

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

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

VOL.-11

October, 2007

No. 4

BOARD OF EDITORS

Dr. Bithika Mukerji
Dr. Krishna Banerjee
Km. Guneeta



MANAGING EDITOR
Sri Panu Brahmachari



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (POSTAGE FREE)

INLAND—RS. 60/-

FOREIGN—US \$ 12/- OR RS. 450/-

SINGLE COPY—RS. 20/-



CONTENTS

1.	Matri-Vani	1
2.	Pages from Ma Anandamayee Prasang — Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta	3
3.	The two facets of excellence — Dr. I Panduranga Rao	9
4.	On Ma Anandamayee — Ma Suryananda Lakshmi	17
5.	Vedanta and Tantra — A synthetic study — Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly	23
6.	Unconditional love overflows — Anandamayee Ma — Sri S. K. Bose	26
7.	Our seventh trip to India — Shraddha Davenport	30

MATRI VANI

Everyone is born conditioned by his actions in former births. In this world health and ill-health are bound to alternate. Have the parents not experienced sufficient proof of this ? They will have to resort to patience. When they are so agitated and upset, how can they cool-headedly attend to all that is required of them ? Depression itself may cause sickness and will in any case tend to aggravate the diseased condition. Everything is His. He has afforded them this opportunity for service. One has to do one's duty to the limit of one's capacity and try to rely on Him, who is the Lord of all.

* * * * *

Do not persons realize that no work can be done well while in such a state of excitement ? To be agitated is to be confused. That they should feel anxious is but natural —are they not the parents ? Nevertheless it is necessary to use discrimination : everything is His and what has befallen them is also His dispensation. Were it possible to create circumstances by one's own volition, everyone would arrange matters according to his liking. As it is, one should endeavour to depend on Him to whom everything belongs, and for the rest do one's duty to the best of one's ability.

* * * * *

Why should he feel so very disheartened ? Why make himself so miserable by excessive worry over the fleeting things of this world ? Let him be brave and calm in the performance of his duty, bearing in mind that it is God who causes everything to happen; whatever He allows to take place is exactly the right thing. One must strive to become an instrument in His hands and cease from worrying so much.

* * * * *

When the renowned Mahatma of Khanna* Sri Triveni Puri Maharaj left his body, Mataji sent the following message to his great *bhakta* Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta. "Under the semblance of union and under the semblance of separation abides He, the Supreme Himself."

* * * * *

To the enquiry whether *diksha* (initiation by *mantra*) is necessary or not, Mataji replied:

* . A small town in East Punjab.

"When *diksha* is necessary it comes about at the appointed moment. One should try to keep one's mind on the thought of God and have firm faith that at the right time He will do all that is needful."

* * * * *

Without the Name and the remembrance of God there is no hope of peace on earth. Let duty come first and foremost.

In *Rama*, who is the dispeller of all sorrow, there is *ārām*—rest and ease; where *Rama* is not, there is *vyarām*—discomfort and disease.

* * * * *

Invoke God's name—whichever of His names you prefer—and spend your days in a spirit of service.

* * * * *

Let His name be ever with you; imperceptibly, relentlessly time is creeping away.

* * * * *

It is through the search after Truth that man can elevate himself. This he should regard in the light of a duty.

* * * * *

Only by the remembrance of God may peace be expected. Set all hopes on Him.

* * * * *

It is incumbent on man to contemplate that which kindles awareness of God.

* * * * *

Where God's Name is, no ghost or evil spirit can exist, for His Name is the destroyer of all sorrow and sin. Cherish His Name ! Be sure to attend to your japa regularly morning and evening and every time your thinking be pervaded by His Name. Make a special effort to understand and have faith that where His Name is, there can be no danger or adversity of any kind.

Do not give into your inclination to think about ghosts and apparitions; rather, keep your mind solely on God's Name and meditate on Him. In the presence of His Name no other power can function. This is the truth, be firmly convinced of it. The moment you have recourse to God's Name you should feel that no other lesser power can touch you. If at that time you are aware of any physical anxiety, be quite certain that it is merely a bodily reaction.



PAGES FROM
Ma Anandamayee Prasang

—Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

Sri Ma's visit to Raipur Ashram, 27th May, 1941, Dehradun

Getting up from bed at 5 A.M. we prepared ourselves to depart for Raipur. The bus, in which we returned from Meerut yesterday night, was standing in the ashram. Pandeyji* lay down last night in the bus itself. Our luggages were already packed, so it did not take more than half an hour to put the luggages on the bus. We left at 5.30 and arrived at Raipur at 7 A.M.

Reaching Raipur we made arrangements to take the luggages to the ashram from the bus. Porters were not available, so there was no way out but to be self dependant. We joined together in taking the luggages ourselves by climbing the hillock. Everything was taken up in half an hour. Ma herself arranged places for us to stay. Manomohan* & I myself spread our beds in the hall. Swami Akhandanandaji, Paramanandaji, Nishi babu, Nepalada and others too stayed there. As the room was quite large we had no inconvenience. Ma stayed in a small room adjoining the hall. Ma asked us to go down to the spring to have our bath. There is a canal down below the ashram, but taking bath in the same has been forbidden in the meantime. I and Manomohan had our bath in the spring. The drinking water at the Railway Station Dehradun was supplied from here.

After bath we sat in the hall near Ma. Sri Jiten Mukherjee* was also there. Discussion was going on about the ashram, Shiva Mandir and Dharamshala. All this property once belonged to one brahmin, named Kaushambi Lal. At one time he was quite well-off, now the position has changed. Ma said—"When I left Dhaka along with Jyotish and Bholanath I saw this place in a subtle form. That is why we

-
- * Sri Parasram Pandey, a very staunch and old devotee of Ma from Dehradun. He was the main donor for building Ma's original ashrams at Almora and also at Raipur (Dehradun)
 - * Sri Manomohan Ghosh, engineer Dhaka University. He was a very old and devoted person. He, after shifting with his whole family to Varanasi, got the new Annapurna Mandir built with great care.
 - * Sri J.C. Mukherjee, cousin brother of Gurupriya Didi. He was an advocate by profession, but very scholarly person as well.

came here. The condition of the temple etc, which you find today was nothing of that sort at that time. Everything was in a dilapidated condition. We three came and took our places in that broken temple. Bholanath used to do sadhana in the Shiva temple and we used to stay in that small room, which you are seeing. People used to think Bholanath was a special sadhu, who has come here for spiritual practices after having left his home; and I, his wife, has also come with him not being able to stay at home alone. Jyotish was considered as our servant, because he used to wear a small cloth those days only up to his knees. After some time when letters from Govt. started coming in his name at Raipur Post Office with his title I.S.O. (Imperial Service Order) after his name, then people changed their opinion about him. The place was a small one, so nothing remained secret."

"During those days a person named Dibbi used to do all our sundry work. He was the servant of Kaushambilal. Dibbi came to him at the time of Kaushambilal's marriage. Then he was quite young. He remained from that time. Kaushambilal has not the ability to keep a servant now on payment basis. But even after seeing that his master's condition has worsened Dibbi does not want to go anywhere else. Dibbi used to bring all the water we required by climbing the hillock. He used to carry water also for his master. His head has become somewhat flat through carrying water ever since his boyhood. (Turning to me) Have you seen him ?

I - No.

Ma - I will show him to you when he comes. Once he had gone to the canal to fetch water, another boy, in order to play with him, tried to pull him by catching hold of his hand. But Dibbi declined to play with him, on the ground that he was busy. At this the boy being angry slapped Dibbi in such a way that blood came out from his cheek. The boy was much younger in age than Dibbi and if Dibbi wanted he could have much punished the boy. But without doing that he started crying. When others asked him - 'Dibbi, he has beaten you, but you could not hurt him ?' Dibbi answered simply - 'I had no inclination to beat'. People asked him to inform to the Police, but he did not do that too. Dibbi has a great desire to study and he says - 'In my next life I shall be a scholar'.

Topic about the Meerut devotees was raised during conversation Manomohan and Jiten babu was praising the devotees of Meerut. They have worked day and night without making any noise. The names of Sri Mahitosh Banerjee and a few others were specially raised. Ma remarked - "Mahitosh babu is busy in taking me to Meerut, but it appears that he is free as soon as I am there. He does not come to me any further out of hesitation. He does the service remaining at the distance. Each one has a separate temperament."

Sri Sher Singh, Zemindar of Dunga Estate, comes to Ma

This year there was a function at Raipur ashram on the occasion of the Vasanti Puja, Many devotees from Delhi and Meerut came at the time of this function. The *Zemindar* of Dunga estate, Sri Sher Singh also came. It is learnt that many were entranced during the 'Nama-Yagna', which was held during the celebration. Sher Singh also was in deep emotion. All this was being discussed.

Jiten babu* - "The emotional expression of Sher Singh is not doubtt a sight to see." (Every one laughed).

Ma—He does not talk much with me, keeps himself a bit aloof. Many a time he looks at me and weeps. Formerly he was a great drunkard; now has changed a lot. From his boyhood he has a spirit of respect within him. He developed the habit of drinking through evil company. During the last Dewali he was much pressed by his friends to have a drink. Being unable to avoid their request he again drank a little. But as soon as he drank I arrived at his door in a bus. Seeing me present there in the most unexpected manner he had not the courage to come out of the room. At first he thought to hide himself and not to come out before me. But as I was also not going elsewhere, he was compelled to come out. His chest was overflowing with tears. While crying he was repeatedly uttering the words - "Why do you have so much grace upon me ?" Seeing me keeping quiet, he said again— "Why don't you speak ?" Normally he did not have the guts to talk to me. But in that emotional state he was addressing me as 'you'-'you' and was repeatedly doing his *pranam* while crying. Seeing him in this condition his youngest daughter-in-law was almost in a fit of laughter.

"When I first went to Dunga I enquired if there were tigers there. Sher Singh "No. there is no tiger. There can't be two tigers in one forest." Just after this the meance of tigers started in Dunga. Apart from cows and buffalows a man was also killed by tigers. The man who was killed, his wife became almost insane through grief. Sher Singh himself is a hunter. He used to run with a gun as soon as the news of tiger reached his ears. Once he found that a tiger had gone after killing a buffalow. He felt that once the tiger had killed the buffalow it would come again to devour. Thinking thus he kept himself waiting on a hillock with his gun for the tiger. After waiting for long his time to do *japa* arrived. Keeping the gun by his side, he sat closing his eyes for ten minutes. Sitting in this condition he suddenly heard some hustling sound. Opening his eyes he found on his right a huge tiger

* . Sri Jitendra Nath Dutta, a very known devotee of Ma from Delhi. He was a high official in the Govt. of India, whose whole family is devoted to Ma.

almost at a distance of five feet. Then there was no time to raise the gun and fire. Sher Singh loves this body much. He thought that when death was so near it was better to die thinking of Ma. How much time passed in this condition he had no idea. After-wards on opening his eyes he found that the tiger was not there."

"Once I saw as if Sher Singh was in great danger. During this time he had planned for going on pilgrimage to Mathura, Vrindaban and other places. A few days before departure his wife and daughter came to meet me. I advised them they should not leave the company of 'babaji'. They went and told that to him. Then they all went out together for pilgrimage. On their way to Mathura they were all lying down in a first class compartment. 'Baba' was in the upper berth and his wife, daughters-in-law and grandson were sleeping in lower berths. In the next coach was their servant. Suddenly his wife saw that a person had got into their compartment and was in search of something. The man was asked what he was searching for. The man very humbly answered that he had got into the compartment out of mistake. Hearing their conversation Sher Singh got up. As soon as he got down the man exposing his true nature attacked him with a sword. Sher Singh caught hold of his hand from behind; but inspite of that he injured with his sword Sher Singh, his wife and daughter, but because his hands were caught by Sher Singh in such a manner that he was unable to injure in a serious manner Sher Singh had a gun with him, but he was not in a position to use the same. His younger daughter-in-law also knew to use a revolver, but she did not dare to fire so that the bullet might not injure Sher Singh. His elder daughter-in-law tried to pull the chain in order to stop the train, but as the train was not stopping, she hung herself with the chain, then the train stopped. Hearing some noise in the master's coach the servant also rushed. Then the dacoit was caught and handed over to the Police. More or less everyone was injured through attacks from the dacoit's sword. The injuries on Sher Singh were much more. Actually Sher Singh was destined to suffer. But the injuries fell also to some extent on his wife and others. It was as if one's suffering was shared by others. Sher Singh told me afterwards—"Ma, I am surprised how I resisted the ruffian so long with my broken hand."

I said—Ma, did you see that Sher Singh was going to be attacked by dacoits ?

Ma — No, didn't see that clearly, but it was understood that some great mishap was about to come upon him which might harm his life too.

In the afternoon several men and women from the village came to meet Ma. There was no ostentation in their dress. It was a pleasant thing to see their simple and devout faces. Some one brought one flower garland, some one a single fruit, some one only two flowers, they put them upon Ma's feet and doing *pranāma*. Ma

was also enquiring about their wellbeing smilingly, Pointing towards one old lady, Ma said - "My 'land lady' has come. Was I not talking about Kaushambilal in the morning ? She is her wife. They had built this hall upto the door level, after that they could not do any further on account of their state of affairs. Afterwards when the point about giving on charity this temple* etc. arose and many persons began to raise various proposals, then they said that if these things were to be given on charity then they would give to this body."

Pointing out to another woman, Ma said-"She is Puri's mother". When I was here with Jyotish and Bholanath then for many months my hair was not combed. Naturally, therefore, the hair had formed into locks. This lady cut my hair and kept two locks of hair in front which used to appear as a cap."

After this Sri Jiten Mukherjee raised the topic of grace (*Kripā*) and self-effort (*Purushakāra*). He desired to know that why people who have advanced to some extent in the process of *sādhana* through self-effort and self endeavour, in the long run depends on God's grace.

Ma — Grace and *Purushakāra*, these are all one thing seen from different angles. When you start talking you have to speak from one particular angle. Seen from one angle everything seems to be His grace. That we are endeavouring to see Him is also His grace. Without His grace none can try to see Him. The fact that we are not attaining Him due to want of our endeavour, this also He is pointing out to us through His grace. Again seen from another angle there is nothing like grace. Everything happens through self-endeavour. If there is only one in this world, who will have the grace upon whom ? In this manner the debate about His grace and self—endeavour will always remain. Some will give prominence to grace, others to self-effort and endeavour. Till that time there is equality in thought and equality in seeing, there will be no end of this dispute. But there is one thing, so long *Karma* is there, the effect of *Karma* will also remain. And again there is no end of *Karma*. From that point of view *sadhana* is also limitless. But complete realization or limitless knowledge cannot be achieved through *Karma*. That is self-revealed.

After this the topic was raised about what sort of private talks do people have with Ma. It is found that in whatever place Ma might be some persons take Ma to a secluded place for their private talks. Frequently, the increase in the number of such "privates" arouses resentment among general group of devotees. People think that these 'privates' are nothing but a plea to remain with Ma alone for some period.

* The old temple was a religious property. So as per village rules those things could not be sold away by any one. This ancient property was subsequently donated to Ma.

Ma remarked — "While doing talk with me in private some one sometimes even ask — Why have you asked me to eat vegetarian food, while you have permitted some one to eat fish ? I say in reply - "I donot ask anyone to take something. You yourself told me that you eat vegetarian food, so I say to eat that. In fact I rarely ask anyone to eat anything. But, of course, it is well to have discrimination about food, because whatever you eat the qualities of the same enter your body. As for example, if you eat meat etc. the animal instincts develop. When one eats pure *sattwik* food the *sattwik* (pure) instincts grow. The judgment of what is very *subtle*. It is certain that drinking milk increases pure qualities. But there is also a stage in *sāadhanā* when milk also is considered detrimental in the path of spiritual advancement. There can be also *rajah guna* and *tamah guna* even in the midst of things which are deemed to contain *sattwa guna* also. The division of things which are supposed to contain *sattwa*, *rajah* and *tamah gunas* is also limitless."

After evening Sevaji, Lakshmi, Pandeyji and others came to the ashram. They left after remaining till about 8:30 P.M.

(To continue)

THE TWO FACETS OF EXCELLENCE

— Dr. I. Panduranga Rao

Embodiments of Divinity in Human form

His Excellency Purusottama, the Lord of the Universe, transcends all forms and norms of excellence as He is far above and beyond what is perishable *ksara* and also what is imperishable *aksara*. Hence, He is known as Purusottama both in the material world of names and forms *loka* and also in the metaphysical plane of cosmic vision *veda*.

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहं अक्षरादपिचोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

yasmatsksaramatito ham aksaradapicottamah /
ato' smi loke vede ca prathitah purusottamah //
[GITA 15-18]

The Lord, while declaring this in His Song Celestial, Bhagavad-gita, clarifies that He who realises this supremacy of His eternal Existence *asti*, unparalleled Excellence *bhati* and inconceivable Endearment *priyam* is the one who knows everything about the all-pervading Lord of the Universe and the infinite variety of forms and facets of His Excellence manifested from time to time for the benefit and betterment of the Universe He has created. *Sarasvati rahasyopanisad* presents an analytical enunciation of this divine excellence by dividing the whole universe-seen and unseen-into five categories *asti*, *bhati*, *priyam*, *rupam* and *nāma* and attributing the first three to *brahma-rupa* and the remaining two to *jagat-rupa*. The first three categories can conveniently be grouped under Divine Excellence. This Divine Excellence manifests itself in various forms-in almost all forms of existence as all the atoms of the Atomic or Cosmic manifestation are inter-knit.

Of all the forms of divine manifestation, *Rāma* and *Krsna* are the most outstanding incarnations of the Lord of the Universe. *Rāma-navami* and *Krsnāstami* are the most important festivals celebrated as the birth-days of these deified personalities in Indian mythology. Of the ten incarnations, *matsya*, *kurma* and *varāha* do not figure prominently in such celebrations and *kalki* is, of course, yet to emerge.

Of the remaining six, *Balarāma jayanti* and *Parasurama jayanti* are mentioned in the Indian almanac. These two occasions fall on the third day of the bright

fortnight of the lunar month of *vaisākha-vaisākha sukla tritīyā* which is also called *aksaya tritīyā*, supposed to be very auspicious for sacred sacraments.

In Simhachalam, near Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, this day is celebrated as the day of advent of Shri Lakshmi Nrisimha Swami. The yearlong sandal-paste covering the idol is refilled on this day and the paste thus removed is distributed as *prasāda*. But this is not the birth day or the day of advent of Lord Narasimha. The almanac presents the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of the lunar month of *vaisākha sukla caturdasi* as the day of celebration for the incarnation of Lord Narasimha.

Vāmana jayanthi falls on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the lunar month *bhādrapada -bhādrapada sukla dvadasi*. This more or less synchronizes with Onam festival celebrated in Kerala with great enthusiasm as socio-cultural and religious festival.

Now we are left with the two incarnations-*Dasaratha-nandana Rāma* and *Devaki-nandana Kṛṣṇa*. *Rāma* was born on the ninth day (*navami*) of the bright fortnight of the lunar month *caitra*, when the sun was in Aries *mesa* and the moon was in *punarvasu*, while *Kṛṣṇa* was born on the eighth day *astami* of the dark fortnight of the lunar month, *srāvana (bhādrapada in the north)* when the sun was in Leo *simham* and moon was with *Rohini*. *Rāma-navami* and *Kṛṣṇāstami* are household names for these two festive celebrations in any Hindu family. In many places *Kṛṣṇāstami* is known as *Jannāstami*.

If we carefully study the two personalities from the point of view of the time of their advent, the purpose of their incarnation, the path they followed to achieve the desired end, their personal and private life promoting the general welfare of the people and restoration of the basic norms of law, justice, love, compassion, truth and righteousness and the impact of their missionary vision and the mode of its realisation, we find lot of things, there seems to be some difference or variation also. This perhaps reflects the clarion call of the age which they chose to attend to. Whatever it is, there is a striking similarity in both supplemented by complementary traits and trends as if it was all a pre-determined and well-programmed line of action to meet the specific needs of the age of their advent.

The source material for an analytical and comparative study of the characteristic features of these two fascinating and fantastic facets of divine excellence is fortunately provided by two unique personalities-*Vālmiki* and *Vyasa*. While *Vālmiki* presented *Rāma*, the man of his epic vision as *Satyaparākrama*, one whose strength lies in truth, *Vyasa* depicted *Kṛṣṇa*, the mysterious master of the multifaceted divine diplomacy as *dharma samsthāpaka*, one whose sole and ultimate

objective is to establish *dharma* and restore order. The main thrust of *Rāmāyana*, the march of *Rāma* in search of truth, is to demonstrate that Truth alone can and should succeed in the ultimate analysis. *Kṛṣṇa* was mainly concerned with the establishment and restoration of *dharma*, the righteousness. But the most interesting feature about the line of action followed by both is that *Rāma's* truth never deviated from *dharma* as He Himself was *dharma* personified and so was *Kṛṣṇa* in respect of truth. He never made any compromise in matters concerned with truth—even while fighting against the ruthless behaviour of reckless people.

The only difference appears to be that *Rāma* was always straight-forward, acting according to the dictates of His inner voice, while *Kṛṣṇa* had to use His mystic and mysterious powers and spiritual strategy to correct the incorrigible evil. *Rāma* believed in direct action with an open mind as transparent as the crystal clear water of the river *tamasā*, while *Kṛṣṇa* managed things with unmanageable persons with divine dexterity like a determined diplomat. This type of approach perhaps became inevitable towards the end of *dvāpara* standing at the threshold of *kaliyuga*. But *Rāma's* simplicity, sophistication, spirit of sacrifice and magnanimity even at the cost of personal discomfort and dreadful disasters was understandable and commendable in *treta*.

Another striking difference between the two is that *Rāma* was personally involved in all the problems He had to face and solve all by Himself. Even when He had to mobilize external support, he gave priority to benefit his supporters as a maker of gratitude and upheld human values. But *Kṛṣṇa* had absolutely no problem of His own and He had only to fight for others as an outsider. But He was always an insider for all the outsiders. He made His presence felt both physically and emotionally wherever and whenever it was needed for the right minded people facing gross injustice. In fact He never fought, never killed anybody in the battle field, with a few exceptions like *Kamsa* and *Sisupāla*. He always acted as a powerful force behind all crises which the right-minded people had to face.

Rāmāyana was a family epic with global implications and impact while *Mahābhārata* was a chronicle of national, cultural and ethical values. There is a fine blend of humanity and divinity in both. But there is a slight difference in degree. *Kṛṣṇa* is born divine while the divinity in *Rāma* manifests itself in due course at appropriate time through the supernatural element found in some of His actions. Even though the advent of *Rāma* was a result of a religious ritual - *putrakāmeṣṭi* - performed by king *Daśaratha*, who was craving for son to succeed him, nobody notices any mark of divinity at the time of his birth. It was only when *Viśvāmitra* tried to convince King *Daśaratha* about the potential divinity latent in *Rāma* and

describes him as *Mahātmaā* and *Satyaparākrama* and also clarifies that even sages like *Vasiṣṭha* are fully aware of this greatness of his son that *Rāma's* divinity gets focussed and that too not to the satisfaction of *Daśaratha*.

Subsequently, the episodes of *Mārīca* and *Subāhu*, *Ahalyā*, bending the bow of *Śiva*, defeating *Paraśurāma*, encounters with demons like *Virādha*, *Kabandha*, having a bridge erected across the sea by threatening the ocean and finally killing *Rāvana* and testing the chastity of *Sītā* through fire-ordeal are all various instances which testify the potential divinity of *Rāma* who, for himself, prefers being treated as an average human being. When several celestial deities glorify Him as the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu and worship Him accordingly at the time of the fire-ordeal of *Sītā*, *Rāma* tells them in all humility that He considers himself an ordinary human being.

But this does not mean that *Rāma* was totally ignorant of His potential divinity and some of his divine powers. When the two sages *Sarabhaṅga* and *Sutīkṣṇa* offer the fruit of all their penance, *Rāma* replies with a significant smile that he would himself manage to bag the fruit of such penance and secure a place in any of the celestial spheres accessible through penance. But He presents his immediate problem of finding a suitable shelter for a peaceful stay in the forest for the time-being. This shows how innocent He looks at times which is also a part of His divinity.

Another instance which shows that He was not ignorant of his divinity is that when he finds *Indra* near the hermitage of the sage *Śarabhaṅga*, he shows his eagerness to meet him and asks *Lakṣmaṇa* to stay back for some time. But *Indra* himself vanishes for the reason that *Rāma* should not be aware of His divinity till He kills *Rāvāṇa*, who can be killed only by a man or a monkey. Even after killing *Rāvāṇa*, *Rāma* preferred maintaining His status as a human being and not as a celestial deity. He loved humanity so much that divinity failed to attract Him. That is why most of the admirers and devotees of *Rāma* glorify Him as *maryādā puruṣottama*, the Supreme Soul within the limits of modesty.

But Lord *Kṛṣṇa* was somewhat different in this respect. He was *līlā mānuṣa vighraha*, an idol looking like a man just for fancy. He was always charming and enchanting in His looks, talks, movements, adventures and achievements. He revealed His divinity even at the time of his birth. His mother *Devakī* and father *Vasudeva* glorify and worship Him even in the prison where He chose to be born. He asked His father to shift him to *Yaśodā* and paved the way for the safe transportation and transplantation at the residence of *Nanda* and *Yaśodā*. His sportive life as a child and his killing *Kamsa* literally as a child's play, provide

ample evidence for His divine powers right from the beginning. This divine excellence of Lord *Kṛṣṇa* finds an elaborate illustration in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He was, however, presented in the *Mahābhārata* as a seasoned statesman, a diplomatic messenger of peace, an expert in warfare, an impartial promoter of justice, a friend and foe combined in one in discharging His role as an incarnation of the Supreme Soul with an objective vision and magnanimous mission and above all a practical preceptor for the entire world—*jagadguru*—who preached the highest philosophy in the battlefield to a person who refused to fight the battle at the last moment.

The objectivity of Lord *Kṛṣṇa* finds a glorious expression in His relationship with *Ācārya Bhīṣma* who, from his side, was also all admiration for the wonderful character, *Kṛṣṇa*. Even on the first occasion when he meets *Kṛṣṇa* in the *rājasuya yajña*, performed by the King *Dharmarāja*, he was so delighted to find the divine radiance in His face that he strongly recommends that *Kṛṣṇa* and *Kṛṣṇa* alone deserves to be honoured first in the august assembly. The actual wording in which *Bhīṣma* extols *Kṛṣṇa* is worth remembering to understand the real excellence of the Lord. He says:

कृष्ण एव हि लोकानामुत्पत्तिरपिचाप्ययः ।
कृष्णस्य हि कृते विश्वमिदं भूतं चराचरम् ॥
एष प्रकृतिरव्यक्ता कर्ता चैव सनातनः ।
परश्च सर्वभूतेभ्यस्तस्मात् पूज्यतमो हरिः ॥

Kṛṣṇa eva hi lokānām utpattirapicāpyayaḥ /
Kṛṣṇasya hi krīte viśvamidaṁ bhūtaṁ carācāram //
eṣa prakṛtiravyaktā kartā caiva sanātanaḥ /
paraśca sarvabhūtebhyastasmāt pūjyatamo hariḥ //

Kṛṣṇa alone is both the creative and destructive force in the world. The whole belongs to Him and is created for Him. He is the *prakṛti*, unmanifest in the world and also the eternal creator. He is above all the living beings and hence deserves to be honoured first.

It is worth recollecting in this context what *Kṛṣṇa* said about *Bhīṣma* when the latter was almost in the last moments of his life. He leads a spiritual delegation of all the five *Pāṇḍavas* to *Bhīṣma*, the most outstanding *ācārya* of his times, to receive his message and blessings. He says to *Dharmarāja*:

स हि भूतं भविष्यच्च भवच्च भरतर्षभ ।
वेत्ति धर्मविदां श्रेष्ठः तमस्मि शरणं गतः ॥

sa hi bhūtaṁ bhaviśyacca bhavacca bharatarṣabha /

vetti dharmavidām śreṣṭhaḥ tamasmi śaraṇam gataḥ //

He knows what is over, what is going to happen and what is going on. He excels all in the knowledge of *dharmā*- the eternal law of nature. I, therefore, seek refuge in him.

This highest tribute paid by the Supreme Soul Lord *Kṛṣṇa* reveals the greatness of the *ācārya* and the nobility of the Lord. But the same Lord rushed towards *Bhīṣma* with a wheel in his hand to attack him in the battlefield. This did not, however, cause any distress or discomfort to the *ācārya*. On the other hand, he was all admiration for the generosity of the Lord who has chosen to come personally to grant salvation to him. He remembers the facial complexion of the Lord at that time and ventilates his feelings when the Lord comes to him with his delegation just to hear his last words. It is worth recollecting this picturesque presentation of the Lord's complexion by his ardent admirer *Bīṣma*. The wording is :

त्रिभुवन कमनं तमाल वर्णं रविकर गौरबरांबरं दधाने ।
वपुरलक कुलावृताननाब्ज विजय सखे रतिरस्तु मेऽनवद्या ॥

tribhuvana kamanam tamāla varṇam
ravikara gaura varāmbaram dadhāne /
vapurālaka Kulāvṛtānanābja
vijaya sakhe ratirastu me'navadyā //

May I relish and cherish forever the radiant face of the Lord resplendent with the curling hair covering the forehead shining like a lotus and his garments as white and bright as the rays of the sun and his complexion enchanting and engrossing all the three worlds.

If we understand the feelings behind these words, we can understand *Kṛṣṇa*, what *Hanumān* was to *Rāma* and vice-versa. Like *Hanumān*, *Bhīṣma* was also deathless in the real sense of the term. The flag adorning the chariot of *Arjuna* driven by *Kṛṣṇa* carried the portrait of *Hanumān*. Though it looked like a symbol, it was not really so. *Kṛṣṇa* managed to instal real *Hanumān* on the flag, who was protecting the chariot from the powerful arrows that came from *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa*. The divine charioteer *Kṛṣṇa* discloses this fact to *Arjuna* when the latter finds the chariot burnt in a moment when *Kṛṣṇa* lays down His office relieving *Hanumān* too from his charge.

As a practical statesman, intelligent diplomat and a judicious counsel, *Kṛṣṇa* played a significant role in the great battle of *Mahābhārata*. It is true that He always supported *Pāṇḍavas*. But what attracted Him to their side is their soft temperament

and positive attitude towards truth and justice even when they were subjected to inhuman treatment and gross injustice. His main concern was to support the good and suppress the evil. He tried His best to convince the *Kauravas* to agree to the bare minimum justice *Pāṇḍavas* asked for. He Himself acted as an emissary to avoid war. But when He was also ill-treated, inspite of His manifestation as a cosmic figure He found that there was no alternative except war and left for Dwaraka allowing the future to take its own course. When *Duryodhana* approaches Him for support in the inevitable battle. He readily agreed to place his enormous army at his disposal and stand by the *Pāṇḍavas* as a moral supporter according to their own free choice.

It is true that *Kṛṣṇa* had to use His diplomatic skill in handling the hard-core villains, like *Jayadratha*, *Aśvatthāmā* and *Duryodhana* who had no heart. But this he adopted only as a last resort. When *Gāndhārī* complains against the most unkindest way her son *Duryodhana* was slain by hitting him below the navel, *Bhisma* gives a fitting reply and *Kṛṣṇa* agrees with him just by keeping quiet. He was not at all disturbed when *Gāndhārī* cursed Him. He accepted it as He knew that it was going to happen in any case. The purpose for which He came down to the earth was served and He returned to His eternal abode with full satisfaction and a sense of achievement.

The same attitude we find in *Rāma* too. The only difference is that *Rāma* always tried to avoid destruction, but never hesitated to undertake it when absolutely necessary in the larger interests of global peace and harmony. He killed *Vālī* to restore the aggrieved *Sugrīva* to his rightful status. He killed *Trātakā* to please the sage *Viśvāmitra* and meet the requirements of peace and justice. He welcomed *Vibhīṣaṇa* to change the mind of *Rāvaṇa* and avoid the terrible loss of life on account of a single sinful soul. When *Sugrīva* was nervous about entertaining the own brother of an avowed enemy, *Rāma* said in categorical terms that He was prepared to welcome even *Rāvaṇa* and pardon him for all that he has done, if only he surrenders himself unconditionally and seeks His protection. This is the height of nobility and generosity that *Rāma* displays.

When Lord *Kṛṣṇa* manifested Himself in His cosmic form *Viśvarūpa* in the royal palace of *Duryodhana*, none but *Saṅjaya* could visualise the immense potentialities of this supernatural phenomenon displayed by the Supreme Soul.

Saṅjaya says in spontaneous reaction to the magnificent manifestation of Lord *Kṛṣṇa* :

यतः सत्यं यतो धर्मो यतो ह्रीरार्जवं यतः ।
ततो भवति गोविन्दो यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ॥

*Yataḥ satyaṁ yato dharmo yato hrīrārjavarṅ yataḥ ।
tato bhavati govindo yataḥ kṛṣṇastato jayaḥ ॥*

Where there is truth, justice, modesty and straight forwardness, there *Govinda* is. Where there is *Kṛṣṇa*, there goes the victory.

These words of *Saiñjaya* remind us of *Mandodarī's* words of wisdom despite the miserable plight she finds in for the fault of her husband *Rāvaṇa*. She says :

शुभकृत् शुभमाप्नोति पापकृत् पापमश्नुते ।

*śubhakṛt śubhamāpnoti pāpakṛt pāpamaśnute –
(Good breeds good and evil begets evil)*

Rāvaṇa realised this even on the first day of his encounter with *Rāma*. He was almost collapsing; but the generosity of *Rāma* advised him to go home and take rest and if he feels like to come back to the battle field later. *Rāvaṇa*, however, chooses to face *Rama* to the end, when all his supporters including his beloved son *Indrajit* sacrificed their lives. At one point of time *Rāvaṇa* exclaims in a mood of realization :

This mighty *Rāghava* is not an ordinary man as several demons have lost their lives in his hands. He is the invincible *Nārāyaṇa* Himself, who has come down to earth.

Thus the two facets of excellence that find a glorious self-expression in the two celebrities *Rāma* and *Kṛṣṇa* broadly stand for the two basic values of life - *satyam* (truth) and *dharmā* (rightcousness) which are normally interdependent. What is true is bound to be right and what is right cannot but be based on truth. This complimentary character we find in the two incarnations *Rāma* and *Kṛṣṇa*.

ON MA ANANDAMAYI

— Ma Suryananda Lakshmi

[Continued from before]

(v)

And now another approach, another variation, Ma had many.

Somebody says to her "One should do what pleases God most." (repeated twice)

But we don't know what that is ! Well then, Ma answers in a rather abrupt way: "That's it, you ask for something from God and you get it" (repeated twice).

Listen to what she adds "But that will lead you nowhere."

God is indivisible, if you want to beg something of God, let it be full realization, that means to see God in everything, in life and death, in joy and in sorrow, in the pleasant and the unpleasant.

All is one and all is God.

And life and death are eternity together, and good and evil are saintliness together.

That's it, you ask something from God and you get it; but "that will lead you nowhere. You learn nothing."

Jesus also said: "Verily, verily, they get their reward." That is to say, they learn nothing at all.

Now, we have to learn to go further, and to learn we have to receive inner and outer blows from life, which oppose us, which show us where we are. (repeated twice).

We believe, we have gained a certain steadiness, a certain spirituality, a certain devotion, and then lo ! Further developments may be very tough, and I know some which really are. The idea to minimize them is not for me, for it is then that one sees if it works. (repeated twice).

My lord and my God I love you. My lord and my God, I am exhausted, I don't understand any more, I cannot move forward any more, but I love you. My lord and my God, I love you. (repeated twice).

And then, the Lord comes, he takes hold of your hand and leads you further, and further, nobody may know where, it is always something very different from what one thinks.

It is said, and I did believe it, it is said that with life, with age, with increasing spirituality, worldly duties fall away bit-bit and decrease. But as for me, I can tell you I experienced the opposite; getting older I got always more material things to do on the human level, and do have all of you (repeated twice), in France, Switzerland, Germany, England, the Netherlands, United States, Canada, and all around. But that's not true at all, when you are ageing, you'll have less things to do, but as for me I experience the opposite.

So, one never knows, life goes as it wills, life goes as it should. Life goes according to God's will, to take us where He wishes. And it takes us often a lot of time to understand. Now I have understood, but it took me quite some years to understand why, although I was doing apparently a good job through my conferences, my tours, with the people and the mail, why I am more and more overcome by worldly duties, both in my family and outside, instead of having less to do, I have more. I finally understood I am not going to tell you what, I finally understood, but it took some time. Rabindranath Tagore says it very nicely "Lord, through your refusals, you always gratify me to the full." The daily bread of the dominical prayer, this daily bread I have explained, specially in my book *Foi et Spiritualite Chretienne, Volume-2* This daily bread, "Give us today our daily bread", is also sometimes a refusal. Today's gift, today's bread, today's page, is a refusal, to allow us to grow. (repeated twice)

Because, as Ma rightly says: "You receive what you ask for, but you don't learn anything."

If you ask anything of God, you should ask for God. My Lord and my God, you alone.

To get realization of that, which is all, indivisible, you have to sustain an uninterrupted endeavor, that's true, in order to realize that, the absolute, the indivisible. I repeat the word indivisible, where all is one. The labour on Earth, the labour in heaven are one, indivisible, You have to make an uninterrupted effort, always, always, always.

What is enlightenment? Actual enlightenment is to know God.

Sadness and sorrow prevail, where God's love is missing (repeated twice).

So we have to tell ourselves, when we are unhappy: you don't love enough. You have to love more.

Sadness and sorrow prevail, where God's love is missing (repeated twice).

So it is very easy, when we see we are not all right, we should say to ourselves: well, you don't love enough.

And my husband and myself are facing difficult circumstances in our family at the moment, we didn't know really what to do; and then I pondered a little while, and I said: we should love them more, we should love them as they are, and let us continue like that.

And it is true, it is within love that one understands, gradually, what is right, what is true, and it is not anywhere else.

(vi)

And now a real treasure. "Ma's relationship to the sky, the earth, the water, the sun and the stars is different from ours and shows an understanding or rather a "cosmic" love different from ours. To her, nature is not "another life", as it is to us, it is one and the same, rooted in the Self; the distinction between nature and spirit does not exist in the Self where she lives." All is One. All is God. (repeated twice).

The soul is the body, the body is the soul, they are indivisible, inseparable. The soul without the body would not be here below, nor the body without the soul would be here below.

All is One. All is God. To learn to see things in their fullness, in their unity, and not with our apparent divisions. (repeated twice).

To learn to see things in their undivided fullness, in their unity and not in their visible separation. We are not apart from God (repeated twice), but we think we are separate from God. We are not separate one from another. When you have left here, and everybody is at his home-we are always all together. (repeated twice). And when, one or other among us needs some help, he may find it, by thinking of someone, whom he thinks may help him. All is One. All is God. All is Light.

And now I would like to tell you, my friends: Worship the sun, when it rises in the morning, it will give you great strength. Worship the moon, when it rises, when it is full, it will give you a great strength. Hail the day. Hail the stars. Hail the earth. Hail the green leaves, nature which is born again, this gives great strength.

And one can very well feel that all is spirit, that all is God, that the sun is *Surya*, the nectar and the enlightener, that the moon is *Suryapushan*, the inner sun, the secret sun, the secret worship, or it is Harikrishna, the full moon. The stars are the gods in the firmament. The earth, nature, the greenery is the life of the spirit, just as man is the life of the spirit. All is One. All is God.

Again I am reading this from the preface of Jean Herbert's book:

"Ma's relationship to the sky, the earth, the water, the sun and the stars is different from ours and shows an understanding or rather "cosmic" love different from ours". Worship the sun, love the moon, love the stars, love the earth, love the

flowers, love the trees, and very simply love also the stones, because the stones also are life. A cosmic love relates us and everything around that we see different from us. "To her the nature is not "another life" as it is to us; it is one and the same, rooted in the Self; the distinction between nature and spirit does not exist in the Self where she lives"

And she said while in her body "I was the same, I am the same, I shall be the same." So she was in immortality (repeated twice).

(vii)

And finally, something I had selected earlier.

The question "How do we know there is rebirth after death ? As soon as the body stops breathing, we die, how can we say we are reborn ?"

Ma : "This is ignorance, why looking so far ? Nobody knows what will be the next hour" (repeated twice) And yet knowledge exists, those who have gone through the veil of ignorance speak to us of the eternal *ātman*, of the eternal soul, of the immortal soul, from which everything proceeds, wherefrom everything originates, in which everything grows and to which everything returns.

And we are all, near or far, the entire world, the past, we are the unique soul, and in this unique soul, nobody dies, and this unique soul lives in us, as it lives in those who have apparently left us.

The *rishi*, who has seen the truth, knows life is eternal and death is but a passage, nothing else. We have to accept everything which comes to us, be it painful or difficult.

It is God who is, it is God who knows, it is God who does.

All what he does is for our good. Ma also said so. God does everything for our good, everything. He is love, He is light, He is immortality, He is sweetness, He is fullness, He is bliss.

And when Ma was asked, after a long *samadhi*, what happened, she answered: 'only bliss.' (repeated twice).

Then you are going to say, but we, we are far from bliss. It is not true ! (repeated twice) Don't say, never say, we are far from bliss, it is not true, it is there, it is within us, it is waiting for us. What is it waiting for ? It is waiting, like Kunti, but for our surrender to manifest itself. My lord and my God, I am giving myself to you. My lord and my God, I belong to you, you alone. And consequently I belong to the whole universe and all humanity. My lord and my God, I love you, I am giving myself to you, I belong to you, it is you who knows,

it is you who will do. I am but the instrument, that you will use in one-way or another.

Only bliss ! The bliss of man's love, the bliss of God's love, the bliss of the forgetfulness of myself, the bliss of the work done with one's hand, or with one's intelligence, or with one's heart, or with one's soul, or with one's spirit. The work offered, step by step, to the only one Lord of the harvest, to talk like Jesus, the work offered to the sole Lord of the harvest, to talk like Jesus, to the only Lord of the vineyard.

"Pray to God and you will receive his blessing". (repeated twice). One has simply to believe it, one has to believe it, one has to practice it. The work offered, step by step to the only Lord of the harvest, to talk like Jesus. You see, the most beautiful theories of the world, the most beautiful teachings of the world are nothing if we do not live in them. Only practice brings what is promised by the Scriptures, only practice. Pray unceasingly.

And you see the fun, you see how funny man is. We were last year at the house of "The Little Sisters of the Child Jesus" who were set up by Nicolas Barre, who is beatified; he is not yet canonized, his canonization process has not yet started, which is perfectly ridiculous, because it is God who give saintliness-nobody else. This father, who founded this order "The Little Sisters of the Child Jesus" has said many prayers and he said over and over again "Pray unceasingly." (repeated thrice).

And that was what we were doing: reading the Bible, collecting ourselves, truly praying, praying without ceasing, and I have quoted Father Nicolas Barre. And the "Little Sisters of the Child Jesus" sent us away ! They put us out ! 'Such are the ways of people !'

So one should go on praying and say to oneself that, if one really prays without any idea of one's own importance, without thinking, "I have the truth, not you". Pray, simply pray, The answer comes from God and the answer is good, and the work is done in one way or another (repeated twice).

Only bliss. (repeated twice) "I was the same, I am the same, I shall be the same." The truth is to know...things.

To contemplate God with open eyes, this is also possible. (repeated twice) And this is the love of the world, for all is one, all is God. There is no division, the men who see divisions, men who create divisions, are wrong and are unhappy.

Shri Aurobindo said "Contemplate God with open eyes", for all is one, all is God.

The world is so small and the Lord so great (repeated twice). And we are so small in his immensity. Jesus has said, I wonder at one thing, that the infinite has been able to show itself in poverty, and poverty is God's love.

We are nothing without Him, we are everything in Him. "Our father who art in heaven.. for ever and ever." Lord, thank you ! Lord, keep our hearts grateful in Jesus Christ, in Ma Anandamayee ! Lord, bless your children ! Take pity on men, take pity on the people ! Let thy mercy and thy grace, thy wisdom and thy love, thy light and thy truth, come down in all hearts ! Take pity on men, take pity on the people ! My lord and my God, blessed be thy name ! Blessed be thy name for ever and ever ! My lord and my God, I love you ! (repeated thrice)

"Pray to God and you will receive His blessing". Amen.

WORTHY CHILD

Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā Ānandamayee
Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā Ānandamayee

Sheltered in Your Love
And surrendered at Your Feet,
I will always seek
The way that leads to You.
Help me be a worthy child of Yours.

Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā Ānandamayee
Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā, Mā Ānandamayee

Like a candle flame,
My devotion leaps to You.
Keep it burning ever pure and ever bright.

Fill my mind with thoughts of only You.

(Repeat twice)

VEDANTA AND TANTRA —A SYNTHETIC STUDY

—Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly

[Continued from before]

The first sloka of the 15th chapter of the *Gītā* describes the creation of the everlasting 'pipal' tree of the universe. The tenth *sloka* of the 9th chapter describes how with the seal and sanction of God, nature carried on the function of creation. In the 13th chapter the nature of *kshetra*, the field of action of *kshetrajna* (soul) is described. The 7th chapter describes the *parā prakriti* (life principle) and the *aparāprakriti*, consisting of mind, intellect, ego and the five subtle elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth. The 3rd *sloka* of the 14th chapter describes how God, as father of creation, impregnates *Mahat Brahma* (Nature), who is the mother of creation. *Sloka* 16 of eighth chapter describes how a *jīvātmā* may rise upto *Brahmaloka*, but may have to come back to the earth, after the expiry of the results of virtuous deeds, but no such return is inevitable, if a true devotee of God reaches His *Paramadhāma*, that is the *Prakrityānda* of Tantra *sāstra* or *Māyānda* or *śaktyānda*. Such cosmic vision of the *Brahmānda* and the worlds beyond can be obtained from 18 *Purānas* and 64 *Tantras* also in great detail.

Evolution, according to Śākta and Śaiva Theory

We have already got a glimpse of the process of creation according to *Vedānta* and *Tantra*. However, a brief encounter with the categories of *Sāmkhya* philosophy and Kashmir Saivism will help us in understanding the nature of the *samsāramandala* as described by Acharya Gopinath Kaviraj. The analysis of Nature and its evolution according to *Kāshmir śaiva* philosophy (based on *śivasutra* of *Tantra*) is more comprehensive than any of the six systems of ideal monism founded by Vasugupta in the ninth century. Its central position is that there is only one ultimate principle, but this principle has two aspects — one transcendental and the other immanent. Its analysis of the process of cosmic evolution postulates 36 categories (*tattvas*). What other systems assume, Kashmir śaivism explains, for it shows the origin of spirit and matter; it discusses the nature of the ultimate principle, and it explains the cause of the initial impulse in Nature. The 36 *tattvas* of Kashmir śaivism include the 24 *tattvas* of *Sāmkhya* philosophy, and the 12 additional categories above *Purusha tattva* (*aham*) and *Prakriti tattva* (*idam*) are: (1)

Parāśakti (Paramasīva), (2) *Siva tattva*, (3) *Śakti tattva*, (4) *Sadāsiva*, (5) *Ishvara*, (6) *Sadvidyā* (7) *Māyā*, (8) *Kāla*, (9) *Niyāti*, (10) *Rāga*, (11) *Vidyā*, and (12) *Kalā*. From *Prithvi* to *Mahat* of *Sāmkhya*, the *tattvas* (elements or categories) are *ashuddha* (impure or gross), from *Purusha* to *Mayā* the elements are mixed (*suddhā-suddha*) and the categories from *Sadvidyā* to *Sadāsiva*, they are pure (*suddha tattva*). Creation or evolution takes place from *Siva tattva* and *Sakti tattva* down to *Prithvi tattva*. Hence the practical process of *sādhana* for liberation should start from the withdrawal of the impure and mixed elements and end with the final realization of the oneness with *Paramasīva* or *Para Brahma* of the Vedānta.

The '*Purusa Sukta*' and '*Devi Sukta*' of the *Rig Veda* are the connecting links between the *Veda* and *Tantra*. A glimpse of the *Sahasra Sirsha Purusha* can be obtained from the *vishwarupa* of the *Gītā* and the meaning of '*dasāngulam atyatisthat*' can be understood only from the picture of *samsāramandala* in higher *Tantra śāstra*. The *pañchāgni vidyā* and the Vedic eugenic science, as mentioned in the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* can never be fully understood without reference to practical *Tantra*. *Tantra* worships *śakti* which leads to liberation, and modern civilization. The only formula for saving modern humanity from the brink of annihilation can be found in a happy blending of the Vedantic ideals and *Tantric sādhanā*.

The '*Rātri-sukta*' of the *Rig Veda* (X-127) also gives a description of Goddess *Kālī* in the form of the dark night which ushers in *Ushā*, the harbinger of light and enlightenment. The '*Devī Sukta*' of *Tantra* and *Chandī (Durgā Saptaśati)* give a much greater detail of the nature and power of Goddess *Durga (Chandī, Kālī, etc.)* According to Śrī Rāmakrishna, '*Brahma*' and '*Kālī*' are the same, the former term signifies the transcendental aspect of God and the latter the *divyāchāri (sāttvik and pure)* worship of the icon of *Kālī*, but he was very critical about the *vāmāchāri (tāmasic or sensuous)* methods of worship. Swami Vivekananda decried *vāmāchāri tantra sādhanā* of Bengal and exhorted the youth to 'read the true *śāstras*, the *Vedās*, the *Gītā*, the *Upanishads*', in his reply to the Calcutta address at Sobha-bazar. *Vāmāchāri Tantra* was as much the cause of the downfall of later Buddhism, as that of medieval Hinduism. Śankaracharya and Śrī Chaitanya had revived Hindu religion through 'their propagation of monistic Vedānta and qualified monistic *bhakti* (devotion) movements respectively. The sheet anchor of Hindu religion being the *Bhagavad Gītā* according to all *ācharyas*, saints and prophets of India, the synthesis of yoga has to be sought through the *Gītā*. However, those intellectual aspirants, who are of *sattva-guna* (of pure and virtuous nature) and who want to reconcile religion with modern science, may seek refuge in *divyāchāri tantra sādhanā*, as propounded by Śrī Rāmakrishna, Śrī Aurobindo, Śrī Mā

Ānandamayee and Mahāmahopādhyāy Gopināth Kavirāj. *Sadhan Samar* by Brahmārshi Satyadeva, *Japasutra* by Swami Pratyagātmananda *Saraswati and Tāntrik Guru* by Swami Nigamānanda are three very good texts on the *divyāchari* method of tantra *sāadhanā*. Of course, wherever there is any doubt or conflict regarding the *Tāntric*, *Vaishnava* or *Hatha-yogic* methods of *sāadhanā*, reconciliation has to be sought in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which is the most authoritative text of practical Vedānta.

My Offerings to Thee*

—Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

I took the music from songs
 And I took the sentiment of all poesies;
 I drew the elixir from all nectars
 And plucked the fragrance out of blossoms;
 I took thought from all minds,
 I took the soul of my own love,
 I seized the symphony of the spheres,
 I pulled power out of all life;
 I distilled Thy mercy out of my prayers,
 I brewed Thy love in my heart,
 I picked the quintessence of silences,
 I took all devotion in the vase of my reverence;
 And brought these all to Thee.
 Wilt Thou come out of Thy hiding place
 And receive my humble offerings,
 From my own self—
 From me ?

*. Courtesy : Journal of the Self Realzation Fellowship.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OVERFLOWS - ANANDAMAYEE MA

—Sri S.K. Bose

For Anandamayee Ma the universe in an expression of "One" and that was the reason that Her Love flows to all beings and creatures in the world equally. It is purest of pure, pleasing, permeates in every body's mind and heart. When the seeker merges in the beatitude of Her love, he cries within, dives within, outweighing both inner and outer imperfections. She is only One and One alone. Every individual to Her is a bundle of love with no condition what-so-ever. Her love attracts every nerve, tissues, arteries and all their branches and their functions etc. This was probably the reason people went after Her madly forgetting social and religious norms, rituals etc. But most of them were inclined to fulfill their worldly desires, personal gains etc. Anandamayee Ma once smilingly expressed to Guru Priya Didi, "People only want their desires, like : i) winning in litigations, ii) elevation of dignity and excellence, iii) to be blessed by wealth, iv) healing illness. Whereas in true love one does not demand any thing, nothing physically, emotionally or intellectually".

Love of Ma for all of us is beyond all reasons. On the contrary our love carries ambitions, desires etc. "It is to be realized once a direct bonding is established with the Supreme you are self contained. No prayer or desire remains unfulfilled". One becomes emperor of the whole universe. In fact, understanding and realizing unconditional love of Ma to all beings is then surfaced. The individual mind gradually ceases to flicker, becomes still with stability.

The author got many opportunities to see Anandamayee Ma both closely and from distance, loved her presence, not knowing why. Nothing special, no distinction or eminence was felt. Yet an unknown force prevented to depart or divert my attention from Her personality. She was one amongst every body, sitting, standing, even walking, yet astonishingly some speciality all the time surfacing out, which is beyond my capacity to comprehend, except to aspire. She was beautiful with an excellent motherly look and behaviour. She was everything, my consolation in sorrow, hope in misery and strength in weakness. She was the source of love, mercy, sympathy and forgiveness. He who had not seen and talked to her, lost unique heavenly opportunities in experiencing a pure soul guarding us all the time from perils and fix us on the right track for advancement towards truth

and immortality. She was the house of refuge of thousands of despairing hearts. Among them were many from Western countries. They never understood Her spoken words, yet never failed to catch the fragrance of Her super-human love. It heals the wound of the heart broken by all the painful events that might have happened to them.

Anandamayee Ma loved all of us and in return begged from us only 15 minutes for ever to reiterate the name of God. She urged Netaji Subhash as well to think for some time the power (*ātmā*) that dwells in his heart. In reply Netaji Subhash said he would try. All these happened when he visited Dakshineswar Temple to see Anandamayee Ma. What is required is patience and perseverance to realize eternal, unconditional and unselfish love of Her's. It is unbreakable, undiminishing, absolutely free from conditions.

People exhibits several means of expressing power of love. For instance, love for the country, community, approach towards social service and so on. But strictly speaking, love would be unseen, unheard, unfelt and would remain altogether unexpressed, unmanifested. It is of no limit and its magnitude cannot be measured by comparison or through any fundamental unit. Obviously perfect unconditional love needs to dwell in an unselfish instrument absolutely free from burden. Anandamayee Ma was such an instrument functioned by sudden spontaneous upsurge of divine will and therefore Her love was free from boundaries of all caste and creed, motivating everyone to realize Her as their own. Whereas we loved Ma for materialistic or undue spiritual gains and in case our ambitions are not met, our love gradually diminishes and remains no longer lasting. This applies even to devotees who were in close association with Ma and attended some degree of spiritual perfection. This was probably the reason why Abhay Maharaj, whom Atmananda used to say as the 'Young God', met Mataji for first time in the year 1938, but left Her company. He travelled with Anandamayee Ma constantly for many years and later departed from Her company on account of not being transformed into deep spiritual consciousness, no matter what it is, what primary condition or degree of spiritual perfection was required to be attained. He was desperately eager to become liberated from the cycle of birth and death. Having appetite of this magnitude one cannot sit anywhere peacefully or associated with any saint or enlightened individual. He may either get into some hasty action such as leaving the company or become faddy. Out of disappointment and frustration he left Mataji's association and established a separate hermitage at Kolkata staying totally aloof from Her. He was so much perturbed that even ignored Mataji's presence at the residence of Sri Srish Chandra Banerjee, which was about five

minutes walk from our house at Allahabad in the year 1947-48, where incidentally he was resting at that time. Abhay Maharaj in response to my telling exclaimed, "I do not want to go about seeing people. She has come, so what am I to do ?" But unconditional love and kindness of Ma towards him was so intense that she silently visited Kirtan Kutir in Kolkata, where Abhay Maharaj was staying and suffering from serious illness. She without any hesitation brought him to Varanasi ashram for treatment at Mata Anandamayee Hospital, where after recovery he passed long ten years of his life under Ma's loving care. It will not be out of place to record that every sincere person agrees in saying, "Love and kindness are best, but its reality is perceptible in deeds not in words." It needs an unselfish instrument like Mataji, absolutely free from fetters and boundaries, loving everyone, even creatures, plants as Her own equally, unconditionally.

Once Prof. Birendra Mukhrejee, elder brother of Guru Priya Didi, performed Kali Puja at Shahbagh in Dhaka. At the close of the puja the moment a goat was to be sacrificed a finger of him was injured by the sword and the goat ran away to Ma. Instead of sacrificing the goat Ma asked him to offer his own blood that was collected on Bilwa leaf and offered to Goddess Kali. She ordered the goat to be left free to roam after painting with a particular colour. Bholanath protested but Ma did not reply. The goat used to move around Shahbagh Garden in the day time and return in the evening to Mataji's room for rest. The goat and a stray dog used to sit either by her side or by putting their heads on her lap. This clearly indicates how She loved everyone even animals, plants as Her own, equally, without any distinction. No doubt it is difficult in the beginning, but on regular practice mind becomes free from thoughts, desires, egos, leaving into a state of nothingness.

The basic method of acquiring this quality of unconditional love is expressed by Ma in response to a question posed by a young girl, "First of all concentrate on the form of the deity, imagining Him to be enthroned on the seat, bow down before Him and do *japa*. When you have concluded the *japa* bow down once again and having enthroned Him in your heart leave your seat". The more you contemplate on Him the more rapid will be the progress towards absolute realization of the Self.

We can never control what appears in the external world around us, but our internal world is in our hand. If one is dead earnest this very seriousness will lead to enlightenment. It is definitely not a talent, it is discovering your being and the being of everyone is absolutely equal. Once you are successful everything, creatures, plants, all objects become one and your love ultimately will flow over to others equally unconditionally. This is true in case of Anandamayee Ma, who loved us unconditionally, but we are ignorant and are unable to realize.

This happened even with Atmananda at the time when some one asked her, "Why you have boarded in this car ? Have you hurt your legs ?" Although her legs got wounded in the previous night, yet she felt humiliated, expressing, "every body enters Her car, but in my case a question like this ?" This probably was the reason why Mataji often used to say, "You people love me, but you don't know how much I love all of you".

It reminds again her utterings—"Asking, seeking and knocking must be genuine, must come out of the inner depths, only then you will get appropriate response of Her motherly love." Then only we ignorant seekers will be able to feel Her love internally.

"Talking and being in the company of people is waste of time. Life is short, meditate, try to find yourself. The blessings of God is always pouring down on you, but if you hold your vessel upside down, you cannot realize it."

OUR SEVENTH TRIP TO INDIA

—Shraddha Davenport

[Continued from before]

Mother was expected to return the next morning. I wondered how Her health would be after such a long trip with no rest. Actually, She had been travelling since leaving Bhimpura on March sixth.

It was not easy to close my eyes that night. At 5:30 a.m. the alarm clock sounded and we prepared to go to the ashram. There we purchased garlands and sat on the short wall near Dasu's display of books and photographs, waiting for Mother.

When Her car arrived, we hurried to watch as She stepped out. We followed Her up the steps and into the temple where She greeted the deities in each shrine. Then She sat with us for a short time. We offered our garlands, hoping to be received, as in the past, by Her look and sweet smile. She was engaged in short conversations with various ashramites who were getting things ready for the Bhagavat Saptaha, and did not seem to notice that we were there.

She stood, walked to the front of the Chhelia (Krishna) Mandir, stopped and related a few details of Her four-day train trip. Mother had been to Calcutta as well as to Varanasi. It was good to see Her so animated. How strange is Her *lila*. She appeared stronger than before making that long journey.

Behind the Chhelia Mandir was a room where Mother would stay for the next two days. When She went into that room, we left the ashram. Darshan was to be around 6:00 p.m., so we went to the dharmashala until that time.

The Bhagavat Saptaha which would commence the next day, March twelfth, was being performed for the benefit of our dear friend, Binu Niyogi. He had passed away on November 23, 1979, in the most auspicious way, and as he had wished, in sacred Kashi (Varanasi). We were glad that by chance we were there during those days.

Binuda's wife and son had arrived. We were glad to meet his son for the first time as he seemed to have much of his father's sweet nature. Anindita, Binuda's daughter, had come with her family. They stayed near us at Neem Karoli Baba's dharmasala. I have written about her and Binuda when we were together in 1975, also at Vrindavan. They had a very special bond and I could feel her sadness at his

loss. We would always remember our special times with him. His love of Mother was always central to his conversations with us and we were blessed to have known him.

That evening we sat in the satsang hall observing *maun* from 6:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., then Mother came out and sat with us for about twenty minutes. She looked more like She was two years previously, as though Her health was better than when She arrived in Vrindavan five days ago.

After darshan we were delighted to receive a telegram which had come for us at the ashram. It was from the American Swami Nirmalananda, telling us that he and one brahmachari would be arriving in Vrindavan on March fifteenth. We had spent many wonderful days together with Mother, but it had been a long time since last we had met, and I was very pleased to know that our reunion would take place where our hearts had always been together—at Her Holy feet.

While having breakfast the next morning, I spilled something on my sari and had to change. That was an unfortunate delay, as when we got to the ashram at 7:20 a.m. Mother was already sitting in the satsang hall. Melita said that Mother had been there for about forty-five minutes. Only a few people were there and I was able to sit quite near Mother. She was so beautiful, looking even younger and stronger than She was the day before.

The final preparations were being done for the Bhagavat Saptah and Mother was supervising the arrangements. She looked at me several times, usually when I was praying. She sat with us for about one hour.

As on one previous occasion, I felt an urgency to study Her features, turning every detail into my mind and heart. Desperately I thought, "One day I will not be able to gaze upon those Divine features and behold Her graceful form."

I traced with my eyes the gentle line of Her forehead, remembering (from when we did Her puja) how incredibly soft Her skin was. The tilt of Her small nose, those wonderful dark eyes possessing all colors within them. Her smooth high cheeks, how the corners of Her mouth always held a smile, and the strength of Her chin jutting forward. The soft darkness of her fine hair falling gently down Her back. Hands moving like little birds, fluttering, then quietly nestling in Her lap. Tiny feet peeking from below Her dhoti, so beautifully formed, the soles having a pink blush. Each little toe was delicately perfect. I watched Her toes to touch the floor as She leaned forward, then stood. We all pronounced as She left the hall.

Outside we spoke with Melita who told us that Swami Akhandanandaji would be arriving at 10:00 a. m. It was only a little past 8:00 a.m., so we went to the dharmasala for a short time.

When we returned it was just past 10:00 a.m. Our rickshaw carried us to the temple steps. Gadadhar was standing there, and Satya asked him if Mother was in the hall. Gadadhar said that She was in the building, but had not come out of Her room yet.

Gadadhar suggested that we purchase garlands so that we could do pronam. As we stood together talking, some of our frustration began to come out. On the previous morning, when we had offered garlands, Mother appeared not to notice us and one of the girls took our garlands, touched them to Mother's wooden bench, and then returned them to us. Satya speculated that if Mother did not receive the offering then it must be just symbolic, so why do it ? We created great "symbolic" offerings and laughed at our foolishness, but I could not deny that the feelings which Satya openly expressed were within my heart as well.

Then we purchased our garlands and went into the satsang hall to see Mother. Her seat had been placed before the front windows on the left as we entered the hall. A few people were doing pronam and we stood in line to wait our turn . The same thing was happening where different ashramites would need to speak with Mother and She would turn Her attention to them as people bowed before her.

Satya had been observing that, and had reconciled himself to being "ignored". When his turn came, he could see that Mother was again speaking with someone standing near Her. As he bowed he held his garland toward Mother. She, in one great sweeping motion, turned from Her conversation, took Satya's garland from his hand, placed it over his bowed head, and looked squarely at him when he raised his eyes. Smiling over Her folded hands, She asked him, "Thik hai ?" Choked with emotion, he murmured softly, "Thik hai, Ma." He had not escaped Her notice whether at Her feet, outside the building, or halfway around the world.

How can we ever think that She is unaware of us ? How can we imagine that She is bound by our human limitations ? She has said, "I am always with you" If an ordinary person makes such a remark, we think, "Yes, that person has a special remembrance of me," but when Mother says, "always", that is not a conditional term. Is it possible to comprehend "*always*" ?

What that experience means to Satya is, of course, his alone. But I also find great solace in that revelation.

Mother sat with us for long time before Swami Akhandanandaji arrived. When he entered the hall, Mother greeted him warmly. Soon the two of them made every one feeling jubilant as they talked and laughed together. I was delighted to see Mother in that light mood. It was as if She had turned time back to earlier days: That wonderful darshan filled my heart with sweetness and intoxicated my mind.

Swami Akhandanandaji spoke for some time about the Srimad Bhagavat and I simply basked in the joy of Mother's presence. After the discourse we all pronounced and then stood as Mother walked to Her room.

The Bhagavat Saptaha was to start at 4:00 p.m., so we went to the dharmasala for our mid-day meal and a short rest.

It was not yet 4:00 p.m. when we returned to the ashram. Mother had come into the hall early and few people were there. I was able to sit quite near Mother and had a full view of Her from head to toe. I watched as one of the girls removed Mother's knitted leg warmers and slipped Her little white stocking onto Her feet.

Mother was very attentive to the beginning of the Bhagavat Saptah which was conducted by Sri Narayan Goswami. After about thirty minutes some people came and Mother went with them into Her room.

We went outside and were told that darshan would be at Mother's house by the garden after 6:15 p.m. *maun*. That was a lovely spot for meditation, so we went there and sat at the garden's edge on the patio facing Mother's house.

I was enjoying the meditation in that beautiful spot and feeling very peaceful when Satya suddenly poked me on the arm. I opened my eyes and saw Mother on the roof. She was seated back a little from the railing.

At 6:15 p.m. Mother stepped up to the railing and stood with us. Her wonderful eyes beheld all who stood below on the patio. Twice She looked right into my eyes for a long time. It was one of those instances when She made time stand still.

Brahmachari Nitai came to where Satya and I stood. As he gave *prasad* to us, Mother walked out of our view.

We were both so intoxicated that we felt a little giddy. As we stood there, Satya told me of the blessing which he had just received. He said that during *maun*, while his eyes were closed, he heard Mother call his name from the roof. Opening his eyes, he looked up and saw just the top of Mother's head, then as She stepped closer to the railing, Her face came into view. She was looking straight at him and smiling. Later, when Nitai came with *prasad*, he walked to Satya first. With a wink and a smile he said, "This is especially for you."

I was unaware of any of that when it was happening. It is a perfect example of how Mother could have a very intimate play with a devotee while in the midst of a crowd, still no one but Mother and the devotee would perceive it.

That wonderful day was like a lush oasis in the arid desert. We simply revelled in the pure nectar of Her sweet compassion, forgetting about the desert.

The next morning we went to the ashram about 9:30 a. m. I did japa as we sat in the peaceful atmosphere near Mother's house. Brahmacharini Vasu came over to

where we sat. She spoke with me for a little while and made us both feel most welcome. At noon we went to do some errands, and then to the dharmasala.

In the evening we returned to Mother's house for darshan. Mother came out onto the roof at 6:15 p.m. and seemed to take special notice of each one of us below on the patio. Two times I received the blessing of being held by Her gaze.

When Mother went to Her room, we stayed and talked with Nirvananandaji for a while. He told us a little more about Mother's sojourn to Calcutta six days previously. Some time ago Mother had a vision in which an old lady was doing Sri Ramakrishna's puja and all of his old devotees were there. While in Bhimpura, Mother had the *kheyāla* to go to Belur Math, the monastery and headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. When Mother arrived at Belur Math, She was there for only an hour. Her return train trip was difficult as the train had problems and Mother's car was on a side rail waiting for several hours. How strange is Her lila ! I wonder about the mystery behind that story.

When we came to the ashram the following morning we sat and did japa near Mother's house. Binuda's family was on the roof with Mother. They very kindly requested permission for us to come up and pronam. Mother looked wonderful and She told Billoji to give prasad to us. A private was scheduled, so we had to go back downstairs, but those few minutes were a great joy to us.

At 5:00 p.m., as our rickshaw carried us to the ashram, the wind was blowing and the sky was gray. A little rain fell and it was cool. We enjoyed it very much. After sitting for a while to do japa, we moved to the patio under Mother's roof. The other devotees came and we observed maun. At 6:15 p.m. Mother came and sat in Her chair on the roof. It started to sprinkle a little and someone held an umbrella over Mother's head. She did not stay long, but looked at all of us. With folded hands She indicated that She did not want us to stand in the rain. We would have stood there as long as She stayed with us. Of course She knew that, and soon went to Her room.

That evening Anindita came to our room for a while. We got to hear some stories about her dear father and of his last days. It was truly Mother's grace that he arrived in sacred Kashi just at his time to leave this world.

Satyā was catching a cold or some virus, so he took medicine and went to bed hoping to feel better in the morning. When morning came he felt even worse and not up to doing any marketing. So we sent Bhagawandas to buy curd and a few other things. When Bhagawandas returned, we were delighted to find that he had Swami Nirmalananda and Brahmachari Prangopal with him.

Swami Nirmalananda had in recent years become Abbot George Burke of the Holy Protection Gnostic Orthodox Monastery. His relationship with Mother remains unchanged and my relationship with him remains in Her. We are bound by that one love. For the sake of continuity, I will refer to him as Swami Nirmalananda (which I still do about ninety percent of the time). When he came to Mother he always wore the gerrua cloth.

It was with great joy that we met him after such a long time. The gentle nature and devotion of Prangopal (Brother Simeon) had long endeared him to us and we were pleased that he had accompanied Swami Nirmalananda.

After exchanging warm greetings, we talked for a long time, catching up on each other's news. Pujari had saved the rooms next to ours for them, and they went there to rest for a while before darshan.

At 5:30 p.m. we all went to the ashram. There was a light rain falling and we sat under the trees for maun. Afterward people were allowed to go upstairs to pronam. Instead of letting everyone come up sit before Mother for a few minutes, a line was formed going up the narrow winding steps as devotees crowded to get in and had to push to get out as no one was allowed to stay upstairs.

It looked like a very long wait and Satya was not at all well, so we asked Swami Nirmalananda to please tell Mother that Satya was not well and ask Her to bless him. I went with Satya back to the dharmasala. After having Mother's darshan, Swamiji and Prangopal came to our room. Bhaskaranandaji had interpreted Satya's message to Mother.

During the night we could hear people shouting as they walked in *parikrama* around sacred Vrindavan. That continued into the next day, March sixteenth. The week of Holi had begun. Holi celebrates the lila of the Lord, Sri Krishna, as the playful boy who showered His friends with the colourful pollen of flowers. Nowhere in India does this festival reach the heights than it does in Vrindavan, the home of that enchanting Lord. Children delight in throwing brightly-coloured powders or squirting coloured water on everyone they can catch and few, if any, escape.

That day we went to the ashram but were unable to see Mother. When we returned to our room I could feel that I had caught Satya's' sickness and spent the rest of the day in bed. In the evening Swami Nirmalananda came to our room. He had seen Mother and told Her that we were sick She sent special prasad with him for us.

The next morning we felt better and by evening were able to go to the ashram. It was not quite 6:00 p.m. when we arrived. For maun we took seats in the garden

back from the patio. Afterward everyone was allowed to go upstairs and pronam to Mother.

I was so thankful to see Her again. She looked wonderful and smiled at me very sweetly, as though She was pleased to see me there. We were allowed to stand on the roof looking at Mother for few minutes. Then everyone was asked to go downstairs because a private was to take place. Reluctantly we went down the staircase, left the ashram, and went to our room for the night.

To avoid the enthusiastic Holi revelers, we sent Bhagawandas to do our shopping the following morning. Swami Nirmalananda suggested that we have cheese sandwiches. When Bhagawandas returned with the needed items, Swamiji prepared sandwiches for the four of us.

We sat in our room and spoke of the strange feelings which we all shared on that trip. Over the years Mother seemed to be leading us away from our attachment to Her physical form. It was very sobering to actually speak of the implication. Swamiji said, "Truth is our only armour in this world, and the time is coming when everyone must choose good or evil, darkness or light. Only Mother can love everyone, good or evil, but we who are in the *maya* of this world must choose. We must live the values which we hold dear, not just talk about them."

At 5:30 p.m. we went to the ashram and walked back to the patio area. As we stood there waiting, Satya suddenly said, "There's Krishnapriya !" We ran to meet her and she met us halfway in the garden. She looked great. It was a lovely surprise to see her again. In our conversation with her she brought up her observations about the difficult times coming and that many people were not going to be prepared for them. She expressed many of the same thoughts and feelings which we had discussed earlier. Several old friends were there on the patio and we greeted each other briefly, then sat for maun.

Mother came out to the railing of the roof and stood with us for a few minutes. When She went to Her room we stayed and spoke with Triguna Sen and a few others who had just arrived. Nitai brought us a letter from Chitra.

A few days past, Satya had complained to Nitai about our not being allowed to go up to see Mother—that Mother had told us during Kumbh Mela that we could be there whenever She was sitting out. Nitai told Mother this, and Mother told him to bring us upstairs. But we were sick, and could not come there for two evenings. Then the next night it was impossible to bring us up because of the huge crowd. He said for us to wait a few minutes as he went into Mother's house. After a short time Nitai called for us and the few others there to come upstairs.

Mother looked so lovely, and I was grateful to be near Her as I pronounced. We quietly sat on the roof for a short time, then were asked to go downstairs. There were some "VIP's" on the roof when we arrived and they were not asked to leave. I took comfort in the knowledge that it was Mother who had invited us to come up.

We returned to the dharmasala, and Satya made boiled vegetables with butter. Prangopal was not well and he went to rest. Gadadhar joined Swamiji and us for our meal. After a little conversation they both left and we retired for the night.

As I did my household chores the next morning I sighed as I thought about the nice pair of rubber gloves that I had so cleverly packed in our lost duffel bag.

It was 5:15 p.m. when we went to the ashram. Mother was sitting in the satsang hall for that last day of the Bhagavat Saptaha. We sat with Her for about one hour. A puja was done to Mother and then we all moved with Mother to the front of the Krishna Chhelia Mandir where a grand puja was done. I stood in a good spot during the puja and felt very uplifted by the atmosphere, but most of all by Mother's presence there. When the puja was completed, Mother went into Her room behind the mandir and we went outside. Melita told us that there would be akhanda kirtan at 8:30 p.m.

A four-sided altar was made in the center of the satsang hall. There were pictures of the Lord Sri Krishnaji on all sides leading from a wide base to a point at the top. It was elaborately decorated by the men who were creating it and was not completed until 10:00 p.m. Krishnapriya called for me to sit near her. Satya kindly went to our dharmasala to get my cymbals and tape recorder for me. I could clearly see the asana where Mother was to sit.

A professional video crew arrived and were setting up to film Mother and the devotees as they celebrated. Satya asked the photographer for permission to take movies while the lights making the video were on. The gentleman said that he would not mind, so Satya made a second dash to the dharmasala to retrieve his movie camera. Arati was done before the newly-made altar and everyone was in a happy mood.

Satya returned just as Mother was coming out of Her room. A wooden bed had been prepared as Her asana. She took Her seat there and was draped with several beautiful saris. After puja was done to Her She reclined upon the bed, covering all but Her face, as the kirtan grew in intensity.

The men in the kirtan party moved in a close circle around the altar as they sang God's name. A harmonium was tied in a sling around the neck of the man who played it as he led the procession. Others played cymbals, a drum, or clapped their hands as everyone joined in the wonderful rhythmic response to the leader's chant.

It was wonderful to sit near Mother. There are no words to describe the feeling of complete security and fulfillment I experienced at such times. I have never known that feeling in any other circumstances in this life. I will never be satisfied until She grants me the boon of *knowing* Her eternal companionship. She has affirmed that She is always with me, but until I know it too, I will be in want.

After about thirty minutes, Mother sat up. She looked incredibly beautiful as Her long dark hair hung loosely upon Her shoulders. She stood, and as we all pronounced, She went to Her room.

At 11:45 p.m. when we left the ashram and walked to the gate, there were no rickshaws in sight except Bhagawandas. He made two trips that night to take Swami Nirmalananda, Prangopal, Satya and me to the dharmasala.

We had been told that Mother would "play Holi" on the following morning. I had only seen pictures of her doing that, as we had never before been with Her at the time of Holi celebration. It was something that we did not want to miss.

[To continue]