Who are you ?" The reply came : "Your *sakti*" (Power). I thought that there was a distinct *sakti* residing in me and guiding me by issuing commands from time to time. Since all this happened at the stage of *sadhana*, *jnana* (Knowledge) was being revealed in a piecemeal fashion. The integral knowledge which this body was possessed of from the very beginning was broken, as it were, into parts and there was something like a super-imposition of ignorance. At that time I was a *mauni* (observing silence). This was also due to

particular command. The father of this body came to see me at that time. I could not make obeisance even to him. Not that I refrained from doing it intentionally, but this body refused to do anything contrary to the commands it received from time to time. When he saw that I was not doing my duty to him, he took it to heart. But as I was a *mauni* at that time I could not explain the situation to him. He came to regard me with suspicion. He argued that if my various moods and experiences had a spiritual origin, there was no reason why I should be disrespectful to those to whom respect was due. This led him to consult different persons regarding my condition."

"In the meantime the occasion of *Siva Ratri* came. On such occasions it was customary with the father of this body to sit up the whole night and worship Siva. Corresponding to the four quarters of the night he used to perform *puja* four times. Each *puja* was meant for the well-being of a particular individual. This time also he proceeded as usual with the *puja*, and I sat up with him to make preparations for it. When after finishing *puja* three times during the first three quarters of the night, he proceeded to perform the *puja* for the fourth quarter for the benefit of this body, a curious thing happened. He found that as he was proceeding with the worship, this body was uttering aloud all the relevant mantras and prayers quite automatically. This surprised him very much. Though he said nothing, he could not help looking at me from time to time."

"However, to proceed with the account of my *sadhana*. After some time I again heard the voice within myself which told me : "Whom do you want to make obeisance to ? You are everything". At once I realized that the Universe was all my own manifestation. Partial knowledge then gave place to the integral, and I found myself face to face with the ONE that appears as many. It was then that I understood why I had been forbidden for so long to bow down to anybody."

Myself : How long was the period intervening between these two stages ?

Mataji : Quite long. But in the meantime various *vibhutis* were being manifested through this body. These manifestations have again occurred in various ways: Sometimes they have been manifested almost in ignorance, e.g., I found that as soon as I had touched a particular patient he recovered in no time, but I did not know beforehand that he would be cured in that way. Sometimes the manifestation occurred with knowledge mixed up with ignorance, e.g., on seeing a patient I used to argue in this way : "I know from my past experience that my touch has a healing effect. If I touch this patient he may also get well." To verify this I touched him and found that he was cured immediately. Then again manifestations of *vibhuti* have taken place with full knowledge and consciousness on my part. Thus I knew for certain that I could cure a disease by a mere touch, and I touched in full confidence of success."

Jiten Babu : In what other ways have your *vibhuti*s been manifested ? And how do they manifest themselves now ?

Mataji : *Vibhuti*s have now become almost a part and parcel of *svabhāva*.

Jiten Babu : I do not quite follow you.

Mataji : *Vibhuti*s becoming a part of *svabhāva* means that everything is regulated by *svabhāva* or the Supreme Self. Here there is no scope for the play of a limited self. This was so with this body from its very infancy. Such type of disclosures are not always made by this body. Since they are coming spontaneously now, I felt them. Let me tell you that what I am now, I have been from my infancy. But when the different stages of *sadhana* were being manifested through this body there was something like a superimposition of *ajnāna* (ignorance). But what sort of *ajnāna* was that ? It was really *jnāna* posing as *ajnāna* . Let me tell you a story relating to my childhood. In childhood when this body was at Vidyakut, a woman became pregnant, and her child was born when I was still there. I knew from the beginning that the child was not to live long. He came only to complete his cycle of births and deaths. However, the child became one year old. He was not very nice to look at. His complexion was almost jet black, but his body was very soft. That is why he was always seen in the arms of others, who all wanted to have the luxury of the touch. And the child was all smiles. When he was over a year and a few months old, his span of life came to an end; and he became seriously ill. I went to see him on the day he was to die. On my way I took with me a hibiscus flower, but rubbed it so that the people might not know what I had in my hand. I left the flower under the child's pillow. Those who were present there thought that I had left some *nirmalya*, seeing that the child was near his end. I did all this under the urge of *svabhāva*.

"At the stage of *sadhana*, *vibhuti* first manifests itself as joy which comes from the recitation of God's Name. When persons experience this, they think that they have got everything that *sadhana* can yield; and their upward progress gets thereby arrested. But he who keeps himself always on the move without being overwhelmed by such manifestations finds himself in possession of various miraculous powers. But those powers are not meant for display. They should be carefully kept under control. He alone can know his true Self, who keeps alive within him an insatiable thirst for the Divine, without being content with the possession of supernormal powers - powers which enable him to cure any disease by a mere touch of the hand or which leads to the instantaneous fulfilment of all his desires."

[To continue]

THE HOLY MOTHER AS I HAVE KNOWN HER

— Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly

I met the Holy Mother for the first time at Patna on the 17th February, 1951. She was then sitting in the midst of devotees, who were singing devotional songs. She appeared to be in a meditative mood. I have since come to know that for Her there are no changing moods. She always abides in a state which is beyond all changes.

I went there because a colleague of mine, who had introduced me to Śri Aurobindo's works, had informed me of the Holy Mother's stay at Patna. It was pure disinterested curiosity which had led me there. I did not expect much from an almost illiterate woman, who laid so much stress only on "*Kīrtan*", i.e. devotional music in chorus. Though she had been staying at Patna for about a week, I had, because of my intellectual vanity, not cared to go and ask Her any question on philosophy. I was convinced that nothing more than what was to be found in books could be said by or learnt from anybody. I was, however, eager to find, if possible, an ideal non-attached man spoken of by Aldous Huxley. It seemed to tally with the concept of *Sthita-Prajna*' of the *Gītā*. The lives of Śri Rāmakrishna, Śri Aurobindo and Śri Ramana Maharshi had convinced me that a non-attached *Brahmajnāni* was possible even in these days of industrial civilisation, nay, in fact the salvation of our industrial civilisation, which according to Dr. Joad, had lost the values of life. I have not had the good fortune to meet Śri Aurobindo or Śri Ramana Maharshi. Could it be, I thought, that fate had at last moved to retrieve my fortune and I was going to have *darshan* of a *Brahmajnāni*, an event at which, all unknown to me, my whole life-impulse had been aiming.

The uproarious *Kīrtan*, however, disappointed me, as I was of the opinion that such terrible noise must be a positive hindrance to meditation, which is considered the best method of communion with God. After an hour's severe trial, which was relieved only by the Divine Grace of the beautiful face of the Holy Mother, just as I was on the point of leaving, I fell into a sort of trance — almost the first of its kind in my life, and experienced a state of ecstasy, which was broken at about 10 P.M. by a sweet call from the Holy Mother. I felt a sense of great relief and perfect repose when I woke up, and looking at the face of the Holy Mother I found a touch of the Beyond in Her. By that time I had returned to my senses and thought that I

might have been under a hypnotic spell. I pulled myself together and got back my critical mood. However, before I could put any question to Her, She asked me to narrate my experience. By that time everybody had left Her room and so without any hesitation, I related to Her my strange physical, intellectual, emotional and possibly spiritual experience. What astonished me was the way She made definite and explicit what I had groped for in my narration. Ultimately She wound up the whole description my saying that she also had had similar experiences in Her childhood, such is Mother's way to encourage a child. I was naturally anxious to know from Her the correct interpretation of such experiences.

What followed was a masterly discourse on *Yoga*. It seemed to me that Her knowledge far excelled that of Patanjali's "*Yoga Sutra*" in matters of detail, or of Blavatsky's "*The Voice of Silence*" in sense of realism. I bowed down to Her in love and respect and came away a changed man. Out of the ashes of my philosophical knowledge, full of doubts and difficulties, was born a devotion that knows no doubt, no break. Her very presence, aglow with a sublime radiance, was sufficient proof that there was a Divine Mother, upholding and protecting the Universe. The presence of Mother in the midst of a *kīrtan* now assumed a completely new meaning to me, namely of a Being, standing beyond the '*Kīrtan*', and yet presiding over it. The necessity of seeking inferential proofs for such feelings was gone and it seemed to me as though I had an intuitive glimpse of the Lord of the *Gītā*.

Since then I paid many visits to Her Āshrams at Varanasi and Vindhyaçal and it would take one long chapter to write down every single event or idea that has struck me as something full of spiritual significance. Apart from the indescribable devotional atmosphere of the 'gnostic collectivity' around Her, reminding one of the Divine atmosphere created by *Devarshi* Nārada of the *Purānas* or Lord Chaitanya of Bengal, wherever they went, the most pleasing and astonishing thing about Her personality is that it offers a wonderful reconciliation of all religious and philosophical views and theories. She does not only resolve conflicts theoretically, but can actually satisfy the contending parties that they are all perfectly correct from their relative angles of vision. I have attended several conferences of philosophers and religious men in India, and always found them unsatisfactory and disappointing. On several occasions when I had the misfortune of offending somebody holding the view of Vedānta of a school other than that of Shankarāchārya, the Holy Mother intervened and like Śri Rāmakrishna Paramahansa proved to the entire satisfaction of everybody present that there are as many ways of understanding Truth as there are accepted theories. At the outset I

used to think that She reconciled those views in order to please all Her children, who are groping in the dark. But no, Her cosmic consciousness enables Her to identify Herself with everyone and thus realize as well as explain the truth according to the particular view held.

Mother often spoke in the terminology of pure monistic Vedānta. It seemed a little strange to me that one who appeared to be immersed in *Bhakti*, and dedicated to this cult based on pure dualism, should repeatedly speak terms of the Upanishads, such as "only Brahman is true", the world is an illusion or "Thou are that", etc. — concepts which form the very cornerstone of Absolute Monism. The theory of three levels of consciousness hinted at by Sir J. Woodroffe and P.N. Mukhopadhyaya in their '*The World as Power*' seemed to suggest a solution. The three levels correspond to three stages, viz. the state of the *Brahmajnāni* who sees one in the many, the state of the ordinary man who sees nothing but the many and mid-way between those two levels of consciousness lies the intermediary plane of consciousness through which a *Yogi* has to pass. The conflicting statements of many realized souls who got glimpses of the timeless, spaceless, absolute *Brahman* and yet had occasion to speak in terms of pluralism can probably be explained by the hypothesis, that they — the realised souls, so to say, come to other planes to meet the needs of men.

And yet doubt assails when one proceeds to apply this theory to MOTHER, from whom Truth flows at its source. In Her case the criterion of Truth as propounded above does not exist.

On the lower pragmatic planes of consciousness the apparent multiplicity has its relative importance, and it is through strenuous efforts or by the grace of the Divine that one can transcend the lower levels of consciousness. In the beginning the *Yogi* gets temporary glimpses of Truth, which cannot be described in language, but the goal of the *Yogi* is to reach the state of *Mahā Yogi*, who always lives in Absolute Consciousness. Whether we adopt the path of *tapasyā*, i.e. deliberate and strenuous efforts at *Yoga* or that of surrender to the Divine, we have got to get away from this sordid worldly consciousness by annihilating the composite elements in our being. So from an embodied consciousness, in which the conscious *Purusha* or Soul has been enslaved, we shall ultimately come to bodiless consciousness, or realise the *Purusha* free from *Prakriti* or Lower Nature, consisting of body, mind, ego etc. Perhaps *sādhana* ends there and the free soul waits for its final deliverance by the grace of the Divine Mother, the *Ishwara-Shakti*, when the divine spark merges in the Infinite.

Mother Ānandamayee reminds us of the *summum bonum* of human existence and re-enforces the truth of all the scriptures that we are greater than ourselves, that we are purer than we seem to be, that we are by nature Divine, and that we must realize the Divine in this very life. This body is the temple of the Divine Mother; let it not be made into the devil's workshop. By surrendering to the Mother we keep our shrine ready for the expression of the Divine within. The Divine pervades all existence, material as well as spiritual. Hence it is the sacred duty of physical-vital-mental man to evolve into a gnostic being, who also functions on the intuitive plane and on the plane of unconditioned joy. Sit near Mother Ānandamayee and Her joy will touch you, invade you and you will forget, at least for the time being, that there are things like cares and anxieties in life. Such a temporary infusion of joy may make you ultimately mad for Joy Absolute and a life of *sāadhanā* may begin.

Put an abstruse metaphysical question to the Holy Mother, and see how spontaneously, without any effort, without the use of inferential processes, She convinces you. Once I had a serious difference of opinion with a qualified monist and after spending a whole night arguing and She asked me, "By accepting which of the different schools of *Vedānta* can you accommodate the other schools most conveniently?" I replied, " *Advaita Vedānta*". She said, "Oh, then his qualified monism can also be reconciled to your pure monism. Why did you then quarrel with him all night long? Baba, you have as yet only intellectually approached the truth of pure monism. Had you actually realised the Truth, you would also have realised the relative truth from his angle of vision. He may not have had the vision of the One, but if you have come to it, you should accommodate the many in the One which contains the many."

The Holy Mother does not, like a philosopher of some school, try to and coerce others into submission. Rather does She encourage him to support the view point of other seekers, when he is in their company. A devotee, having blind faith should stick to his blind faith. But a philosopher or a teacher who knows the different theories of different schools of thought, should make an attempt to explain in the most logical way any particular view held dear by a particular group of devotees.

Once I had to suffer for my dogmatism in this connection. During the *Dol Purnimā* day of 1952 (the full moon day of the Bengali month of Fālgun, in which Lord Chaitanya was born), the Holy Mother was present, when at a religious sitting at Vrindāvan, I delivered a speech on the message of Sri Chaitanya. It was well received. When I was requested to give another discourse the next day at the same place, I began to explain the fundamental of the "*Synthesis of Yoga*" by Śri Aurobindo, which lays special stress on work without attachment as sacrifice to the

Lord, in view of the fact that free India needed divine workers more than hermits living in seclusion or in Ashrams. The source of the thesis of *Karmayoga* as developed by Śri Aurobindo and as explained by me on that occasion, is what Lord Krishna preached to Arjuna in the *Gītā*. And though everyone present in the audience was a devotee of Lord Krishna, most of them disliked my speech, because of the exuberance of the words. There was such an adverse reaction that some learned pandits complained to Holy Mother about my speech. I, of course, tried to justify myself, but ultimately became convinced that my talk had been an inopportune one. I was simply amazed to find in Mother a first class logician with wonderful sense of realism. She convinced me that not only the philosophical basis of life at Vrindāvan was quite different from that of other places, but also that an attempt at divine work by ordinary *sādhakas*, who have not attained to a certain stage, would lead not to "*Karma-yoga*" but to "*Karma-bhoga*", that is to say, the *sādhaka* at initial stages may just rationalise his ordinary actions, which have been dictated by his lower nature. Hence some *sādhakas*, at some periods of their *sādhanā* may require exclusive recourse to devotion after abandoning works of life. I was reminded of a reference to that effect by Śri Aurobindo himself in his "*The Synthesis of Yoga*."

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THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

[Continued from before]

— P.C. Mehta

Spread and break up of Buddhism:

We have briefly dealt with three stages in the history of Buddhism

Buddhistic schools gradually declined under the stress of strengthening Hindu thought. The first great onslaught came from Kumarila Bhatt (700 A.D) and was continued by Sankara and others, with the result that the doctrine lost its hold on the Indian mind. From the twelfth century onwards the discussions of Buddhistic thought became academic. Therefore for the history of this great teaching after that time, we should look outside India, to Tibet, China and Japan.

Its emphasis on compassion is a feature which it shares with Jainism. This has greatly helped the growth of the quality of benevolence in those countries.

The doctrine is broken up in numerous sects. In China more schools developed, such as The 'Tendai' (Tien-tai'), The 'Kegon' (Avatamsaka), The 'Jodo' (Ching-t'u), The 'Zen' (Ch'an) etc. In Japan besides these they also have, the 'Hokke' The 'Shin', the 'Ji' etc.

Further development of the ideal of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism:

We now touch upon two other important areas in which it has developed;

(i) In developing the **Bodhisattva** ideal and ii) Deification of the Buddha.

The Bodhisattva ideal: Buddha the great Bridge:

The attainment of liberation by the individual has ceased to be the ultimate aim. The person who succeeds in acquiring enlightenment is expected to work for the salvation of mankind, instead of remaining satisfied with his own *Nirvāna*. Such a person is called '*Bodhisattva*' literally 'Wisdom-being'. This ideal, with its emphasis on the welfare of others, exceeds the goal of the *Arhant*, who is chiefly concerned with his own salvation.

According to folklore, at the time of Enlightenment it was suggested that on reaching enlightenment, Buddha may enter *Nirvāna*, but Lord *Brahma* intervened and requested Buddha to wait to teach the saving doctrine. Since *Jñāna* or wisdom and *Karunā* or compassion are the two sides of the same coin, Buddha's great emphasis on compassion brought forth the *Bodhisattva* ideal.

It is also said that Buddha gave up *Nirvana* to become the great bridge between *Alaya Vijnāna* and *Tathāta*. All Yogic efforts are within the duality of *Alaya-Vijnāna*. Effort within duality does not lead to the non-dual state. It is total cessation of movement in duality, because one has understood through insight, the futility of such activity, that frees one from its limitations. Buddha in his great compassion gave up *Nirvāna* and decided to be a bridge between the two dimensions, thus enabling the *sādhaka* or the practitioner, through Yogic efforts within duality, to transcend it, either by merging his will with the Divine will through *Bhakti*, or being lifted up through *Jnana* in a state of choiceless awareness of non-duality. This is another reason for the *Bodhisattva* ideal.

Buddha is represented to have been a *Bodhisattva* in many of his former lives; and the love and compassion which are the characteristic features of this ideal can best be indicated by citing the saying which tradition ascribes to Buddha, viz. that he would willingly bear the burden of everybody's suffering, if he could thereby bring relief to the world.

Deification of The Buddha :

While the *Hinayāna* was atheistic and looked upon *Buddha* as essentially a human being, though divinely gifted, the *Mahayāna* gradually came to deify him and adopted devout worship of him as a means to salvation.

This is a clear departure from the earlier position mentioned before where Buddha admonishes Ananda to be a light unto himself. Now both positions coexist.

In these developments, *Mahāyāna* Buddhism has been considerably influenced by theistic Hinduism.

In the history of Indian literature, (vol. ii, page 229), Winternitz states, "We see here the influence of the doctrine of *Bhakti* known to us from the *Bhagavadgita* and it is most probable that it was the *Bhagavadgita* itself which influenced the development of the *Mahāyāna*".

The Trikāyā doctrine:

These developments were brought together in the formulation of the three-body *trikāyā* doctrine. According to this doctrine, Buddhahood can be considered under three aspects :

- i) At one level Buddha appears in his *Nirmānakāyā* i.e. 'transformation' body, as the historical Buddha.
- ii) At another level as *Sambhogakāyā* i.e. 'enjoyment body' in which he appears celestially as heavenly god :
- iii) Finally, and most importantly, he appears in the *Dharmakāyā* i.e. 'Truthbody', where Buddhahood is identified with the Absolute.

Vajrayāna :

Vajrayāna is a form of Esoteric Buddhism which infiltrated into Tibet from India and China during the 7th. century and after. Despite resistance from the indigenous *Bon* religion, it became well established in it's Indian form by the 11th century. The type of religion was an amalgam of Buddhism with *Tantra* a form of religion found in India, especially, in Bengal, that involved esoteric sacramental practices, some of which involved breaking taboos as a means of transcending duality.

The *Vajrayāna* is also known as *Mantrayāna*, or Tantric Buddhism. Its philosophy and aim are the same as that of *Mahayāna* Buddhism. *Hinayāna* or the *Mahayāna* schools of Buddhism did not subscribe to the Tantric practices prevalent in Bengal. The *Vajrayāna* school believes that individual realization could be accomplished more quickly through Tantric practices.

For enlightenment, the *sadhaka* or the aspirant has to correlate the three avenues of his body, speech, and mind with the "three mysteries" i.e. of body, speech, and mind of the supermundane Buddha, through the use of gestures (*mudrā*), incantation (*mantra*) and intense concentration (*samādhi*) respectively. This is possible only through transmission of the *Mantra-Sakti* or 'Mantrapower' by a competent Guru to a worthy disciple in a process where the Guru achieves the Buddha level at the time of initiating the disciple, and the disciple looks upon the Guru as the Buddha. The 'Mantra-power' thus infused has to correspond to the capacities and requirements of the disciple. Often enough the 'Mantra-power' is transmitted to the disciple through the '*Ista-devata*' or the tutelary deity of the disciple, whom the devotee daily propitiates and serves. This deity (Guardian-angel) both protects and helps the disciple in his spiritual progress.

To suit the dispositions of disciples, the Tantras are divided in four categories. The *Kriya-Tantras* are meant for disciples for whom external rituals are more important than inner *samadhi*. The *Cārya-Tantras* are suitable to disciples for whom external rituals and inner *samadhi* are equally important, the *Yoga-Tantras* are designed for those for whom inner *samadhi* is more important than external rituals, and the *Anuttarayoga-Tantras* are revealed for those for whom only inner *samadhi* is important.

"Various Buddhist Tantras have a theory about *klesa* or defilement, that differs strikingly from the non-Tantra aim of eliminating it, as though defilement were something to extract. According to these Tantras, the three 'poisons' viz., lust, hatred, and delusion, cannot really be extracted from man, they can only be 'detoxified'. It is a kind of alchemy they teach. These 'poisons' are to be turned

against themselves, as though to short circuit them. According to this theory, for man to be perfected nothing need be added or subtracted, only converted. The Tantras have of course been criticized, even condemned, for asserting that precisely what causes bondage is what causes release from bondage. But this doctrine was misunderstood as an endorsement of license to engage in practices that Buddhism has always condemned. It is true that the Tantric texts when read literally sometimes appear to give such reproachable advice. In fact, Buddhism does not speak ill of the craving for enlightenment or for liberation, so it appears that what is wrong with craving is not craving itself but what it is aimed at, that is, craving that is badly aimed or perversely directed. Nevertheless, Buddhism uses different words to maintain the contrast between different types of craving. *Rāga* or lust connotes bad craving while *pranidhaāna* or aspiration connotes good craving. But while non-Tantric Buddhism speaks as though they were different cravings, the Tantric outlook is that ultimately they represent craving, and therefore cannot be distinguished. Indeed, even the so-called bad lust has the function of preserving the species and permitting the birth of Arhats, Bodhisattvas and Mahasiddhas or Tantric adepts" (From the writings of Alex Wayman, in the Encyclopedia of Religion)

This subject is vast, deep and outside the scope of a book on the philosophies of India. It calls for independent treatment. After the take over of Tibet By China, the rich heritage of this Tibetan religion is getting distributed to various centers of the world, but noticeably in the U.S.A.

CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI VIJAYANANDA

Question : What is our real nature ?

Vijay Ananda : In the depths of our heart, our real nature is perfection. To find it we must remove "the crust", the veils which are hiding it behind a curtain of form and duality. Veils are made of our negative emotions, of our fears, of our desires, etc... It's like a golden bowl left into the earth for a long time. You must take off the dirt, but the gold itself will not be damaged.

Q : Which part of us becomes reincarnated ?

V : It is the subtle body which first goes away and then becomes reincarnated. It's an agglomerate of desires. At the instant of death our more powerful desire rises up and determines our next reincarnation. So it's very useful to have only pure thoughts to control the mental and at the moment of death it is recommended to practice some rituals. It will help the dying person to think of God when he or she leaves the body.

Q : What is the difference between mystical love and human love ?

V : Human love has inevitably its dark side, hostility, since it is within the range of duality. So it remains limited, personal and tied up to the form. Mystical love (for the Guru, the Divine) is pure, tending towards mystical union. To make human love purer, you can do your best to see the divine in the other people. In any way, it's better to have a common love, "Whatever it is", than having no love at all. Then, when the divine love increases the need of human love decreases spontaneously. Divine love is so purer, stronger. You must not force anything, it will come of its own when it's ripe.

Q : Why do we grow so fond of our body ?

V : We think we'll find happiness in it through pleasures like sex, food, etc.... In reality, these pleasures are nothing else but deformed manifestation of the absolute joy which is within us, which is our true nature. If you look outside in search of happiness, whatsoever it is, you'll be disappointed. It is a question of becoming aware of it and of renouncing gradually habits dating from innumerable lives. We must do so with patience, tolerance, vigilance and perseverance.

Q : Is it difficult to be a disciple ?

V : Very difficult. A real disciple dedicates himself totally. There are much more Gurus than true disciples.

Q: How is it possible to maintain a spiritual orientation in the daily life ?

V : Through *Karma Yoga*. You must not give any importance to success or failures, and you must get rid of the habit to say : "It is me, I did it". You must keep your mental indifference concerning all results. You must act while being aware of the fact that "you are not the one who will take advantage of your action". You are just an instrument of the Divine. One must act in a perfect way for the joy of accomplishing a perfect action, whatever the result may be.

You also should remember those sayings full of sense :

"Everything God makes is for the best".

"Do what you have to do .. Come what may".

Question : Now a days we speak very often about Vedanta in the western countries . Do you think the transition from one culture to the other will occur in a purer way ?

Vijayananda : The two pillars of *Vedanta* are *Vairagya* (detachment) and *Viveka* (discernment). If they are missing, it remains a westernized *Vedanta* , with the risk to end up only in words. It is not enough to read *Shankaracharya* or to learn Sanskrit, you must practice. After a period one should try to study the holy scriptures in a precise way. *Vedanta* is the highest point of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*.. It is also tied up to the fourth of the ashrams (stages of life) which is the *sannyas*.

In going from one path to another, from one guru to another, westerners may end up in strange stages and imagining they follow some high teachings, when they do not have any solid basis at all. For example, the Jewish people have a tradition to consider sexuality as something sacred, but one must practice all that referring to the basis of Torah.

At his wife's death, the Baal Shem Tov mentioned : "I thought that if I had died first, I could have gone up to the sky in a chariot of fire. But now she is dead, I have lost half of my power."

I have a friend who bought a real expensive Rollex watch but as he was afraid of having it robbed, he also bought at once an imitation one to wear it for daily use. It is a typical attitude in the West where they use to do the same with an imitation of *sadhana*, not knowing the requirements of the true one. In India also you have few real *sadhakas*, but at least they know what an authentic *sadhana* needs. Often westerners intellectualize too much. It's a great obstacle, especially if you go close

to a sage. In front of him or her, you must know how to remain like a child. If St Francis of Assisi is so popular in the west, I don't think it is only on account of his love or of his close contact with nature, I think it is mostly due to his humility.

Q : Why do they have so many suicides in France, compared to India ?

V : People are committing suicide in the west because they have explored all the possible desires, they have realized that they go nowhere and at the end, they have nothing else to put in their place. The one practicing a discipline has always some hope, and gives stamina in life.

Q : In India they believe in asuras, in "devils," who can also have their good sides, as the Gods may have their bad ones. But India does not believe in the "Prince of Darkness", in the Absolute Evil, like in Christianity or recent Judaism. What is the advantage from the Indian point of view ?

V : The belief in the Devil which spread among the first Christian monks, for example, is good for the ones who are aggressive and need to fight against an enemy. In the Bible, the Devil is nothing else but an evil being. God has created everything: the Good and the Evil. In the Cabbala, however, he becomes so important that they don't even dare to pronounce his name for fear of invoing him. They call him by the two first letters of his name *Samael Samachem*. That name means "the blind angel", and they refer to him by "the other side". No doubt there is a Manichean influence on late Judaism.

One day, the Baal Shem Tov pronounced the whole name of Satan in spite of interdicts. The Satan came furiously protesting : "I have only been disturbed twice by the calls of mankind, the first time by Eve in the Garden of Eden, and the second one during the Temple's destruction. What do you want from me ?"

At that precise moment the Devil started seeing the light on the foreheads of Baal Shem Tov's disciples. He then felt so impressed that he was obliged to thank Baal Shem Tov to have called him.



LOVING ANANDAMAYEE MA

—S.K.Bose

We realize all the time, that we love Anandamayee Ma. But to be true to our mind how can we say that, when we do not know what is "LOVE". We loved Ma due to some cause, to fulfill our demands and desires. But "real love" does not demand anything from another, nothing physically, emotionally or intellectually. Real love has no cause. If it has not, then love and intelligence go together. If it has a cause it is not. It therefore matters little to survive like this in association with Ma until oneself, rather true self, is known by love-love and determination.

Atmananda* with desperate eagerness pondering over the significance of love was lost in the stillness of night with no realization altogether. Yet the dawn used to remind her the best part of life in a formless delightful meditation qualified by an essence of undefined glare of love towards Ma. It is obviously beyond expression and limitation.

If one observes when he is angry, the anger after a while falls away, but love towards Ma, instead of falling, gradually grows. Our mind no doubt can pursue sensations, desires, but cannot pursue love. When one experiences it towards Anandamayee Ma no division or section occurs. It is love alone brings total comprehension of the whole universe. It is something that is new, alive and fresh. There lies neither respect nor disrespect when one loves Her. It silently crawls in our heart without banner of flashing of light and breaks the hammer that strikes to destabilize mutual bonding. Once the pull is experienced the knot is cut, doubts dispelled, and all the effects of worship, rituals, worldly knowing stands cancelled. Pure supra-eternal love towards Ma stabilizes one, conquers the state of mind.

Anandamayee Ma was both a Guru, formal teacher and also a spiritual preceptor for Atmananda. She loved Her so much that if anybody even a wealthy host treated Ma as though they owned Her, to fulfill their desires and interests, she would become desperately wild and had the courage to give them a good piece of her mind

* Atmananda, the name given by Ma to an Austrian lady, who lived in Ma's ashram for many many years. Her original name was Blanca Schlamm.

without caring herself being thrown out. Osho says, "It does not mean saying the truth. Saying is only the half way, being is the true thing".

Atmananda in an advanced state of spiritual perfection realized identity of truth and soul within, being the same, so could speak the truth. Probably this was the reason that Ma responded, "*Just as you spoke the truth, so it be spoken*". Unless the true self is realized by completely surrendering to Ma, one cannot have the courage to speak out the truth.

Atmananda never knew how to worship except to pray to Mother, "Take possession of me completely. make me just an instrument of Your Self. Do anything you like with me. Only don't keep me apart from You. I am burning with passion for You. I have now found out what is *Love*, like a day of low dark cloud showers away the heat". In fact real worshiping of Ma was learnt when she knew how to love. It is no less than seeing the face of God, doing everything that has to be done. She is breathing through her, everybody including plants, animals, inert objects etc. People even without a strong religious bent and background on seeing Ma also experienced something over-whelming, uplifting, revealing intrinsic qualities of their own divinity. They discovered the meaning of love, their existence, that they never ever dreamt. Damialue, a renowned interpreter of Indian culture admitted that Her radiance was such that agitated and unhappy people were soon pacified there, anguish dissolving like morning mist of the river Ganges. All their religious, metaphysical, existential problems would suddenly cease to be. Once these troubles are gone those people would melt away into a beautiful state.

The "*moment*" in experiencing the Divine state depends upon the spiritual readiness. Once this happens an infinite joyous love within oneself grows, activates transformation of our intrinsic energy and added to our energy pool eg. the fine substance that we need to be stored for higher level of awareness. Sometimes a momentary look of Anandamayee Ma acts as a cataleptic agent that in fact accelerated vigorously the process of *Japa* in case of Bramhacharini Seva, this is followed by the soul being freed from the clutches of materialistic world. The seeker then tastes the sweetness of loving Anandamayee Ma from within, the moment, a direct spiritual bonding is established.

No body can predict when for any particular individual "the Supreme moment" will reveal itself. But the power of Anandamayee Ma operated in special way on the aspirant unrevealing the Supreme Union with the true self. It is one of the unique

examples, eg. :- The power of Ma is transmitted to a devotee, who no doubt was capable to hold in.

Once. Dr. Panna Lal asked, "If someone stayed with you and just enjoyed himself without any deeper spiritual interest, was this a burden to you ?" In response Ma answered, "If my *kheyal* (a spontaneous upsurge of divine will) turns such person could come to know the nature of pleasure; similar to that happened in case of Seba." Sometimes by simply a touch, or mere exchange of vision, she would arrive at stillness, the energy of enlightenment (*Kundalini*) remaining active with an uni-directional upward surge, followed by the absorption of an intense love and devotion. On asking about it, Ma said, "Seba's concentration was not becoming optimized due to some inherent deficiency in her nerve-center which was unknown to her'. On the contrary she could feel a Supreme Power originating from Ma and transmitted, the moment Her vision fell on her body.

Simply having a glimpse of Ma's radiant physical form inducts an overwhelming beauty that almost defies description. Her brightness was looked as an illusion, a dream by devotees, who were in an advanced state of spiritual perfection and awareness. This probably unfolded inner feeling (perception) of Atmananda that 'Mother's divinity was still to her a proud mental conception". Her pride probably was a barrier in having Her true *darshan* when she was in a dilemma in this state of mind. Sri. Ma lovingly conveyed, "*Do regular Atmakriya of Atmanand. This little girl is always with you. Remember that*". Is this that endless love one seeks ?

Mahamahopadhyay Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj was fully convinced that we should try to love Her deeply and sincerely and by loving Her will bring our self into closer union with Her. As a result of this practice Anandamayee Ma will surely reveal Herself more fully according to the degree of our fitness, receptivity and intellect. In so knowing we shall be able to know our true self. Then only seeing Ma our mind and vision will be immersed in desireless Divine Love.

Experiencing love is not love either. If there is experience, then there is both the experiencer and that which he experiences. But love is Svayam Prakash.

Jai Ma

THE DIVINE MOTHER

— Dr. Premlata Srivastav

Sri Sri Ma's Teachings

Ma has proved Herself as an ideal teacher. Her teaching differed from person to person depending on one's mental status, time and need. Ma's every movement, each gesture was a lesson in itself of service, knowledge, devotion, sacrifice austerity etc. She has given every possible chance for devotees to learn.

From small, little things like-what will be cooked and how, and what suits a particular Mahatma, how to serve food, decoration of the food plate, how to welcome a guest etc. etc. are so many small things that Ma only taught. There is no end to Her teaching. Ma delegated work to her able workers to someone puja work, to someone kitchen and store and so on. She even taught how to cut vegetables, and the way to cook.

Once at Naimisharanya Ma asked one brahmacharini to cook rice with all the vegetables in it. She asked her to put water in proper proportion so the rice is neither overcooked nor it is watery. After giving her instructions she went to bathroom. After sometime the girl had a feeling that she had not put enough water and the rice was getting spoiled. What to do now? Meanwhile Ma returned and realised the problem. She immediately lifted the vessel, full of rice, with both hands and shook effectively before putting the lid. Now the rice was nicely cooked.

That was how she taught?

Wherever She stayed, Ma went for rounds of the premises without notice. Once, during such rounds, She happened to find a place, the venue of Akhand Naam Kirtan, not properly cleaned. She herself wiped the dust on the pictures of Gods and Goddesses and then with the help of Her wrapper Ma dusted the venue. She herself did it while Didi implored Her for pardon. But Ma continued until She had finished Her work perfectly.

Omniscient Ma pointed out such errors in Her uncanny manner. Once, before Ma's imminent visit, an ashram lady cleaned the entire premises and asked the waste to be left at a remote corner Ma was not likely to visit. But as it happened, while talking to a guest, she strolled to that very point.

Ma had a knack of delegating work to the right person at the right moment. With unlimited resources and no scarcity of sincere devoted workers in Her

majestic domain it was for the welfare of the person whom She delegated the particular

work. He considered himself fortunate to get the chance to serve Ma who was above any wishes and desires.

Those who have listened to Ma's words must have felt its impact. It is difficult to describe or analyse. Someone asked Her what should the human being do? Quick came the reply. He should try to recognise himself".

Why do people wait so impatiently to hear Ma? Her words are neither the wizardry of *pandits* nor logical analysis, as She says. But the beauty of Her words can best be understood by those who have listened. Her words touched the core of one's heart leaving a lasting impression of love and joy.

In course of Her everyday talks, with smiling suggestions and parables, She expressed ideas and thoughts about life and religion.

Sri Ma at times turned serious, strong and reserved. Sometimes totally unconcerned with even grave happenings. The next moment She was again a compassionate loving mother. She would enjoy and laugh at trivial matters.

Sri Ma chose the tiny incidents of everyday life as vehicles to express lofty truths and principles of human conduct. Once someone asked Her should someone who was cheated by his partner in business move to courts or accept it as it is?

Ma replied, "You can guess if you do not give him the reply he would continue to cheat you."

There was a greater dimension to Ma's reply, who cheated whom ?

Is he not playing in different forms ? What we did not get, was not ours."

"Further, he (thief) can be tackled in a different manner too. One thief stole something from a seer's hut. As he was pushing away with the booty, the saint returned and ran after the thief calling him, saying there was still something left in his hut which could be useful for the thief." The thief no longer escaped. He fell at sadhu's feet in reverence. There is a another way of punishing the guilty. but does that come in our area of work?

Ma recounted another incident—

"Once a devotee of Sri Krishna was in great ecstatic mood. Unknowingly, he stepped on the clothes, cleaned by a laundryman. The man shouted "Are you blind? and ran after him. About that time Sri Krishna, who was having his meals suddenly left asking Rukmini to return after sometime. But Sri Krishna returned soon there after.

When Rukmini asked him the reason for His return so soon Sri Krishna recounted about the devotee's incident and said He rushed to save the devotee but

when He saw the devotee had himself picked up a stone to defend himself, He preferred not to interfere.

In another way it can be said, someone was calling bad names to one saint. The devotee saw that former was doing a grave mistake so he softly slapped him to neutralise the former's sin.

And lastly, had the person who has cheated you been your brother, would you have called it a betrayal ? Will you call the theft of your own thing as stealing ? Is this not all the same ? Who will punish whom ? Now, you do whatever you deem fit "

The singlemost goal of every religion is to reach God, says Ma, who has never suggested anyone to change his religion. She has always supported and helped the religious minded persons to carry on their *sadhana* irrespective of their religion. She has never uprooted someone's roots and replanting for attainment. With times the changes occur slowly and steadily that even the aspirant could not guess about it. It all depends on our alertness to understand Ma. If someone is capable of visualising everything as God he can achieve it even if he is a family man. The service to God should be without pride and prejudice, with no desire, says Ma.

Ma further says, "To reach God, one can take the path of japa and meditation or through logic and philosophy. All the paths reach to the same place. In monotheism aspirants start with saying as He is not this, not this, and they discard and discard ultimately when he gets enlightened then the multifaceted world is no more before him, one Supreme Bliss is there. At this stage there is only one and one, alone. Thus it is said "There is only one Brahman and nothing else. At that stage of ignorance what was set aside as not this, not this is now profused with Joy and becomes an Enlightened spiritual body. What is this spiritual body? The awakened body—awareness of the fact that what-so-ever you see in the world is He alone in different forms. This observation or attainment is different from the worldly ways look, where the things look different. The diversified world looks a Unitary one, "Brahma is one." So, one in infinite and infinite in one can be achieved. Therefore what is present in the universe seems to be present in self, and self in the whole universe. So at this stage there is nothing to get rid off. Dualism or monotheism or say *leela* everything lies here. This is the accomplished stage. Pointing to this stage it is said—Now here exists 'He Alone'".

Ma used to solve doubts in a unique manner. Depending on the spiritual maturity She gave different answers, suggested different ways, sometime privately occasionally before a full audience. Question of one, solved problems of many. It is reported that when someone asked Her about such doubts Ma either laughed it

away at times or continue to speak on something else. Meanwhile, the questioner would get the reply through the courtesy of Ma's subtle entity.

One gentleman once asked Her, "Ma, I have a query. I am repeating within myself, guess it." Ma smiled and said, "I am also giving you the reply, guess it yourself." While going back, he offered obeisance before Ma and left.

Next morning the gentleman was back at the threshold of Ma's room, tears jerking out of his eyes. Ma asked him what happened? He said, "I have a splendid experience."

When Daya Mata, disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda came to Ma and sat there in silence, she had a telepathic communion with Ma without speaking a single word. Later Daya Mata has written about this experience.

Once, another gentleman asked Her: "Should I go home?"

"Yes, try to go to your real home. This home is unstable, Pitaji, make it an inn, will you?"

Ma spoke about the supreme spiritual truth and the fathomless spiritual goal in a few words. Volumes can be written about the annotations on these plain and simple words of Ma.

Ma Herself is the reflection of the Vedas, Upanishads and the Puranas. She was the boundless ocean of knowledge and wisdom, who knew when a devotee will be able to accept and understand Her.

On another occasion, Ma said, "Keep a sugar cube in your mouth all the time, it means repeating God's name, praying to Him. You don't have to go anywhere for this. Call Him by any name you like, at each and every moment, in all situations. Purify your self with prayer, you will get knowledge and wisdom. The Ganges of Knowledge purifies everything".

"Do satsang, it opens the path to spirituality." Ma, further explained, "we do not concentrate on main subject. Instead we run after unimportant things in life. Have you heard the story of a cat?" In a witty style Ma told the story—

"A cat lived in a house where during puja days (Durga puja) she was kept tied so that she may not spoil anything. However, the cat was given food as usual at right time. After some years, the cat left the place. But people in that home thought, that perhaps it was a tradition to keep a cat tied during the Durga puja days, so they got another cat and tied her during those puja days."

Ma said, "Many times we also do similar mistakes. Rules are made out of necessity. Even after the purpose is over, the rule remains."

Ma narrated an incident on the glory of satsang. One mahatma visited a kingdom. The King received him with utmost respect. He washed the mahatma's

feet and then arranged for his alms. Mahatma asked the King do you hold satsang here?" "No Maharaj," the King said, "We do not do satsang." The moment he heard this, the Mahatma decided to leave the place without taking his alms. Raja implored him to accept the alms, but the mahatma would not relent. The Princess of that Kingdom was an intelligent girl. She fell at mahatma's feet and exhorted the same request. The mahatma did not listen to her too. As he walked out of the gate, the Princess, accompanied him and again fell at his feet. The Princess said, 'She had heard that if one walks seven steps with another person, they become companions. Though we had not organised satsang so far but now I have, come with you so far. Your company is also satsang for me. Now you must accept the alms. The mahatma was delighted. He returned, accepted the meal and blessed all those present.

Once at Naimisharanya Ma was arranging a fruit basket to be sent to Kashi. A piece of paper, from a sweetmeat box was lying nearby. She picked up the paper and placed it in the basket, saying, this will also get a chance to visit the holy city. Ma actually showed that everything was God.

"The integrity of one's character is his religion. There are ways to attain it. *Nāām Jap*, religious discussion, reading of scriptures, satsang and kirtan, meditation and pujas—they are all various means to control one's mind and soul." Ma insisted on determination in all endeavours. "This much time will be spared for such work if not complete, next day it has to be accomplished. Endeavours pave the way for pure mind and attitude."

"To have pure mind and attitude, one must take one course, unitarian or diversified course, ultimately everything blends into one whole, all this is feeling of Brahma."

"A man, leading a family life also, gets various chances for sadhana. At home, the child is Gopal, the husband is the '*Parampati*' and the wife Laxmi'. The home where all family members worship turns into a heaven. After a certain age, let the couple spend the rest of their lives as *Vānaprasthees* and devote to spiritual meditation."

Ma has suggested to a householder that the lives of ancient sages and their wives be taken as ideal example. "Brahmacharya opens the path to *Brahmavidyā*".

[Continued]

OUR VISITS TO MA IN BOMBAY AND POONA

— Shraddha Davenport

15th December, 1978

Returning from Morvi we had lunch at Rajkot, then caught the 3:30 p.m. flight to Bombay. On Juhu Beach we got a nice hotel room with a pleasing view of the Arabian Sea, where palm trees grew along the white sandy beach. It was December fifteenth, but the heat and humidity were very oppressive to us. We were most appreciative of our air-conditioned room and slept soundly that night.

Darshan was scheduled for the following evening after Mother's arrival at the home of B.K. Shah. We enjoyed a late midday meal then took a taxi to B.K. Shah's residence. In the rear of that beautiful home a platform had been erected on the lawn. Mother was seated there and everyone could easily see Her. I got to stand quite near Mother for a long time. It was a very relaxed and comfortable setting. Following the darshan we pronamed and Mother went into a little cottage situated at the edge of lawn. Flowers and plants gracefully lined the path to the entrance. That cottage has been constructed by the Shah family for Mother's use, when She was in Bombay.

We visited with some people there for a while, then went to our hotel and got to bed by 1:00 a.m. It had been a lovely day and we would have one more evening with Mother in Bombay before going to Poona.

The next day was spent visiting with friends and devotees. Then at the allotted time we eagerly went to see Mother. The mood was light and once again my heart was appeased by Her presence. Satya and I stood by a lovely old tree near where Mother sat. She looked absolutely beautiful. We were relieved to find Her appearing to be in better health. She sat with us for about one-and-a-half hour as everyone had the opportunity to do pronam. That singular joy which Mother radiates was poured out in abundance. How could any of us willingly leave? Only when She retired to Her little cottage did we slowly move away from that peaceful garden.

Mother was going by car to Poona the next day and we also made arrangements to hire a taxi for that trip. According to a hint which we had received, Mother would most likely return to Bhimpura after going to Poona. We prayed to be with Mother wherever She might go, but Bhimpura was such a special place that we could not

resist hoping to follow Her there. Based on that cue we went to the hotel travel agent and put in a request for two seats on Indian Airlines to Baroda for Sunday, December twenty-fourth or, as second choice, Saturday, December twenty-third.

Our taxi driver was a very nice man who spoke English, did not smoke, and directed our attention to many beautiful spots along the way. The halfway point was a rest stop next to a clear mountain stream where local residents washed their clothes and children played. The water glistened in the sun as it splashed over rocks of all sizes along the river's winding path. Cars and trucks were parked along both sides of the road cooling their motors.

Before leaving Bombay we had purchased some fruit. It made a perfect light meal as we travelled. We each drank a cola and enjoyed watching the scene. From that point we climbed higher and higher up the mountain road leading to Poona. On one occasion our driver pulled off the road so that we could photograph the Rajmachi Waterfalls near Khandala village.

By 4:30 p.m. we arrived at Morvi House, the Maharani's lovely house in Poona. We were given an upper room with adjacent deck overlooking the well-kept gardens and lawn. Poona is a hill station and resort area due to its marvellous climate. The clean cool air was invigorating. This was our first visit to Poona and we were delighted to be there. Madhavananda and Jean Claude, who had made the trip by train, were there ahead of us. After a quick bath we four hired rickshaws to take us to Mother's ashram. Morvi House was some distance from the ashram, but the ride was very pleasant.

When we arrived we found the ashram to be very beautiful, so clean and nicely laid out. Chitra was standing near the front of the building and she looked wonderful. I was most happy to see her again after two years. She sent us into the satsang hall to see Mother and said that we could talk after darshan.

Mother was reclining with Her head near where Didi Gurupriya was sitting. Chitra sat by Mother's feet. The feeling was like days when first we came to Mother, very high and intoxicating. When Mother stood, we all prostrated and watched as She left the building. Near where Mother had been sitting was the shrine of the most beautiful Sri Krishna. I had seen photographs of that *murti* and always wished to see Him "in person." We prostrated, then stood gazing at Him for some time.

Outside, Nanduben, Raju's aunt, who was in charge of that ashram, called us to take *chai*. As we sat in the lovely courtyard enjoying the tea Chitra chatted with us for a few minutes. She told us to come in the morning at 9:00 a.m. when she would have time to visit with us.

That night Satya got no sleep due to an upset stomach; so he did not feel like going out the next morning. I gave him medication before leaving. I walked down the driveway to the gate of Morvi House wondering how I would find a rickshaw in that residential area. When I reached the gate a rickshaw suddenly appeared and I was quickly on my way.

At the ashram I was able to have a nice visit with Chitra. She had gifts for our Gopal, for us, and some things to be taken for others in America, I told her about a few letters which I wished her to read before Mother, then note Mother's replies for devotees in California. She said that she would do that in Bhimpura. I also requested a pair of Mother's chappals for our friend Chaitanya.

Chitra had to go and take her breakfast, so I walked to the road, got a rickshaw, and returned to Morvi House. Satya was feeling much better and we had tea and toast together. After a little more rest he felt able to go for darshan.

When we arrived at the ashram Chitra was outside and we spoke with her for a few minutes. She said that she had mentioned to Bhaskaranandaji our wish to follow Mother to Bhimpura. He said that it was not yet decided and that he would ask Mother. Shortly after that we saw him and went to ask what Mother had said. Before we could say anything he answered our question. He told us that in Bombay Mother had said that no one could go, then in Poona he had asked Her again. Because we would be leaving in the first week of January, Mother said that we could come. That was a great relief, for otherwise, we would have lost our last two weeks with Her. We saw Chitra a few minutes later and told her our good news. She was smiling.

Didi Gurupriya had been quite ill and was resting in a room of the building next to Mother's house. Mother came out of Her house and we all followed as She walked down the path and across the patio to Didi's room. We waited at a little distance until Mother came out and again we followed Her as She walked to the satsang hall.

There were more people in the hall that evening than had been there the night before. Everyone was going up to pronam before Mother and it was not possible to see Her while seated on floor. We moved outside on the porch and stood at the tall open window facing toward Mother. We could look in and see Her easily. Actually we were only about two feet further back than we had been when seated inside, and the cool air felt good. Mother looked radiant and appeared to be feeling better. She sat with us for over an hour, then threw prasad to the devotees as She used to do in years past. Everyone was laughing and happy. After that playful moment Mother went into the Krishna Mandir where puja was done. We all received the blessing of

the flame, then one lady placed the *deepak* (flame) in Satya's hand and he passed it among the others who were standing outside. When Mother retired to Her room we left the ashram and went to eat before returning to Morvi House.

Chitra had asked us to come at 10:00 a.m. the next day to take pictures of some of the girls. It was so nice just to be at that ashram and everyone seemed to have the same feeling about it. I took photos of several girls, then Mother came out and went to the long porch of an ashram building where a twenty-four-hour reading of the Ramayana was being done.

Mother was issuing some unusual instructions and we watched as She rearranged the seating of everyone there. First She had one rug that was in front of Her asana folded lengthwise. Then She called for Satya, Melita, and me to come and sit in a line upon that rug, in front of the steps. She pointed for me to sit on the corner. Two other men also sat on the rug. Mother made the ladies there sit upon the bare floor by Her left side. People doing pronam and arati had to line up on the steps. They could not go in front as She had placed us where we blocked their way. Mother motioned for us to scoot forward a little. I got to move as She had indicated and Satya did too. Mother said, in English, "Sit down." She said it so sweetly and everyone laughed.

Mother was so incredibly beautiful that morning as She sat with us. We were blessed with Her presence for a long darshan and received several special looks from those wonderful eyes. Even when She was looking directly *at me* I always found it difficult to believe that She was actually *looking at me*. Perhaps it is because I am completely transparent to Her. Mother stood smiling at all of us and we pronamed. Then She left the porch and went to Her house.

One of the men who had also been on the rug took us aside and related the story behind Mother's play with the seating arrangement. His Name was Mr. Cama. He said that some time back when Mother had come to Poona for a Bhagavat Saptaha the devotees made him sit outside because he was a Parsi. Each day the weather got colder, then one day he did not come. Mother asked why and someone sent word for him to come. Mother asked him why he had not been there that day. He explained to Mother that he was not Hindu and the people did not want him to come inside. He said he did not mind that but it had just gotten too cold outside.

Mother asked the people why they treated him that way when he had been the Secretary of that ashram for twenty years. Then She made a special seat for him at Her feet and told others to sit back. Mother said that from that time on, in the Poona ashram, there would be a special seat for him and any others. How fortunate we

were to share the blessing of Mother's gracious concern for Camaji. Chitra brought prasad for us, and Sri Krishnaji's pujari also gave us prasad from that sweet Lord.

Another delightful surprise awaited us. We were invited to take our meal at the ashram where a sumptuous bhandara had been prepared. We sat on the patio and Raju kept us company as we ate. Then we went by rickshaw to our quarters and prepared for evening darshan.

When we returned to the ashram Chitra was busy and unable to talk with us before darshan. Bhaskaranandaji gave us the official news that Mother had granted permission for us to go with Her to Bhimpura. Melita was also given that privilege. We were very relieved and thanked Bhaskaranandaji for putting forth our earnest plea to Mother.

News had reached the ashram that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had been arrested. Riots had sprung up all over India. Two buses were burned and an airplane from Calcutta had been hi-jacked. Mother's departure from Poona was set for December twenty-first, but She was being requested to wait one more day due to the unrest.

Mr. Cama told another story to us in connection with his relationship with Mother. At some past time, when he and his wife were at one of Mother's ashrams, some of the devotees would not let him come in when food was being served. Dr. Triguna Sen came and told him that those in charge in meals requested him and his wife to take their food in their tent. Mr. Cama said that was no problem, and it was being done that way. Mother saw it and asked them why they were eating in their tent. They explained what had happened and told them to come to Her kitchen. They were fed from Mother's plate as those same devotees stood in the door watching rushed in and started eating what was left of Mother's prasad.

Dr. Sen laughed and said to Camaji, "See, how Mother's lila is. First they did not want to eat in the same room with you and now they are eating your leftovers. "Oh how She plays with all of us ? None can escape Her mystical game that may just as easily cast us on one side as the other. Nothing in life has captivated me so completely nor caused me more joy as even in deep despair I hear Her laughter, beneath the muffling veil, echoing, "I can play with you any way that I like !"

We stood at the long windows on the porch again that night, at peace to be with Mother in such an intimate setting. She was very animated and I taped some of the beautiful kirtan that surrounded Her. After the darshan She sat in the Krishna Mandir during the puja. When She came out Her eyes rested upon both of us as She stood for a brief moment. We pronounced, then She slowly left the hall. We walked to the street, hired a rickshaw, and returned to Morvi House for the night.

By 10:00 a.m. we were again at the ashram. Chitra said that Mother would not leave until the next day, December twenty-second. We would have time to arrange for a taxi, get our laundry back from the dhobi (laundry man), and pack our things for the drive to Bombay the following morning.

The Desjardins family from France had arrived that day to see Mother. Their daughter had recently married and the young couple were there for Mother's blessing. Denise (Mrs. Desjardins) had a most beautiful relationship with Mother and has written her story in French.

Mother came to the satsang hall and was joined there by an aged Baba whom we were told was over one hundred years old. Mother had a seat prepared for him near Her. Devotees went up to pronam in a very orderly fashion, and when the newlyweds bowed Mother She placed a large garland over their two heads together. After almost everyone else had pronamed at Mother's feet, Satya and I approached Her. As I was on my knees in front of Her She asked, "Accha ?" I said, "Accha thik hai Ma !" Then I bowed in pronam. As I raised my eyes to Her face, She was smiling and I softly said, "I love you." And She nodded at me.

When Mother left the hall, She walked to Didi Gurupriya's room and then to Her cottage. We watched until She went through the door into Her room.

After having lunch we prepared to return for our last evening in Poona. It was 5:30 p.m. when we returned and found Mother seated in a chair just outside Her door. Her little feet did not touch the ground and She gently swung them like a small child would do. A car pulled up to Her gate and She was escorted to it. After She took Her seat, the car drove out of the grounds and did not return with Her until an hour later.

We sat on the steps to wait for Her. I told Satya that it was strange but that I was suddenly hungry. At that moment Raju walked to where we sat and asked if we would like to have some *khir*. He took us to rear of the building and gave each of us a leaf cup full of delicious *khir*. I was especially good.

Mother returned, and after going to see Didi went into the satsang hall. We had two wonderful hours with Her. She looked at us in a very loving way as we stood at the tall windows facing Her. She looked at us so often that a lady seated just inside the window turned toward me, smiled, and commented that Mother was always looking at me. The pujari did arati to Mother as She sat receiving pronams. The kirtan was beautiful and the environment was so high that we did not want to leave. We would have been pleased if Mother had stayed in Poona for the remaining fifteen days of our trip, but that was not her kheyal.

[To continue]