

# MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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## MATRI VANI

No two days pass alike. do not allow yourself to be overpowered by despair. Have complete trust in Him inspite of everything — to Him you should call out, whether surroundings make it easy or not. If you have fallen to the ground, use it as a spring-board to raise yourself up again, for it is man's duty to exert himself, no matter what he undertakes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Misfortune must not be looked upon as a disaster : it would be a sin to do so, for who sends the misfortune ? What He does is all-beneficial. Under no circumstances, however adverse, should man accept defeat.

"Gurudeva, you do only what is for my real well-being," keep this thought ever with you. In this world there are bound to be all sorts of troubles. If you have lost wealth and position, let them be gone. Pray to God only for the lives of your family.

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At all times let patience be your stronghold. Say to yourself. "Lord, everything Thou doest is for the highest good !" Pray for the power of endurance. Nothing happens that is not an expression of God's Grace : Verily, all is His Grace.

Anchored in patience, bearing everything, abide by His Name and live joyously.

\* \* \* \* \*

What else can be expected from this world, whose very nature is constant flux; times are never the same. To live in time is to be bound by it—by death\* . If you do not rise above time, how can you escape the clutches of death ? Had time not swallowed up the moment that brought you such acute distress and agony, would any life be left in your body ? This is the way of the world. What you have experienced, continually happens to every family in one form or another. Console yourself with the thought that this is how the world is fashioned.

When one resides in a country not one's own, how can one possibly evade the hardships that are a foreigner's lot ? Your motherland is where there is no question

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\* Here Mother plays upon words. *Kāla* means both 'time' and 'death'.

of distress and sorrow, of violence and hatred, of alienism, neither of the opposites of light and darkness.

The endeavour to find Himself in his real home, in his true nature, is the sole duty of man. Courage and steadiness is what is required.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is the will of the Almighty that prevails at all times, such verily is the law of creation. 'World' means a ceaseless round of sorrow, temporary happiness and affliction : to experience this, man is born. Do you not see that the world is nothing but in infinite variety ?

For him who has set out on this life's last journey with the name *Durga* on his lips, there should be no grief, no tears; at any rate do your utmost. If weep you must, weep for God. Fortunate is he who breathes his last pronouncing God's Name. One must strive to keep one's mind ever concentrated on His Feet. Pray for the Guru's Grace and constantly remember His Lotus Feet.

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Such is the nature of the world. Girded with fortitude like a hero you must try to calm yourself. There simply is no hope of peace save in the contemplation of God. Let this be your firm conviction. It is man's duty under all circumstances to seek refuge in Him, by virtue of whose Law all things are wrought. Not to wail or pine for the physical presence of the departed should be your sole effort. This is a journey which everyone without exception has to take and it is necessary for each one to provide himself for the way. Those who have been received into His arms should be abandoned entirely to His care.

Regard as the Supreme Being whomsoever you serve. Rely on Him absolutely.



**PAGES FROM**  
**"MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG"**

*by*

**Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta**

**[Continued from before]**

**July 28, 1949, Varanasi Ashram**

This morning, while discussing some topics, Prof. Sudhir Gopal Mukherji asked : 'Ma, I am eager to hear how exactly the first manifestation of Guru-power took place within you.'

Mataji (laughing) : First of all let me tell you : this body is exactly the same now as it was in childhood. There is no such thing as an initial or a subsequent stage for this body. I am saying this while sitting on the bank of the holy Ganga : (Everybody laughs heartily). Nevertheless, a play of *sadhana* did take place for this body : for some time it assumed the role of a sadhaka and all the conditions and stages that are undergone by a sadhaka were fully manifested in this body.

"Do I not repeatedly say : "I must now go and see how Nani\* is ? Am I not aware of her condition while sitting here that I have to go to see her ? But although knowing fully well how she is, I do go again and again to see her; my *sadhana* also took place in a somewhat similar fashion."

Sudhir Gopal : We are very keen to hear from you how your *sadhana* started and how your initiation took place in due course.

Mataji : This body's father was very fond of singing *kirtana* and religious songs. They included songs of various religious sects, such as *Sāktas*, *Vaisnavas*, etc. He slept very little and usually spent his nights singing devotional songs. When this body was about four or five years old it asked him one day : "Baba, what is the purpose of singing the name of Hari ?" He replied : "By calling out to Hari one comes to see Him." I again asked : "Is Hari very big to look at ?" He replied : "Yes, very big." "Is He as big as this field here in front of us ?" "Much, much bigger. Why don't you call Him, then you will be able to see for yourself how great He is."

"This was how I began to sing His Name. But right in earnest the repetition of the Name commenced when Bholanath took me to Astagram after our marriage. In

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\*. Nani was the wife of Sri Sudhir Chakravarti. She had come on a visit from Calcutta and fallen ill.

the house where we stayed there was another person who was Bholanath's friend. Although I was always heavily veiled, he used to address me as "Ma". He let us occupy the room in which his own mother had breathed her last."

"In early childhood I had been taught by this body's mother to take great care of the tulasi plant. So on arrival in Astagram I prepared a *tulasi mancha*\* in the courtyard. Daily I used to place flowers and lights there in such a way that people would come and perform their *pranams* reverently at the *mancha*. It was due to this *mancha* that preparations for holding a *kirtan* in front of it were made subsequently."

"When the *kirtan* started I was engaged in nursing a patient. But on listening to this *kirtan* for some time, I fell down as if in a faint. In this condition there was no longer any question of modesty or *purdah*. Before this I used to veil myself heavily and conduct myself with the utmost propriety."

"On seeing my condition everybody thought I had a fit. They raised me up and sprinkled water on my eyes and face. Just as perspiration trickles down a human body in an incessant stream, so blissful ecstasy (*ananda*) oozed out of every pore of this body. It appeared as if I had become one with the *kirtan*."

"But if people become immersed in ecstatic emotion while singing *kirtan*, this is of a different nature because it is connected with *kriyā* (action) and hence there is a touch of worldliness about it. But this body's condition was not due to any *kriyā*. So worldliness was entirely excluded in this case. Furthermore, the experience of *ananda* was somewhat different ... of its own right."

"After my being in such a state of *bhāva* \* during the *kirtan*, the singing of the name of Hari was continued regularly, whereas previously this used to take place only occasionally, not according to a fixed routine."

At this point of conversation, Sri Sri Ma was being called for Her meal. So we performed our *pranama* and stood up to go. It was decided to continue this discussion in the evening.

At about 5 p. m. I went to the Ashram. Ma had not yet descended, but a little later She came downstairs and sat down in the courtyard. Sudhir Babu, raising the topic of the morning, said : "The reason for asking questions regarding Ma's *dikshā* is that among us Hindus there is a tradition that without a Guru no religious practice can be started. But exceptions can be seen in the cases of Sri Aurobindo and yourself. Although Sri Aurobindo did in fact resort to a Guru to start with, he

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\* . Tulasi Mancha : A raised platform with a tulasi plant in the centre.

\*. *Bhāva* : Spiritual ecstasy, *Bhāvas* usually occur in elevated stages of the path of *bhakti*.

progressed far beyond the Guru to a much higher state of achievement. He himself said that he reached this state only by total surrender to God. He further declared that if someone is really deeply anxious to receive the grace of God, then it is not difficult to obtain It. Therefore, even if the Guru is not fully enlightened, this need not prove an obstacle. On the other hand, even if the Guru is fully enlightened, but the disciple has not the right foundation, or is unable to surrender entirely to God, then the Guru cannot provide substantial assistance though his own knowledge be complete."

Mataji : Well, do you think that as soon as you depend entirely and with your whole being on God, his grace starts functioning in you, or do you say it is due to the Lord's grace that you are able to surrender to Him completely ? I pose the question : When the earth is struck with a crowbar and the crowbar penetrates into the earth, is it due to the force of the blow or because the earth yields a path to the penetration of the crowbar ?

Sudhir Gopal : It is difficult to say which comes first and which afterwards. It seems that both occur simultaneously.

"In any case, apart from Sri Aurobindo, in your case also there was no sign of any Guru. This is why I wished to ascertain whether your spiritual progress was due to taking on a Guru or did it come about without any Guru whatsoever ? Would you please continue from where you left off in the morning, when you said that during *kirtan* your body would fall unconscious."

Mataji : Yes, after that incident this used to recur off and on.

"Near the place we lived there was a house belonging to a family of carpenters. They used to build boats. During the day they worked hard, but after sunset they would sing *kirtan*. Although their house was invisible because of a bamboo-grove, yet the sound of the *kirtan* reached my ears. Whenever it was heard, this body would react sharply. Later it came to pass that whenever I merely glanced in the direction of that house, everything seemed to brim over with Supreme Bliss. "

"There was a little boy in the carpenter's house who used to come to me. Whenever I asked him to sing *kirtan* he would dance and sing simultaneously. This body had the *kheyāla* to make him dance while he was singing. When doing so he used to go into a *bhāva*. When his mother saw this *bhāva* she got frightened and told me : "He is still a child, please to not make him dance when he sings Hari's name". Since his mother objected to it, the boy was no longer asked to dance. But whenever he met me he would shout loudly : "*Hari bol, Govinda bol.*"



"Anyway this body continued to become immersed in *bhāva* when hearing *kirtans* at various places. At first efforts were made to keep this controlled. But even these efforts were of short duration; because when the flood of *bhāva* was really roused, then all efforts to suppress this were of no avail. The fact that I had these *bhāvas* during *kirtan* was a source of amusement to some people. I would make light of their criticism by appearing to join into their amusement. For this reason nobody tried to stop these *bhāvas* during *kirtan*. In fact, with the exception of Bholanath, people were hardly aware of what was taking place. Moreover, I also at that time had the *kheyāla* that my *bhāvas* should remain hidden as far as possible from the outside world."

"Subsequently, an accomplished singer named Gagan Kirtania came with his party to perform *kirtan*. It was arranged that after the *kirtan* they would have a meal before departing. Thus various dishes had been prepared for them in advance. When the *kirtan* started I beheld two boys of tender age dancing in the midst of the *kirtan*. The amusing thing was that this body also took on the role of a child and assumed the restless behaviour of a child. It repeatedly ran to the kitchen to see whether the food was all right, and again ran hurriedly to the place of the *kirtan*. In this manner this body was hastening hither and thither. Although the chief objective of all this moving to and fro was to make sure whether the food was all right, yet there was no real precaution taken to see that the food was indeed safe."

"A wooden couch had been placed near the *kirtan* for us to sit upon. This body would sit on the couch and time and again hurry to the kitchen like a small child. In the course of all this nobody noticed when exactly this body came to lie motionless on the couch. When the *kirtan* ended and it was time for the singers to be fed, it was discovered that a dog had entered the kitchen and spoiled everything that had been cooked. On seeing this, Bholanath became furious and started looking for me. After searching he found me lying unconscious on the couch. On calling out to me he realized that I was indeed senseless. On whom could he then vent his anger? In the meantime the people next door quickly cooked fresh *khitchri* and other things and somehow fed the singers. But I remained unconscious during the whole night. When I did not come to my sense even the next day, Bholanath called the singers together and resumed the *kirtan*. When the *kirtan* had been continued up to 3 p. m. my consciousness returned.

From this time onwards people would look upon this body's *bhāva* as a case of hysteria. Bholanath duly wrote to the parents of this body. They also became anxious on hearing the news. But this body's mother did not come to see me. She felt that if these *bhāvas* were a help on the spiritual path, why should she take a

wrong step in being an impediment to it ? Thus pondering over the matter she did not visit me even after learning of my so-called problem.

Later on, when coming to Bajitpur after leaving Vidyakut, (of course quite a lot is being omitted that happened in between) then also this sort of *bhāva* occurred again and again. Bholanath always used to take precaution to keep this secret from neighbours. When *kirtan* was sung I was not allowed to go outside. The doors of the small room in which I was staying were kept shut. I used to roll along the floor of that room. However, in spite of all precautions, a rumour spread that "Ramani Babu's (Bholanath's) wife had been dancing during *kirtan* with a drum on her shoulder !"

"Just at about this time the Guru of the local Sub-Registrar's mother arrived. He was a worshipper of *sakti* and used to wear bright red robes. On being told of my condition he expressed the wish to see me. So Bholanath took me to his residence. There I was made to sit beside an image of the Siva. Since arriving at Bajitpur this body used to regularly repeat the Name while sitting in a yogic posture. At such times various *bhāvas* used to pass through this body. For instance, suppose I was seated repeating the Name, I would spontaneously start to spin round, still locked in a yogic *asana*. So, when being made to sit near the Siva linga, this body automatically assumed yogic postures and spun round once or twice. The Guru observed this. Thereupon he kept on sending me messages through others to the effect that he was a *Siddha Purusa* (realized soul) and, if I so desired, could be instrumental in communicating to me the direct vision of God. I merely listened to all these messages."

"During his next visit to the house of his disciple, he told Bholanath that he wished to perform a *puja* in our house. When I heard of this, I pointed out to Bholanath that if the Guru was coming to perform a *puja*, he should also be offered a meal. Bholanath thought this very appropriate. So he invited the Guru to a meal and made all necessary arrangements. But owing to his work in the Court he could not remain at home during the visit. As Bholanath was leaving for the Court, I asked him : "I am remaining alone here, what should I do when the Guru comes ?" Bholanath replied : "What can you do ? Give him what he asks for and do as he tells you." Although this body was a very young housewife, yet Bholanath never felt any qualms in leaving me alone. Even when going on tour to the district, he never arranged for anyone to stay with me. For this reason people used to speak ill of him, but Bholanath had seen enough of me to realize that this body was fully capable of taking care of itself."

"So in due course, after Bholanath's departure, the Guru arrived. I had previously kept ready everything that was necessary for his *puja*. So he started on his worship, and I was busy cooking the food. At the conclusion of his *puja* he called me. I veiled myself and came and stood in front of him. He asked me to sit on the *asana* of the *puja*. I complied as I had been told by Bholanath to do as the Guru requested. When I was seated on the *asana*, he asked me to perform the *āchaman*.<sup>\*</sup> As this body was not in the habit of doing *puja* or any other ritual, I asked him how exactly I was to perform *āchaman*. He sat on his stool and showed me with his hands how to do it. Now it so happened that as soon as this body was seated on the seat for *puja*, its behaviour suddenly changed completely. The correct posture for *puja* was automatically assumed. There was then no question of shyness or modesty. My hands also started performing certain *kriyās*. On beholding all this the Guru became frightened and at once asked me to get up from the *asana*. This is why it is said that if something is genuine, there is nothing to be afraid of. Even if you fling it into flames, it will not burn; even if you throw it to the tiger, he will not be able to swallow it. However this may be, just then Bholanath returned and the Guru after having his meal, departed."

On his next visit to the town he again wanted to see me, so Bholanath brought him to me. He started talking of various subjects, including how he had attained to perfection by worshipping the Goddess Bagalā<sup>\*</sup> and another deity as well. Now it can often be seen that when one is based on Truth, the power of Truth automatically manifests. This is what happened on this occasion. As soon as he mentioned that he had achieved "*Bagalā Siddhi*" this body retorted with extreme vehemence : "What ? You have attained to *Bagalā Siddhi* ? This is a complete lie !" Thereafter, the actual facts of how he had gone wrong in his efforts on each and every occasion were loudly divulged through this body's mouth. On hearing all this the Guru became bewildered. Bholanath kept on asking me to keep quiet. For fear that someone might hear what I was saying he shut the doors. But what was the use of crying : 'Shut up ! Shut up !' Whatever is meant to happen through this body is bound to come about. Bholanath had on previous occasions tried many times to stop me by force, but to no avail. So then the Guru was compelled to confess to this body that he had not got any *Bagalā Siddhi* or any other *siddhi*, but he wanted to know from

\*. *Āchaman* : Preliminary purification with water before performing any ritual.

\*. *Bagalā* : One of the ten *Mahavidyās*, forms of Devi in which She manifested Herself to Siva. *Siddhi* means Realization, fulfilment. Also occult power gained by yogic practise.

this body what he had to do in order to attain to it. The funniest part of the story is that, as soon as he asked this question, this body at once furnished him with the complete details of the *mantras* and methods of worship required by him."

"Just now something else comes to my *kheyāla*, so I shall tell you about it. Quite often nobody was allowed to touch this body. But the reason for this restriction was not understood by people. This was enforced because they did not possess the power to bear it. What happened once ? There was a young man in Bajitpur. he was married, but had no children. This is why his father wanted him to marry again, but the boy had no wish to do so as he wanted to remain with his first wife. When his father continued to press him on the subject, he finally resolved that when I would get up from my *asana* after *puja* he would touch my feet and mentally pray for a son. But at that time it was forbidden to touch my feet. Therefore, after consulting Bholanath, he resolved to offer his mental prayers while touching my feet. So one day as soon as I got up from *puja* he came and touched my feet. He at once fell down unconscious and therefore could not offer the prayers as decided. Hour after hour passed, but he did not return to his senses. Bholanath became frightened. the young man was a Government Treasury employee and Bholanath's friend. When after a long interval he regained consciousness, he said it was impossible to describe the blissful ecstasy in which he had been plunged. Even though he had been unable to pray for a son as planned, yet because it had been in his mind while touching me, he later did have children."

"Previously I mentioned that ever since coming to Bajitpur I had the *kheyāla* to perform *japa* regularly day by day. The room occupied by me was always kept spotlessly clean. Care was taken to see that there was no direct contact between the room and even a single blade of grass outside. In the evening burning incense used to be taken round the room from outside, since it was veritably a temple in which the Name was being recited. But so far no initiation had taken place. Even though every evening I sat down to do *japa* it was nothing else but just "*Hari bol*". Whatever stage this body had already reached at that time had been brought about by virtue of the Name."

"One day Bholanath said to me : "We are *sāktas*\* why do you always repeat "*Hari bol, Hari bol*" ? This is not fitting." I replied : "Then what should I chant ? "*Jai Siva Sankara, Vom Vom, Hara Hara*" ? This body did not know any mantra,

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\*. *Sakta*—Worshipper of sakti.

so whatever came I voiced. Bholanath was satisfied and said : "Yes, just recite this." So from then onwards "*Jai Siva Sankara*" was being recited. But already when repeating "*Hari bol*", this body had spontaneously assumed various yogic postures and this gradually was being intensified. With the repetition of "*Jai Siva Sankara*" it became even more intricate. So many different *asanas* came about of themselves, one after the other—such as *siddhāsana*, *padmāsana*, *gomukhi āsana*, etc. The strange thing was that while repeating the Name there was a sudden change in this body : yogic postures formed spontaneously and then, with an audible sound in the spinal column, this body would straighten out naturally into a completely upright pose. There was no force or compulsion, no uneasiness in this. In such a condition this body could not be moved or bent in any way. It seemed as if this body had been screwed down into this position. Thereafter, the repetition of the Name would cease by itself and some type of getting immersed in His thought (*tanmaya bhāva*) ensued. After some time in this state, the Name would be resumed, the *āsana* would slowly become relaxed and the body would return again to its natural state. Some time passed in this manner. There are many details in this connection that cannot be explained, and even those that can be, will not all be dealt with now."

"So, omitting many things, I shall now speak about the *dikshā*. This body's *dikshā* took place on the night of *Jhulan Purnima*\*. In order to see the *Jhulan* festival, many people had dined early and then gone out. Bholanath had also had his evening meal. A *hookāh* was got ready and given to him. He lay down smoking and watching what I was doing. The care with which I had wiped the floor of the room and then sat down in an *āsana* seemed somewhat unusual to him. But after watching for a while he fell asleep. Here also, the curious thing is that the *yajna* and *puja* that have to be performed during initiation were spontaneously carried out by this body. The *yajna sthali* (vessel) was placed in front ; all the various ingredients necessary for the *puja*, such as flowers, fruits, water, etc. were already there; although not everybody could see them, yet there was no doubt about their actual existence. The *dikshā mantra* emanated from the navel and was pronounced by the tongue. Then the *mantra* was written by the hand on the *yajna* vessel and *puja* and fire sacrifice were duly performed over the *mantra*, that is to say all the rituals prescribed by the *Sāstras* for *dikshā* were duly gone through. Later, when my fingers were moving to count the *japa*, Bholanath woke up and

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\*. The full moon night on August 3rd, 1922.

saw me performing *japa* counting with the fingers. None had taught me how to do it, yet the fingers of their own went through the movements of counting. Bholanath was exceedingly surprised to see all this. But the next day when I went to do *japa* of my own I found everything turning topsyturvy. However, soon this body again entered into the previous state and *japa* came about of itself. This is how this body became initiated."

Sudhir Gopal : The *dikshā mantra* manifested indeed; but did the Guru's manifestation also occur ?

Mataji : Yes, that also happened.

Sudhir Gopal : Was the Guru in clear evidence (*pratyaksa*) ?

Mataji : Yes, that was so.

Sudhir Gopal : Please, describe the Guru a little !

Mataji (smiling) : I always say that during childhood this body's father and mother were the Guru. When marriage was performed my parents told me that the husband was now the Guru. So, after marriage the husband became the Guru. Thereafter, all who exist in the world are this body's Guru. From this point of view I can say that the *Ātmā* is in fact the Guru, in other words, this body is itself this body's Guru. Furthermore, about *puja* I always say that when a particular deity is to be worshipped, this particular deity emerges from this body and after being worshipped disappears again into this body. Thus you can infer something similar in the case of the Guru. In this way I have just explained how at the time of *dikshā* flowers, fruits etc, whatever was needed for the *puja* and the *yajna*, everything came out of this body; so cannot the Guru have also revealed out of this body ? Now you have been told everything that was asked concerning this body's initiation. Do you now understand how the *dikshā* took place ?

Sudhir Gopal : Yest, I have understood.

Mataji : What have you understood ?

Sudhir Gopal : I have understood nothing at all. (Everybody laughs loudly.) I shall ponder over what I have heard and then see. Later, I shall question you again regarding this subject.

Nepal Dada (now Swami Narayanananda Tirtha): When the *mantra* emanated from within you, did you know which deity's *mantra* it was ?

Mataji : No; but immediately on receiving the *mantra* the question arose within me, "Whose *mantra* is it ?" And then quite clearly the reply came from within that it was of such and such a deity. This is why it is said that once a genuine question

arises with urgency from within, it does not take long for it to find a response. But you are not truly receptive. If there is real enquiry, there can be no delay in the answer.

Sudhir Gopal : Kusum Brahmachari says, your *sadhana* was no real *sadhana*, because all the obstacles and difficulties that arise from within us when we set out to practise *sadhana* were non-existent in your case.

Mataji : Why should this be so ? When the play of *sadhana* commenced within this body, did it not live with a good number of people ? This body resided in the midst of Bholanath's large family. Every type of work was performed by this body. But when this body played the role of a *sādhikā*, it assumed every detail necessary for each particular *sadhana*. For instance, marks on the forehead like *tilak\**, *svarupa*, *tripundra*<sup>Φ</sup>, all appeared one by one.

"There was a gentleman in Bajitpur who later became a judge. He also used to give *dikshā*. On being told about my condition he suggested that I should wear a string of beads. In reply I sent a message to ask : "Should the necklace be worn outside or in the mind ?" On hearing this he declared there was no need for me to adopt a string of beads."

"About the *asanas* which formed spontaneously I have already told you previously. Some people spends a lifetime in acquiring the act to perform one such *asana* to perfection. But when this body became a *sadhaka*, it was seen that one *asana* after another was done and each of them to perfection. All your questions have now been replied to."

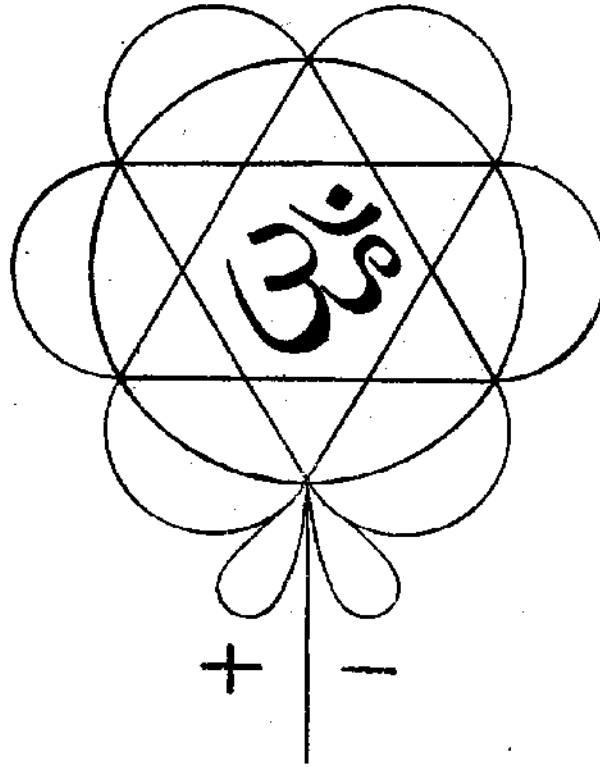
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\*. *Tilak*— Mark on the forehead.

Φ. *Tripundra* — Three curved horizontal marks made on the forehead by the worshippers of Siva and Sakti.

## YANTRAM—WHAT IT MEANS?

—Swami Pratyagatmananda.



*YANTRAM*, in ordinary use, means a mechanism or organ for doing work in an effective, systematised manner with a view to achieving a definite end. Such work, evidently, implies three things : the End, setting the principle or rule of action; the Means, setting the combination and co-ordination of the forces doing the work; and the Method, setting the necessary conditions and practical lines of such actions. In scientific analysis, the first gives formula and equation; the second, diagram and design; the third, *function* according to plan, and in respect to given or assigned conditions. Basically speaking, these three are *Mantram*, *Yantram* and *Tantram* respectively. One may call them Rule, Ruler and Ruling; or Principles of Law, Code and Procedure; and so on. With respect to anything that is or becomes, they answer the three root questions : Why is it so ? What makes it so and how is it so ? Obviously, the three are inter-related. In the word '*YANTRAM*', one should seize upon the root *Yam* (pronounced as *Iyam* and not as *Jam*), note what that root'



means and implies, and correlate it with the root principle (*Vijam*) of *Vayu*, which is also *Yam*. *Vāyu* is cosmic *Prāna* of Elan Vital. It is the Cosmic Fund of both potential and kinetic power as a whole, that is, without abstraction and limitation as material, vital or mental. When this power as a whole operates as a system of Control (*Yam*) as a 'Ruler', with respect to a given end or objective, it is *Yantram*. It is essentially, therefore, a Power disposition and design, not a mere model representation, picture or graph.

It is superficial thinking to look upon the Mystic *Yantram* as symbolic or pictorial. It is dynamic *Śakti-lekhā*. But in the understanding and appreciation there of it is more suitable to begin with the sketch drawing, graph, and so on. But the initial approach should be such as to open up newer and fuller vistas of complete dynamic import and significance.

The Means (*Yantram*) will signify nothing unless we can show it in the context of the entire movement from beginning to end; unless the picture of the event can be exhibited in its entire dynamic set-up. A boat on the river pulled by two ropes in two directions making an angle gives no intelligible meaning of its actual movement unless we are able to resolve the resultant effect into its constituent parallelogram. This instance is typical. Examine an organism, a crystal, a molecule, an atom. Inspect any planned structure in human or natural scheme. The structural design is laid upon a functional plan, and that, again, upon a dynamic scheme or power pattern. It is the last that controls (*Yam*) and rules. What is *this* behind any situation that presents itself, any event that takes place? That is the be-all, end-all of questions. And power, as we have noted, is only abstractedly and segmentally 'physical'.

Nevertheless, it is the analysis of physical science and mathematics that sets the first model and draws the first sketch suggesting the fuller and more basic pictures. We are in quest of fundamental 'ground plan'— the heart and core picture of Power, in other words, of *Hrillekha* (हल्लेखा). In this vital quest, it is possible that one can catch or miss the 'direct home line'. Even systematised, a scientific pursuit has oftener than not strayed off the right track and missed the correct orientation. It has been said that intelligence is a tool-making organ. So there has been no lack of tools, instruments, appliances. They serve a variety of ends and purposes. But of what positive lasting, fulfilling and harmonising value have been most of these?

Are they in affiliation to the 'far-off divine event to which all creation moves' ? Do they even suggest that there may be, all appearance to the contrary notwithstanding, 'a divine purpose and end' at all inspiring the basic scheme of creation ?

The question cannot, particularly at this critical world juncture, be evaded or postponed. Without boldly facing this, we cannot quit the fatal quicksands of mal-adaptation and vicious circle, both subjective and objective, in which we have been caught.

Hence Power (*Śakti*) as a whole has to be understood and appreciated with its appropriate *Mantram*, *Yantram* and *Tantram* in the senses above noted.

We imagine, for instance, that we are now near, if not actually, at the core picture of atleast material being and behaviour. Our equations have, at any rate, a reassuring look of thorough and compact reasonableness. Deceptive is not that look.

But the equations have, in practical application, ominously equivocated and not helpfully equated the basic queries and discrepancies in the appreciation of creation and existence. So, possibly, only a sidedoor to an ante-chamber of what Reality resides in has been opened.

*Yantram*, in its fullest context and co-ordination, must evolve from the First Principles of Creation.

The potency of *Yantram* or Power Diagram, in all relevant dimensions, varies in geometrical ratio (so to say), according to the refinement and purity of the power field composition. Hence what controls the intra-atomic field of energy is enormously more powerful than mechanical, chemical or molecular systems of control.

If by *Prāna* is meant not simply vitality or biological entity, but an all-pervasive cosmic principle of renewing and creative activity, then *Prānik* control ought to be more powerful than atomic. Modern science and modern methods must now essay to make that *Prānik* control available in an increasingly helpful measure. For in such availability lies all hope of harmonised, creative progress. The consummation of such progress can be reached only by opening *Hrillekhā* (हल्लेखा), of things by Yoga where the Spirit reigns as Perfect Power and Perfect Harmony.

Therefore, *Yantram* must be traced from the Magnum Matrix (Perfect Power positing itself as the Perfect *Bindu*), down to our appreciated planes of Magnitude, Number and Space-time. *Yantram* should affiliate all our known and appreciated matrices to the Magnum Matrix and this affiliation necessarily bears the character of a logicomathematical descent.

The diagram looks, apart from the internal scheme of the interlaced triangle, like a flower in partial bloom, with six symmetrical (say, parabolic) petals joined at the stem axis by two others, one at each side of the axis, which are still 'hidden' and unfolded. The two 'hidden' stem-buds are marked with plus and minus signs.

Basically, this means the six-phase functioning that becomes patent (or manifest) in the analysis of any creational entity or event (as pointed out elsewhere); and the two hidden axis buds are, or represent, the Mystic *Ardha Mātrā*, on either side of the *Bindu* and its axis of self-projection : they link up, both in the sense of evolution and of involution, what is patent and manifest with what is radically there as the potent and un-manifest. The entire scheme is supervised by *Om* at the core or *Hrllekhā*. *Om* itself in its 'rise' shows this 8—phase pattern in dynamic creation. These, for instance, represent the 8—phase pattern : *Parāvyakta (Bindu)*, *Vyaktavyakta (Setu)*, *Vyakta (Udita Nāda)* AUM *Avyakta (Vilaya Nāda)*, *Vyaktāvyakta (Setu)*.

Ponder also over the relation of this diagram to the famous mystic mantram :

“पूर्णमिदं पूर्णमदः पूर्णात्तुपूर्णमुदच्यते ।  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

*This is Full, That is Full : The Full evolves from the Full :*

*The Full taken from the Full remains the Full.*

In this mantram, the two mystic words, viz '*udacyate*' and '*ādāya*' (taken out and taken in) stand respectively for positive and negative *Stem Bud* or *Ardha mātrā*.

\* Courtesy : Works of Swami Pratyagātmā nanda Saraswati  
(Reprinted from Journal "Ananda Varta")

## THE GOLDEN ORANGE

— Richard Lannoy

I have been asked to write an article far away from India, living in surroundings so remotely different from the Ashram. Upon my return to England my thoughts had naturally dwelt frequently on all that I learnt in India, particularly since I received great inspiration during the months spent near Mataji. But England is even farther away from India than I had expected. The readjustment has caused me much thought, because I believe that ultimately one can and should reach a point where time and place are no longer intrinsically important; that one should be able to abide peacefully in the abode, the home, of no recognizable geography .....

Surrounded on all sides by the undoubted seriousness of writers and thinkers of many different kinds, I feel nevertheless that something is lacking in the direction that they have set their thoughts. I keep on remembering a kind of dream, and this dream is of an orange.

The scene is the Varanasi Ashram into which, by some miraculous means, a man from London has been transported and this is what he sees.

There is a movement in the cluster of figures and She is leaving the room now. We watch Her go outside and standing on the step, She pauses for a moment, not looking at anyone, but beyond them, quite still, and we notice with what perfect beauty She stands, and we are close enough now to see Her face clearly. It ripples : there is a kind of fullness, a richness of modelling, it is as if we were looking at a Rembrandt, with every line and slightest variation of modelling containing behind it a tremendous power, so that the volumes, their density, their delicacy, their lightness are the shape of the character itself, a power which is both dark and mysterious and also radiant. The smile is not only a line, a shape, a movement, but the colour of the thought played upon by light. And we observe the eyes, and there is an immensity of distance between them and a darkness around them and they have an extraordinary colour, the colour of looking through autumnal leaves at the sky. Above the eyes the brow is tall and lofty like an arch, fluted upwards delicately with very fine lines. A movement quivers across it and it is like the uplifting of the threads in a loom, when the warp mingles with the weft. But suddenly we find that we are looking into the midst of a dark fire, and in the fire there is a bright

incandescent speck of seering light; She is looking right at us, or rather into us and we become confused, for something pierces us and we feel as if we were suddenly looking down over a precipice that unexpectedly looms up under our feet. It lasts for an instant and leaves a filament of slender fire in the spinc.

There is a great throng of people on the terrace and She moves about, saying a few words here and there to smiling people. There is a bright effervescence in the air and we catch a glimpse of it in the swish of Her white raiment, a hand poised, a gesture, Her voice. For a moment She turns to one close at Her side and has a quick conversation with him. In half an hour She is leaving for another town — arrangements must be made. All the time people are pressing forward, then prostrating before Her, and we notice that every time this happens She is different. To someone in whose bend and gait we can discern real devotion She responds with a slow, very sweet smile, and as it were, collects Herself very precisely, delicately folding Her hands inside Her white shawl; but even if She does not turn, and She does not always smile, one sees a quiver course through Her body, and the expression of Her eyes becomes soft, very gentle for an instant, a softness which the camera can catch just as it can reproduce the fire or the joy of other movements. As these people prostrate themselves, their masses, the direction of lines, the fall of drapery, tilt of head, all flow into one whole. It is like an expert draughtsman who, assembling a group of figures which in reality appear separate unrelated blocs, by a few dynamic lines welds them into a compact, related composition. Her face registers not only Her own response, but something of the heart of the one bowed before Her. Even though at times She attends to practical matters as She walks among the crowd, supervising the baggage and sending people scurrying here and there with last minute arrangements, She has time to turn to those who come to Her; She gives advice, She listens intently, She directs, and throughout She is utterly calm. There is never a moment of hesitation either in Her movements or Her words. Usually we can tell and respond to the artistry, conscious or otherwise, with which a cultivated person measures his pauses and hesitations. The inflections of face and voice in one who waits for an instant before replaying, or considering, or pondering, fluctuating between decision and shyness, all these things can be done with grace, with subtle shades of meaning. But with Anandamayee Ma there is no hesitation, no doubt, no pause to collect Her thoughts, no puzzling, no mystification or clouding of the eyes. Only when She is seen, can this be verified, but it is true, and one comes to notice it very quickly, so striking is the contrast to the usual ways of men and women. She speaks of "effortless being", of spontaneity, not with the look of one visualizing a distant, scarcely attainable ideal.

When She says these words you are looking right at them, for She is a picture, a map, a complete living representation of them : the word made flesh.

A visitor, a distinguished industrialist, has just arrived. He walks over to Her and devoutly prostrates himself, and She tilts Her head and smiles sweetly. They talk quietly, at once entering upon some practical matters, for he is a great devotee. She turns and they go into Her room and for some minutes we hear voices in earnest conversation. With more than a dozen ashrams She has many things that require attention — which She gives with Her characteristically scrupulous observation of detail. We wait until She comes out again. It is time for Her to leave. At the last moment someone comes up to Her, bows and gives Her an orange. As She walks by She looks at us, smiles, drops the orange into my hands and is gone.

The crowd disperses and we go out into the street and we walk along past the shops, eyes down in thought. We have seen Her, the famous Anandamayee Ma we had heard about in London. We have listened to Her words, seen Her walking among Her people, a cluster of humble followers and among a great multitude of people. We have heard of great men, statesmen, philosophers, writers who have come to Her. They come to Her little room and talk and go away, and we hear that sometimes they come again and again. They write to Her, they see Her when their busy lives permit. There are many such whom we know for their achievements in the world of men. We read of them in the newspapers and we forget that they too have their inner lives.

All of a sudden we become aware of the orange; we look at it. It is bright gold, lumpy. It seems touchingly absurd. We laugh as we remember that sparkling smile She gave us and we put it in our pocket. We walk on wondering. This is the wonderful sage we have been told about. What did we see ? A very beautiful ..... and so our thoughts continue. But what did we get from all this ? What did we get from Anandamayee Ma ? An orange. A simple, lumpy, homely, domestic orange. As we walk along we feel it in our pocket and in a moment a flood of recollection comes up. We remember how we hung up a stocking, as is customary among Western children, on Christmas eve, and next morning we experienced that delicious sensation of feeling the orange in the toe of the sock. And we remember the time when we stole an orange and made the little boy cry who had lost it. Now, we get an orange from Anandamayee Ma. That smile She gave us and Her eyes — we remember it all minutely, and suddenly we want to run back, we want to tell Her all about the orange, only to remember that She has left for another city, that somewhere She is smiling, perhaps about the orange. Instead we are reminded of the story of the poor little boy in the story-book who could not go home at Christmas

because his parents were penniless, so he painted them a picture and sent it as a present, and on it were great golden, gigantic golden, five seer oranges. Then we pull ourselves out of these thoughts, straighten up and remember who we are. We have just met Anandamayee Ma and She gave us an orange. We hold it and look at it carefully. It is very golden. Already we want to read about Her, what She says, what is Her teaching. But the sounds and sights of the strange city claim us. Then we forget.

A little later, perhaps when talking to some friends the matter comes up again. We are asked what was our impression and we find that the replies we give are not only evasive, but extraordinarily clumsy. So we ponder over the matter. Goodness, happiness, love — what are these things ? Do they really transcend all other matters ? What do they mean; what is their significance in a tragic world, shattered by war, suffering, starvation ? She has some very special quality. We call it Joy. It seems so awfully insignificant, almost scandalous. Such a simple naked thing is Joy. Such a tormented, anguish-ridden place is the world. Joy. What is Joy ? How can Joy be of any importance ? People nevertheless prostrate, not before skill, not before technology, but before Joy. Why ? Like a child She gave an orange and like a child we received it. If we were to write now to our London friends and tell them about it, they would say it seems so silly, so trivial. Yet this enigma has disturbed us and we like to muse about its implications, although our brains are unequal to the task, helpless before such an elementary question as : what is Joy ? The mind becomes completely vacant and all our so-called maturity, the bright ideas, clever thoughts, we had a few moments ago, where have they gone now ? All we can do is to remember that inexpressible, beautiful appearance of Anandamayee Ma. Here the dream fades, leaving the Londoner irresolute, perplexed.

By seeing Mataji the Londoner or in fact anyone, is reminded of the child that lies hidden beneath the premature adult preoccupations. The orange reminds us of the tedious and stupid efforts we make to increase self-importance and to hide the lack of true spiritual maturity. Mataji calls out of us a response of our only true seriousness and at first we are at a loss to know what to do at all, because that seriousness still has the frail innocence of childhood in spite of superficial adult competence stifling it. We are often desperately afraid of inconsistency, afraid that we shall discard a seriousness that befits a serious age, for the sake of such a scandalously naked, simple thing as Joy. When we make this initial discovery, Her presence inspires us and everything becomes beguilingly simple. Many are the occasions when people new to the ashram totally forget all their worries and responsibilities, even the taking of food, for nothing matters but the chance to sit at

the feet of Mataji. As time passes, life in the ashram under Her guidance becomes a subtle intermingling of extreme simplicity and ease, the absence of worry, the doing of happy, lovely, restful things, until gradually She helps us to assume more serious tasks, in themselves simple, yet requiring utmost concentration and fully mature responsibility, real *sadhana*, has begun. It is then, and only then, that the meaning of joy begins to dawn—when it becomes the focus of all actions, reshaping them, remoulding the entire case of the mind, so that the deepest roots of action are gradually cleansed and the magic of childhood, the golden orange, is no longer absurd and unreal, but the source and repository of all we do. This is the philosopher's stone, the ancient symbol, by which all that it touches becomes golden too. The afflictions of the world which have reached such gravely disturbing power in the present age cannot be aided by ideas alone, nor by our acute awareness that they exist, nor by technological research and social development plans, while the orange remains just a humble, domestic, edible orange, and our childishness, an awkward reminder of lost innocence. To find in Mataji a beautiful being and a loving generosity, the giver of the golden orange, is but a beginning. But it is the only beginning to chose. She is there, and this is the measure of Her supreme greatness and the very essence of Love, to guide us at every moment, step by step, as we begin to alter everything we believe in, everything we do, till the magic pervades our entire lives, even our most desperate worries and the most complicated problems of contemporary life. Beyond the beautiful gift, beyond Beauty, beyond the inviolable innocence of the child within us, She promises the way to illumination, to *Ananda*.

"Sustained effort ends in effortless being—in other words, what has been attained by constant practice is finally transcended and then spontaneity comes."



# VEDĀNTA AND TANTRA — A SYNTHETIC STUDY

— Pror. Bireshwar Ganguly

Vedānta, comprising of the Upanishads, the *Brahma Sutra* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* studies the subjective universe of the individual soul (*Jīvātmā*), the cosmic Soul (*Paramātmā*) and the underlying infinite, all-inclusive Reality (*Brahman*). Hence Vedānta proceeds on the lines of philosophical, synthetic analysis and tries to discover the unified ultimate field of reality. *Tantra*, on the other hand, is an analytical study of the multifarious objective world. Hence it adopts what is believed to be a scientific method of study. A glimpse at the *Positive Sciences of Hindus* by Brajen Seal and *A History of Hindu Chemistry* by Prafulla Chandra Roy indicates how vast is the canvas of Hindu *Tantra sastra*, which made valuable contributions even to the scientific fields of Surgery, Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology, Geography and Geology, Botany, Zoology, Psychology, Sociology, Political Economy, etc. Thus we see that while Vedānta philosophy studies the eternal principles, the *Tantras* study the ever-changing world.

But the world has its physical as well as subtle aspects. Modern sciences, both natural and social, deal with the external physical and social universe, whereas the *Tantra* scriptures deal with the subtle forces operating behind the physical world and seek to forge a link between *jagat* (world) and *Brahman*. Of course, even modern physics has reached a stage where scientific laws have begun knocking at the door of *śakti* or *prāna*, which is the primeval source of all energy. The Relativity Equation of Einstein ( $E = mc^2$ ) has almost established that not only all matter is ultimately reducible to energy, but also that there is nothing real like matter. It sounds almost like the dictum of Vedānta that the *Jagat*, the world of name and form, is *mithyā* (false or illusory). *The Mysterious Universe* and *The Universe Around Us* of Sir James Jeans or Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World* or Pere Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*, all throw ample hints of the limitations of science. Swami Ranganathananda's book, *Science and Religion* has succeeded in providing the complementarity of science and religion. However, in my view, the religious approach of *Tantra* is the subject matter of religion, than Vedānta. In fact, *Tantra* is the practical or applied aspect of Vedānta. It describes in detail the scientific aspects of *nididhyāsana* (the techniques of worship and

meditation) and has the capacity of raising an allegedly atheistic science to the level of a truly theistic science. Thus I think *Tantra* is the logical link between Vedānta and science.

Vedānta offers the perennial philosophy of the Hindus which has universal application for the whole of humanity. According to Aldous Huxley, at the core of the perennial philosophy the following four fundamental doctrines are found:

First: The phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness — the world of things and animals and men and even of gods — is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent. [This Divine Ground is called *Brahman*, whose creative, sustaining and transforming aspects are manifested in the Hindu Trinity of *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and *Maheśvara*].

Second: Human beings are capable not merely of knowing *about* the Divine Ground by inference: they can also realize its existence by a direct intuition, superior to discursive reasoning. This immediate knowledge unites the knower with that which is known.

Third: Man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul.

Fourth: Man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground (*Paramātman* or *Brahman*).<sup>1</sup>

The Upanishadic aphorisms such as *Tattvamasi* ('Thou art That') or *Aham Brahmāsmi* ('I am the *Brahman*') or 'All this manifested universe is nothing but *Brahman*', categorically establish this monism of the Vedānta. It is on the basis of this perennial philosophy based on Vedānta that, after realization of God, an ancient sage declared. 'Hear, O children of immortal bliss! I have found the Ancient one, Who is beyond all darkness, all delusion; knowing whom you shall be saved from death over and over again.' Jesus Christ declared that he was the son of God whereas the Upanishads of India declared that all human beings, all other creations, and even gods of higher heavens, are children of God, children of immortal bliss. What better message for humanity could be delivered to demonstrate the oneness of existence, let alone the universal brotherhood of mankind ?

From time immemorial, dating back to about 5,000 B.C., there ran two parallel spiritual traditions, namely the Vedic and the *Tāntric*. The bases of the Vedic

1. Aldous Huxley in 'Introduction' to the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *The Song of God*, translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, Śri Rāmakrishna Math, Mylapore, 1945, pp. 10-11.

tradition were the four Vedās and more than one hundred Upanishads. Whereas the bases of *Tantrism* were innumerable *Tāntric* texts, starting from the *Devi Sukta* of the *Rig Veda*, and culminating in *Durgā Saptasati Chandī* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna*. The Vedās were recognized mainly as *Nigama Sāstra*, based on deduction from revealed knowledge, and the *Tantras* were recognized mainly as *Āgamā Sāstra*, based on induction or practical methods of yoga.

It is not easy to define *Tantra* as such. However, among the many meanings of the word '*Tantra*' (root *tan*, i.e., to extend, continue or multiply), one that concerns us particularly is that of 'succession', 'unfolding', 'continuous process'. Thus *Tantra* means that which extends knowledge ('*Tanyate, vistārayate jñānam anena iti tantram*').

*Tantrism* gradually came to represent a great philosophical and religious movement which assumed a pan-Indian vogue from 6th century onward. In ancient and medieval India, *Tantrism* was popular not only among the philosophers and theologians but also among the ascetics and yogis, who were active practitioners of spiritual life. In the words of Mircea Eliade:

"In a comparatively short time, Indian philosophy, mysticism, ritual, ethics, iconography, and even literature are influenced by *Tantrism*. It is a pan-Indian movement, from it is assimilated by all the great Indian religions and by all the 'sectarian' schools. There is a Buddhist *Tantrism* and a Hindu *Tantrism*, both of considerable proportions. But Jainism too accepts certain *tāntric methods* (*never those of the 'left hand'*) and strong *tāntric* influences can be seen in Kashmirian Saivism also, in the great *pancharātra* movement (c.550), in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* (c. 600) and in other Vishnuist devotional trends"<sup>1</sup>.

There are generally two types of knowledge, viz. philosophical and scientific, the former being mainly deductive and the latter being mainly inductive, though both the logical methods are used in both the studies. Western philosophical as well as scientific knowledge is wholly based on reasoning, whereas ancient Indian philosophical knowledge, in addition to reasoning, relied also on intuition and revelation. *Vidyā* or spiritual philosophy deals with the 'subject' of knowledge and *avidyā* or science (both natural and social) deals with the 'object' of knowledge. Monistic Vedānta attempts to understand the 'subject' (*adah*) by the logical process of *neti*, not this (*idam*) to assert the existence of the 'subject'. *Tāntric* monism being integral monism, takes up both the 'subject' and the 'object' and arrives at the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality by unravelling the mysteries of the apparent

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1. *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, Bollingen, Princeton, 1973, pp. 200-201.

phenomenal body as well as the external world. Philosophical knowledge is synthetic, whereas scientific knowledge is analytical. Modern scientific knowledge attempts to explore the *jagat*, world; Vedāntic knowledge attempts to understand *Ātman*, Consciousness. Thus *Tāntric* knowledge is a bridge between the objective world and the subjective Brahman or *Ātman*. Dr. Balajinath Pandit has beautifully summarized the subject-matter of Tantric science and philosophy in the following manner:

"The academic development of both *Saivism* and *Saktism* has its roots in *Āgamic* scriptures called *Tantras*. The theistic absolutism of monistic character is the main metaphysical principle of the *Tāntric* monism and is also the innermost secret of the higher theological pursuit of the *Tāntrism*. Higher *Tāntric* philosophy sees the only basic source of all phenomena in the infinite, all-perfect and pure absolute consciousness having perfect Godhead as its essential and basic nature. Such pure consciousness is an absolutely monistic reality without having any internal variety or *svagatabheda*, as propounded by philosophers like Ramanuja. All phenomena, that appear anywhere, enjoy their basic existence within such absolute consciousness, the divine power of which (consciousness) is their internal form. Such divine and infinite consciousness is playful by its basic nature. Its divine playfulness keeps on vibrating inwardly and outwardly...."

"The subjective self-awareness, shining as pure 'I', is said to be inwardness and an objective awareness, appearing as 'This', is meant by outwardness. Such double-edged awareness, illuminating I-ness and this-ness, is appearing in the multifarious forms of 'this-ness' and its such static aspect is termed as Sivahood. The natural playfulness of such pure consciousness manifests the divine activities of cosmic creation, preservation and dissolution of the objective phenomenon, as well as the self-oblivion and self-recognition on the part of the subjective phenomenal beings. Such playful aspect of the absolute consciousness is termed as its *Saktihood*. The absolute consciousness is thus both *Siva* and *Sakti*".<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that the noumenal aspect of the monistic absolute consciousness is termed as *Siva* and the phenomenal aspect of the same reality is termed as *Sakti*. Therefore *Siva* and *Sakti* are not at all any mutually different entities, nor is any of them different from *Parama Siva*, the monistic Absolute of *Tāntric Saivism* of Kashmiri *Saivism*. *Sāktism* and *Saivism* move together hand in hand both in their

1. 'Philosophy of Saktism' in Navonmesa (M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj Smriti Granth), Varanasi, 1987, p.129.

metaphysical formulations as well as yogic rituals because *Sāktism* has adopted the philosophy of *Saivism* and *Saivism* has adopted the theological practices of *Sāktism*. A *Saiva* yogi or a *Tāntric Sādhaka* becomes fully satisfied on realizing himself as none other than God Himself. He has to practically realize the three divine powers, known as *icchā, jñāna* and *kriyā sakti* of Siva. The *Trika* system of practical *Saivism* recognizes the whole *samsāramandala* (phenomenal universe) as consisting of *Siva, Sakti* and *Nara (Jīvātmā)*. *Siva* descends to the position of *Nara* through His extrovertive movement on the outward path of His *Sakti* and *Nara* has to ascend to the pinnacle of Sivahood by the means of his introvertive yogic march through the inward path of *Sakti*. Dr Paṇḍit rightly observes:

"All deities right from *Sadasiva* to petty *grāmadevatās*, who are worshipped by *Saiva* aspirants in the practice of *Saiva* theology are the outward manifestations of the different *Saktis* of *Siva* and their worship is thus the worship of *Sakti*. *Sāktism* is thus an integral part of *Saivism*. It is on such account that many *Saktas* of the present age count *Saiva* works like *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta and *Spanda Kārikā* of Bhatta Kallata as works on *Sāktism*. Most of the mantras used in the theology of *Saivism* are *Sākta* in character and so is the worship of *Srichakra*, the *Tāntric* diagram representing the whole system of the hierarchy of *Tāntric* deities. The highly sophisticated *Tāntric Sāadhanā* by means of five *makāras* is essentially *sāktic* in character and so are all the rituals connected with *dikshā* and other theological performances of monistic *Saivism* discussed in detail in *Tantrāloka*".<sup>1</sup>

With a little introspection any yogi of any school can understand that any yogic method of *sāadhanā* is essentially the worship of *Sakti*, which leads to the arousal of the inherent divine energy in the individual, who has to control the vital forces of lower nature, in order that the impediments to the divine journey for self-realization may be removed. Whatever power resides in the infinite *Brahmānda* (universe) also resides in the finite body of man in a latent form. This is the whole secret of *Kundalini Yoga* of *Tantra sāadhanā*. The worship of *Siva, Vishnu, Krishna, Ganesha, Surya, Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Brahmā, Rudra* and all other deities is essentially the scientific technique of invoking the latent powers of the *sādhaka* and hence is basically the worship of *Sakti*. For a smooth success in this *Sakti sadhanā*, knowledge of the physical, subtle and causal bodies, and understanding of the implications of the fifty *mātrikās* or seed letters (*Varna Mālās*)

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1. *ibid.*, p. 132.

and a global view of the *samsāramandala* (universe) from *Parama Siva* to *Prithvi tattva* (matter) are necessary. *Devi Bhagavatam*, *Nirvāna Tantra*, *Siva Samhitā*, *Hathayoga Pradipikā* and Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraja's *Tantra O Āgam Sāstrer Digdarshan* (in Bengali), *Tāntrik Vāngmayme Sākta Drishti* (in Hindi), Mircea Eliade's *Yoga* and Arthur Avalon's *The Principles of Tantra* are good source materials, which are easily available.

M. M. Gopinath Kaviraj has rendered a brief but wonderful summary of the description of the *samsāramandala* from physical nature (*bhu tattva*) to God (*Ishvara-Sadāsiva tattva*) within the Absolute monistic reality of *Paramasiva*, as found in some of the 64 *Tāntric* texts and 18 *Purānas*.

[To continue]

## THE MUCH AWAITED PUBLICATION

**"AS THE FLOWER SHEDS ITS FRAGRANCE "**, the much waited book in English, which was for long out of print, has just come out again in a new form. The volume consisting of 200 pages, printed on good quality paper, is claimed as a masterpiece, comprising of a short biography of Ma and pages from the superb diary of the famous Austrian lady Blanca Schlamm, popularly known among Ma's devotees as Atmananda, covering a long period of sixteen years of her close association with Ma. Price : Rs. 100/-.

## NOBODY THERE BEHIND THOSE EYES OF A WOMAN

— Maria Wirth

[Translated from German]

The foreigners in the tourist bungalow had made the journey to Haridwar primarily because of Anandamayee Ma. They considered her as their guru.

"She is coming tomorrow morning!", Manfred from northern Italy called out to me over the balcony. "Coming with us to the railway station to meet her?" He didn't have to persuade me. I was curious about Ma, because I remembered seeing a photo of her in Paramahansa Yogananda's 'Autobiography of a Yogi': Yogananda, Anandamayee Ma in the middle, and her husband, who looked much older. The photo was taken in the 1930s and showed a beautiful, attractive woman. Almost fifty years had passed since then and I was surprised that she was still alive and anyone could meet her.

At dawn we went by cycle rickshaws to the railway station. Even at that early hour pilgrims flocked to the Ganges in a steady stream. They were mainly poor people, who carried their bundle of belongings on their heads or over the shoulders. The railway station too, was typically for India, already full of people and activity: groups of travellers sat in between their luggages, the women in saris of the brightest colours and some of the men with similarly colourful turbans on their heads. Children ran around, some of them naked—their mothers calling out for them or sitting quietly breast-feeding a baby. Boys offered 'Chai' (tea) with strong, monotonous voices. Dogs were sniffing around in search of something eatable. Sadhus sat in a pose of meditation with one elbow resting on a wooden crutch or inhaled, with hands cupped, from a *chillum*. And some figures wrapped up in sheets were soundly sleeping on the ground.

Here I was at that early hour waiting for Anandamayee Ma. A group of Indians were conspicuous by their neat and well-groomed appearances. They were devotees of Ma.

Then, hooting and with a cloud of smoke trailing overhead, the train from Varanasi pulled in and screeched to a halt. Four young men in spotless white dhotis, the traditional substitute for trousers in northern India made of thin, starched cotton, entered the first class compartment and carried Ma out on a chair, to which

four handles were attached. Ma looked fragile and delicate, was wrapped in white cotton cloth and her black hair fell over her shoulders. She looked at us with calm eyes. There was no reaction on her face, no sign of recognition of her devotees, many of whom she would have known for decades. She simply looked and her eyes moved slowly around the group. It was pleasant, and I had the strange feeling that *nobody was there behind those eyes*.

When I saw her like this, my reaction came as a surprise: tears were rolling down my cheeks. I was neither especially happy, nor sad. There was no reason for tears to well up and yet they kept flowing and didn't want to stop. "That's normal, when one is touched by a great soul", someone next to me, who had noticed it, reassured me. And indeed I had the feeling that I had been touched by a very pure soul.

Anandamayee Ma went to her ashram in Kankhal and we followed her in taxis. Kankhal extends to the south of Haridwar and is more idyllic, quiet and laid-back. It mainly consists of large ashrams surrounded by boundary walls. The ashram is unique to India. It is a place, where not worldly goals are sought after, but where spiritual practices and prayers fill all hours of the day. Where some ashramites, as the residents are called, sit in a corner of the temple for the whole day and sometimes even the whole night and keep chanting the same mantra to the accompaniment of harmonium. Even in the hot, quiet hours after lunch at least one singer keeps going, a little less enthusiastic may be and with a sleepy voice. "*Om namah Sivaya, Om namah Sivaya*".

Ashrams are often compared to monasteries, and in a sense this comparison is valid: its residents are ideally striving for god—or self-realisation (god and self are interchangeable in Indian philosophy). Yet there is a major difference: an ashram comes up around an extraordinary human being: an enlightened master or at least someone, who is spiritually above average. That person attracts attention, because he or she rests in the innermost being and does not seek any benefits for his or her own person. People, who are interested in knowing the truth, want to stay near him, because someone, who knows the truth, is said to be of invaluable help to someone, who wants to realise it. So they erect huts or build houses and an ashram is taking shape. It usually continues to exist, even when that great personality dies without a designated successor. Henceforth, the tomb, called *samadhi*, becomes the focus of veneration, as it is supposed to have power. Anandamayee Ma's *samadhi* in Kankhal also is today such a focus, since her passing away on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1982.

The taxi stopped at the gate of Ma's ashram. Flower vendors eagerly awaited us. They offered garlands of jasmine, marigold or even roses, which were tightly



pressed into a string and shed a wonderful fragrance. Everyone entered the ashram with either flowers or fruits in his hands. The tall American put a garland into my hands. He knew the custom: one is not supposed to come to a saint with empty hands.

In the centre of the courtyard a chair was placed for Ma. She sat down and we, about thirty people, were standing around her. Now, she asked some of her devotees, how they were doing, whether everything was okay and so on. The questions were commonplace, and yet there was a sense of sublime grandeur in the air.

Then with a garland in his hands somebody went up to her and kneeled down. He placed the garland at her feet and his forehead on the ground. Two women assistants, who sat on the floor right and left of Ma's chair, threw the garland over his head. Then he got up, slowly and with folded hands, his gaze fixed on Ma and probably hoping that she, too, would look at him which was not always the case. One by one went up to her like this, including my friends and it became plain to me, that the garland in my hands was waiting for a similar destiny.

I felt ill at ease. While visiting Devraha Baba I had avoided going down on my knees, even though most people did. On my very first visit the American even lay down flat in the sand. It was clear that I wouldn't imitate him. Yet here, in the courtyard around Ma, I decided not to play the outsider and do 'pranam', as it is called in India, when one bows before the divinity in a human being.

I walked up to Ma, kneeled down and put my flower garland at her feet and my forehead on the ground. When I lifted my head again and looked up to Ma, she looked above my head towards the group. I went back to my place disappointed. "When you couldn't see, Ma looked down at you", someone next to me kindly whispered into my ear. I had noticed it already at the railway station, and now, in the courtyard, I noticed it again: her gaze was different. It touched the heart and widened it. And it was painful, when it was withheld. Because of her short, fleeting gaze and the feeling that it induced, I went from then on every evening by rickshaw to Kankhal.

Was Ma enlightened ? I didn't know, but felt, it was possible. Melita Maschmann, a journalist, who has lived in India already since 1963 and written several books, two of them about Anandamayee Ma, was the only other German in the courtyard and she explained to me what enlightenment meant.

'Ma sees in everything and everywhere only the one god, that is, her own self. For her, 'others' don't exist. She herself has said that only because of convention

she differentiates between herself and others. In truth, she doesn't see a difference and there is no difference.'

So basically, there is no difference between an enlightened being and us ordinary mortals. We differ only in one aspect, an enlightened being lives in that oneness, feels it, is at home in it, whereas we think that we are separate and even prefer to hold on to this illusion, though we, of course, are also at home in the oneness. Oddly, we *want* to be separate; we are fond of our person, our thoughts, feelings, relationships, memories, hopes and even our worries and pain. We are used to the illusion. It is familiar and almost everyone shares it. So far we were okay. Why should we give it up ? Just because of the truth ?

Few are ready for it inspite of the assurance that truth is heaven and illusion compared to it is hell. All our suffering originates from our imaginary isolation and is completely unnecessary, claim the sages. We don't need to be afraid of the truth. In fact, truth is the fulfilment, for which we unconsciously long for.

I tried to imagine what Anandamayee Ma perceived, while she looked at us. Did she see our bodies and her own among them as fleeting, transitory waves on the one ocean, while she felt immersed in its immense depth and vastness ?

Concepts like truth and god, which I had not considered relevant in recent years and had hardly figured in my vocabulary, seemed in the Indian context important, relevant and natural.

"Life is meant to realise the truth. Truth has to come first. Everything else is secondary", Anandamayee Ma claimed and did not compromise on that. It seemed logical, if we are indeed taken for a ride by our senses and take falsely an illusion for the truth. And doesn't science, too, maintain, that the perceived, manifested multiplicity in this universe is a deceptive appearance and that in truth everything is one, a whole ?

For the Indians it doesn't matter, whether the one is called God, Brahman or Allah. "There is only one Supreme Being. Sages call it by many names", is stated in their Vedas, the oldest scriptures of human kind. This view is probably one of the reasons, why Indians, compared to Christians and Muslims, are more tolerant and generous regarding differing world views. I have not yet met a Hindu, who didn't hold Jesus Christ in the highest regard. On the other hand I have not yet met a Christian missionary, who did not depict Krishna, whom Hindus revere as an incarnation of God, in bad light and sometimes even as a devil.

Ma talked about God, as if he was naturally the dearest friend we had in this world. She saw that it was true and did her best that we also could see it. When scholars put questions to her, she argued highly philosophically and gave

inadvertently the proof that she who had attended for only two years a village school in East Bengal (today Bangladesh) not only knew the scriptures but knew from direct experience what they propounded. The scholars were impressed by her. Many came. On the other hand, she formulated the essence of Advaita Vedanta, the highest wisdom, in clear and simple terms.

"Behind all the different perpetually changing names and forms in this universe there is only 'one thing' - God or however you like to call it. *That* alone is eternal, ever the same. This God plays with himself as it were. All appearances are contained in him, like in a mirror. He is the I of our I. Life is meant to realise this — to realise who we really are and drop the wrong identification with our person."

Her words had power, probably because she was genuine and said only what she definitely knew was true.

When her mother had died and was laying out in the ashram, Ma was not sorrowful and laughed her hearty laugh as usual. Her devotees felt that her behaviour was not quite appropriate for the situation. Ma reacted surprised, "Why? Nothing has happened!" For her dying was like changing a dress. Who would be sad over losing an old dress, when one is still fresh and alive?

In May, when the temperature shot above 40 degrees celsius in Haridwar, Ma moved to Dehradun in the foothills of the Himalayas. Dehradun is some 800 meters above sea level and the temperature a few degrees lower. During the following years, this town became the place in India, where I felt most at home.

A wealthy couple had built a cottage for Ma in their spacious compound on the outskirts of the town on Rajpur Road. Towards evening, around sunset, Ma would give darshan there. She sat on a cot on the veranda, behind her the outline of the first range of the mountains against the evening sky that changed into ever new shades of colour. The atmosphere was uplifting and pure.

While waiting for Ma, we were singing religious songs, and the repertoire of such songs seemed infinite. Once, a girl of about ten sat next to me. She sang full throatily, yet a little out of tune. Her clapping of hands was also slightly out of rhythm. When I heard her singing like this and felt her presence next to me, I liked her more and more. My heart went out to her and was overflowing with love.

Then the veranda door opened and Anandamayee Ma appeared, supported by two women. Even before she reached the cot, she briefly stopped, half turned and looked sort of irritated into my direction. When she finally sat down on the cot, her glance settled on me for a long time - so long, that the three women sitting behind me afterwards whispered about it to each other. Yet this time, Ma's glance did not

strike me or induce any feeling. It seemed as if there was no centre that could have got struck and affected. I simply looked back at her.

Probably Ma's glance was attracted by the love that I felt for that girl and probably she really did not perceive us as separate persons. After all, she often declared that it is a mistake to consider oneself as separate from others. But almost certainly all of us, as we were sitting there on the veranda during her daily darshan, wished that she appreciated us *personally*. And if we were honest, we most likely even wished that she appreciated our own person a little more than the others.

But Ma didn't oblige. She was not consistent in her attention and affection, as Devraha Baba had also not been consistent. Sometimes he had suddenly and abruptly turned to someone else and left one abandoned and ignored standing in the sand. A genuine guru can see, even if his disciple can't see it, that the ego is the culprit which makes life difficult. Naturally he is not interested in flattering the ego and strengthening it - on the contrary.

"The association with an enlightened being consists in getting blows for the ego", Anandamayee Ma once remarked. My ego felt sometimes the blows, for example, when she didn't look at me for long and it reacted with heavy, resentful thoughts. It wanted to leave. On the other hand I felt still attracted to Ma, because I learnt around her almost effortlessly a new way of life—for example, that everything is just right as it is.

"Trust in God. He certainly will look after you and all your affairs, if you really put full trust in him and if you dedicate all your energy to realise your self. You then can feel completely light and free", Ma claimed and it sounded convincing. By 'God' she meant the formless essence in everything. But this essence is not something abstract and cold. It is love and can be experienced as the beloved. She also said, "You are always in his loving embrace."

No doubt there had to be something far greater and far more intelligent right inside me than this Maria, who I think I know. I, as Maria, could not even manage the functioning of my liver. And what about coordinating all those million cells in my body ? An impossible task for even the most accomplished person in this world. It also made sense to me that that great being is the source of love. Where else would love come from ? Anandamayee Ma drew my attention again and again to that Great Spirit in me, in whom it is possible to relax and feel fully safe and protected.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Excerpt from the book "Von Gurus, Bollywood und heiligen Kuehen-Eine Liebeserklaerung an Indien" by Maria Wirth, published by Herbig, 2006 (Pages 44-54).

## THE DIVINE MOTHER

—Dr. Premlata Srivastav

[Continued from before]

Now and again Ma says—

"Life and religion are one. All that you do to maintain your life, your everyday work and play, all your attempt to earn a living, should be done with sincerity, love and devotion, with a firm conviction that true living means virtually perfecting one's spiritual existence in tune with the universe. To bring about this synthesis, religious culture should be made as natural and easy as taking our food and drink when we are hungry and thirsty.

Irrespective of one's religion she extended Her compassion and kindness to all who went to Her for Her advice. Here is one incident—

Ma was in Pune Ashram in 1960-61, when a Parsi couple, the Camas started from their place for the ashram to meet Ma. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, they could not meet Her.

Around that time Ma was in pandal and satsang was going on. Suddenly Ma said to a girl sitting nearby, "Both of them returned after they got drenched". Since they didnot come neither Ma nor the brahmacharini knew about their coming to the ashram.

On the second day, Mrs Cama came with a lady who had been sent by Ma to fetch her. As Mrs. Cama came Ma rose from Her seat and took Her along to Her room. Behind closed doors they talked for about an hour during which Ma correctly assumed Cama's daily routine without having any knowledge about that.

Ma said to her, "This body watches you daily praying to God at 4 o'clock. In the morning you pray for 4 hours. This body saw you lighting flame over water." How ? Why ? Mrs Cama then explained that in Parsees fire is worshipped. In a glass of water oil is topped and flame is put on so that the glass does not crack. Ma said, "Why do you cry while praying ? What do you want ? Ask this body and you will get it". Mrs. Cama replied, "They are tears of joy, not sorrows." "Ma appreciated and said"—This is called the 'power of core'.

Ma now asked to open the door and narrated the same to the audience. Ma told that she had a strong religious bent since childhood when she visited Parsee's fire temple at Pali. On Ma's direction Mrs Cama came back again with Mr. Cama. Ma

told him, 'Pitaji, this body will visit your home to see the holy perennial fire there.' Ma visited them later on. The holy fire was brought. Touching it to Her eyes, Ma said, "For the last 12 years this fire is on. This body has seen this holy fire in subtle." She instructed the devotees present to have darshan of the holy fire and asked them to learn from Mrs. Cama how to lit it.

Following this incident the Cama couple became close devotees of Ma and Ma too had a '*kheyal*' for them.

Mrs Cama passed away in 1985. After the death of Mrs Cama, Mr Cama was very much upset. He spent most of his time in meditation. During this period, thanks to Ma's graciousness, a miraculous incident occurred.

In Pune, there is a Christian centre located near Ma's ashram. However, Mr Cama was unaware of its existence. The Principal Nun of the centre had seen Ma in her dreams for continuous seven days, Ma had been instructing her to show the path of peace to a particular visitor.

Sister Sara, the Nun, brooded : "Who is coming ? How she will recognise me ?" A spate of questions circled her mind as she finally opted to hold meditations at the centre. As she got the news published in local newspapers, Mr Cama happened to come across it.

What could be only through Ma's *kheyal*, Mr Cama went to the Christian centre in the evening. A stunned Sister Sara took him to the prayer hall inside. There, Mr Cama saw the picture of Ma alongside the picture of Christ. Sister Sara said, "Ma visited this place on several occasions". They still follow Ma's puja and mediation. She recounted her dream to Mr Cama.

Once Ma narrated a tale, in context with service to others. There was a philanthropic King at Ayodhya, who always did his best to help others. Once, the benevolent King donated his kingdom to a saintly man, and left the palace in the garb of a seer. Moving quite a distance, the King discovered a well. When he went near the well to fetch water the King found four animals in the well, a lion, a monkey, a snake and a human being. They all requested him to pull them out of the well. The King rescued the lion first. The lion was very grateful. He said, "Please give me an opportunity to serve you. Whenever you need me, please call me." As the lion left the place, he requested the King not to rescue the human being. The second to be rescued was a snake who too offered its service to the King whenever required and requested the King to rescue only the monkey. The King then lifted the monkey out. Strangely, the monkey too repeated the same words.

Meanwhile, the human being implored the King to rescue him as well. Though the other three animals were against it, the kind-hearted King pulled the man as well.

The person thanked him profusely. He introduced himself as the goldsmith of the King of Udaipur. Inviting the King to his home in Udaipur, the man bade goodbye.

After some time, the King went to the lion as he had rescued him first. As he called out, the lion appeared. The lion said, how could he offer his food to the human being. Asking the King to wait, he went back to his cave and returned with a bejewelled necklace to present to the King.

The King accepted the gift and then went to Udaipur to meet the goldsmith, who received him very well. The King was pleased. Hence, he presented the necklace to the goldsmith.

In no time the goldsmith recognised the necklace that he had made for the Prince of Udaipur sometime ago. The necklace was subsequently stolen. Soon, the goldsmith secretly sent words to his King that both the stolen necklace and the thief were at his home.

The guards came and caught the King of Ayodhya. The King of Udaipur ordered the thief to be burnt alive in a pit. The King's chief killer, who was impressed by the personality of the King, as a matter of chance disclosed the reason to the guilty.

The King was stunned. He could not believe the goldsmith, whom he had rescued, could do it to him. However, accepting it as the will of God, the King resigned himself to fate. Soon, the King remembered the snake, who came and after it learnt the bad news, taught the King one 'Mantra'. The snake said it will bite the King of Udaipur to death. And the King of Ayodhya should use this *Mantra* to give the Udaipur King another life.

So it happened the King of Udaipur could not survive the snake bite. A pall of gloom descended over the entire kingdom, leaving everybody in a state of shock and despair. The King's guards and killers too in a mournful mood passed on the news to the King held for theft. The King of Ayodhya then volunteered to return the King of Udaipur to his previous self. And he did it with that mantra.

The recovered King was astonished to hear that the man on whom he had served death sentence, gave him back his life. He, therefore, invited the King of Ayodhya and got to know the entire truth. So enraged he became that he immediately ordered for the death sentence in the same manner for the goldsmith.

The King of Ayodhya, however, was not pleased. He said, if someone is killed in my endeavour of help and sacrifice, my purpose will be defeated. He instead asked the King of Udaipur to donate to him that necklace as well as money and land.

The King of Udaipur acceded to the request of Ayodhya's King. Thereafter the sannyasi King went to Dandakaranya. Tears came to the monkey's eyes as it saw its saviour. With great respect, the monkey offered him a seat made of leaves and presented him one fruit. That was a celestial fruit which the King, instead of eating himself, in turn presented to the present King of Ayodhya. The King asked for one more fruit from the former King in order to present to the queen.

Therefore, the former King went to the monkey again but the monkey had got only one from Hanuman. They went to Hanuman who in turn said, "It was Sankarji who had given him that fruit. The three then met Sankar Bhagawan who too expressed helplessness, saying it too was given by Narayana. They all now went to Narayana in *Vaikuntha* (Heaven). But Narayana said, "I can't oblige you because I've already donated my entire garden to that philanthropic King of Ayodhya. By his good deed, this King has staked his claim in the heaven too. Whether he remains in Ayodhya or here, he does not have anything more to achieve."

The benevolent King, thereafter, took the second celestial fruit from 'his' garden to the King of Ayodhya. The saint-King was very pleased. He said, "I was only testing your kindness and benevolence. Take charge of your kingdom. It belongs to you only."

The story thus ended.



## OUR LAST VISIT TO BHIMPURA ASHRAM

—Shraddha Davenport

[Continued from before]

The next day was filled with chores and cleaning. About 5:00 p.m., when starting for the ashram, we saw Denise and her husband putting their luggage in a taxi. They were going to see Mother and then would be leaving Bhimpura.

At the ashram we talked with Swami Virajananda for a while. He told us about the Saraswati temple where Sri Aurobindo used to meditate. The temple was near where we were staying. We decided to visit that place and take some pictures.

When we went upstairs for darshan only a few people were there and I stood at Mother's front window. Her wonderful eyes embraced me completely. Never in this life have I known such a caress as Hers. Sublime and pure, beyond this realm and surely beyond my ability to express it. Those times passed so quickly—too quickly for me.

After breakfast the following morning we walked a short distance beyond Ganganath Temple to where the Saraswati temple stood. The room in which Sri Aurobindo sat for meditation was like a cellar and could be entered only by crawling through a little tunnel and then dropping down into utter darkness. It was awe-inspiring to think of his great love for God and the intense yearning necessary to pursue such a *tapasya*. The mandir was locked, but we had a grand view of the river and surrounding countryside from the upper portion of the temple.

We visited the beautiful gardens of Ganganath Temple also. That was the first time I had ever seen how bananas grow from under such a potal of a flower on the plant.

In the evening when we went upstairs to Mother, the little boy Kanti came with us for darshan. He stood at Mother's window with his little hands held in pronam and his eyes locked into Mother's face for the whole hour we were there. Even the tempting sweets and fruits which he received did not distract him from Her. It was wonderful to meet such a child. Many times I have wondered about him and how he grew up. I feel sure that his meeting with Mother was something he would never forget.

The next evening Kanti joined us again. Satya took him to get a garland for Mother, then we went upstairs. He stood holding his garland with hands in

pranam, gazing at Mother. Udas was very sweet to him. She asked him some questions, then took his garland, touched it to Mother's hands, and put it over his head. He was so pleased. Udas gave him prasada sweets and Raju did also. His little hands were full but still in pranam. The Mother told Raju to place another garland over his head. He stood very still for the whole time.

Later Mother had oranges given to each of us. We had been craving oranges and were delighted when She pointed to us, telling someone to be sure that we received them. Everyone else went downstairs, except Satya and me. Raju was inside mother's room and Her front window was closed.

Raju interpreted as Mother asked if we were leaving tomorrow. We told Her no, that we were leaving the next day. She asked what time we would go and we told Her that our taxi was ordered for 10:00 a.m. Then She asked when a French couple who were there were leaving. I said, "To-morrow". Raju asked, "What time?" They were standing at the bottom of the steps below where I stood, so I called down to them and asked what time they were leaving. They said at 6:00 p.m., and as I was repeating that, Raju told me that Mother said, "I did not say that you should ask." That was a good lesson. Both Raju and I learned that we should never anticipate Mother. But at the same time I was thrilled that She would scold me. It was another indication of my relationship to Her.

When darshan was ended, we went to Mother's door and pranam. We talked with Raju for a short time, then walked to the Ganganath Temple.

In the morning I began the process of repacking luggage and sorting out things which we would leave behind. I did the laundry for the last time in Bhimpura. Then we got ready and went to the ashram. Dasu had arrived and we were happy to see him again before we had to leave.

Satya sat with Bhaskaranandaji under the banyan tree. When I joined them, I bent down and touched Bhaskarananda's shoes which were on the ground in front of him. He laughingly said, "You know my rule". I replied, "But that rule is for touching your feet, and I only touched your shoes." He was in a warm mood and we felt very fortunate to have his counsel on our sadhana.

Some of what was said he told us not to repeat but his other comments I feel it must be all right to share.

When meditating, he said to watch the mind's thinking and to try to see or be aware of that small space or void between thoughts, then try to expand that. He spoke about the atom and its parts as it is divided. The part which can no longer be divided is "That." The part and the whole are the same. "If you can catch hold of the part, you have the whole."

About the ego, he said that as the "I" goes, the outer activities go. Even in spiritual practices to think "I do these things" is the ego or separation.

Then he told us that there are many sounds one hears from physical to spiritual, and that we are unaware of most of the experiences which we have, as we are so distracted.

He asked about our daily routine, how we spend our time, and what we ate.

We felt very blessed to have that saintly soul advise us. He moved around never calling attention to himself. Always near Mother, but staying in the background. Visible, but for the most part, unseen.

The young French couple had been upstairs saying good-bye to Mother. They came down with Mother's gifts in their hands and we spoke with them briefly before they left.

Soon we went up to see Mother and stood by Her side window. No one was there to interpret as Mother turned toward me and said, "Muriel..." and then something which I did not understand. I looked puzzled and Mother repeated what She had said in a more firm tone, petrified, I took a guess that She was asking if Muriel had left and I said, "Muriel" has gone. Mother nodded and said, "Tik hai," Thank goodness, my guess seemed to have been correct.

Mother was in a light mood. Talking with some ladies who had come, She laughed and was very animated. Once she gave us a long sweet look and a loving smile. Some devotees arrived with a large basket of oranges and bananas for Mother. She told Raju to distribute the prasad and motioned toward us. When Raju brought oranges for us, I asked if we might have one for Gopal who had not received fruit for two or three days. Raju asked Mother and She told Shanta to bring an orange to Her. Then Mother threw that orange to me Herself, When the lovely darshan ended, we prostrated at Mother's door, then went.

Swami Paramanandaji was there and we prostrated to him. He asked when we would be leaving. We told him that our taxi was coming at 10:00 a.m. He said that we should have our meal in the ashram at noon. It was always a blessing to have the concern of that great soul and we told him we would come to the ashram as soon as our luggage was loaded into the car.

We talked with Raju for a few minutes, then took for last moonlit walk down the narrow road leading to the Ganganath Temple.

The evening meal was nice. Datubai cooked in the room where we ate. With only Melita, Satya took some pictures around the grounds. When Raju came out and joined us we told that there were things which we wished for Mother to bless. I wanted Mother to hold Gopal, but for no one else to touch him. It was a problem as

we were not allowed to go into Mother's room. Raju told Udas and she very sweetly went to tell Mother of our desire. Soon Raju called for us to come upstairs.

Mother was seated on the corner of Her bed as Udas gave Her something to drink. We pronounced at the door and waited. Mother told Raju to bring Her little stool. He placed it just outside Her door on the roof. Udas put Mother's asana on the stool, then Mother came out and sat with us. We drew near and bowed at Her feet. She had a birthday present for Satya. She gave it to him one day early as we would be at Baroda when that day January seventh arrived.

Her gift was a graceful picture made of small peacock and other little feathers pasted in the shape of a heart. In the center of the heart, bright red seeds were pasted to form the Sanskrit word "MA." Below the heart was a beautiful poem about The Name. (Later I framed that special gift and hung it where we see it every day).

I had made a new double frame for the picture Lord Narayana standing within the OM. That was the picture which Mother had singled out on our first trip and told us to always carry when we travel. The other side of the frame held Mother's photograph. When I handed those framed pictures to Mother, Raju mentioned about the travelling Narayana to Mother. She said, "Accha .... Accha ... Accha." While holding the frame, She ran Her hand over the Lord's picture, bowed with folded hands to both pictures, then ran Her hand over Lord Narayan's picture again. That frame has grown old, but I would not dream of changing it.

Mother then blessed my *mala* and a locket which I wear. She allowed Satya to take movies as She held our little blue Gopal. When I placed Gopal in Her hands, She looked at him and said something to Udas. Mother held him to Her head, eyes, and then to her heart. She told Swami Virajananda and Raju that he was "*Sundar Gopal*" (Beautiful Gopal). She said that several times and I knew that was then his name. He is truly '*Sundar Gopal*'.

After Mother placed Gopal in my hands, along with a small cloth which She had been holding, She gave Satya a little yellow towel. We had each laid a garland at Her feet and She sat with one foot touching each one. As we pronounced at Her feet, unknown to each, we both silently said a special prayer to Mother, one which we had just recently learned. Mother put a garland over each of our heads with Her own hand and blessed us in that way. She gave us permission to come to Her once more just before leaving.

Dasu walked with us to the Ganganath Temple. Our taxi was there and we loaded all our luggage. Some things were given away which we no longer needed.

We said good-bye to our friend Melita, to Heidi and those who had made us so comfortable and welcome at the Ganganath Temple.

It was almost noon when we returned to the ashram. Bhaskaranandaji had a few small things for devotees in America. We were pleased to take them for him. It is always a blessing to carry such things. He went over something he had told us the day before, then we sat beneath the great banyan tree once last time and were given our food there on leaf plates.

Actually it was more like a banquet than a meal. The dishes were fried squash, *aloo* (potato) *panir* (soft cheese), rice, *dal*, cabbage, cauliflower, *puris* (bread) and our favourite *khir* for dessert.

Swami Paramanandaji asked me to take his photo for a boy who had asked for it. He stood barefooted in front of his room as I took that picture as well as a second one for myself. Then we prostrated and touched his holy feet. A very rare blessing.

Bhaskaranandaji asked if we ever got holidays off together. He suggested that we should go off into the forest together on retreat. In my diary I wrote of that incident and commented that, "His words are powerful and we know there is a reason for his saying that to us." As I write this now, we are retired and have found a small place in the forest where we live.

Raju called for us and we went upstairs for the last time, Mother was seated in the back room. Swami Virajananda sat on the floor near Her, working on his book. We walked to Her window and my breath was taken away by Her beauty. Her hair fell loosely around Her shoulders and Her mood was exquisitely sweet.

She took an orange and threw it to Satya saying, "Gopal." Then She threw one to me and one to Satya for himself. Mother gave a bag of rock candy to us for offering to Gopal. Then She said that as the next day was Satya's birthday, we should offer Gopal His orange on that day and then divide that prasada between us. We said, "Accha," and though it was only in English, told Her of our love for Her and prostrated. Mother said for us to let Her know when we arrived safely.

Reluctantly we went down the stairs to where Bhaskaranandaji and Raju stood. With full hearts we bade them good-bye.

As our taxi drove out from the ashram we held on to the last glimpse of that room in the second floor where, as far as I was concerned, my life ended, until I could return to her again.

[To continue]