

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

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

VOL.-12

JULY: 2008

No. 3

BOARD OF EDITORS

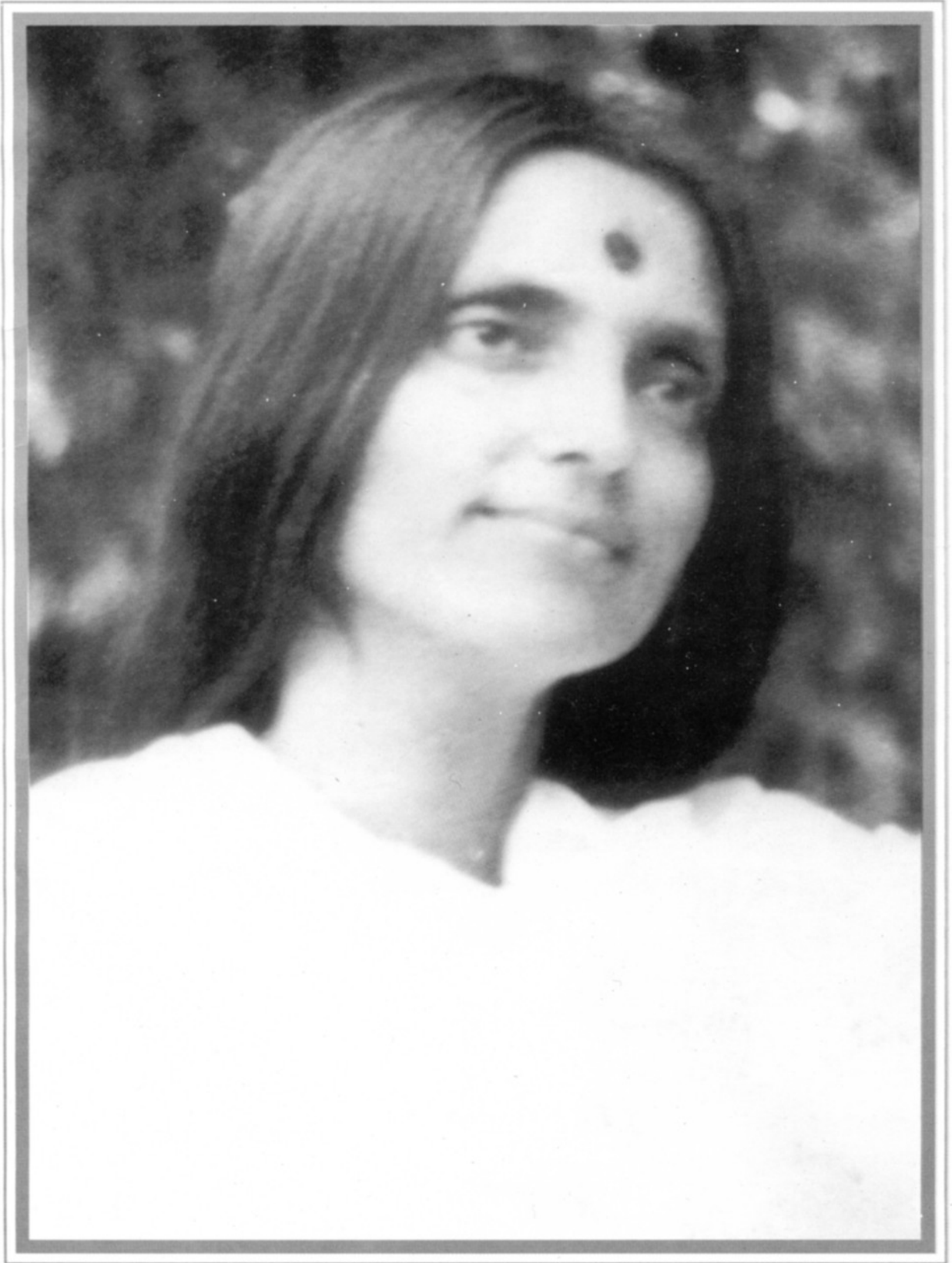
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Sri Sri Ma's Self composed Song

The ultimate state will not be reached by the jiva without detachment. Therefore, make renunciation and discrimination your sole objective, giving up all desires.

*What is the extent of renunciation,
You will know when you are engrossed in action,
Then you shall see constantly,
In which direction your mind will be drawn.*

*Offering all your activities,
Adhere to man's dharma*

*You are the eternal, changeless Brahman,
Meditate on this in your heart repeatedly.*

*Beckon the mind which wanders outwards,
Keep it within your heart continuously,*

*Mount the raft of Brahman
And cross the ocean of samsara.*

When your ego is annihilated.

And all duality transcended

*You shall see that you repose in your true nature,
Which is the Supreme Truth to be realised.*

—Vindhyachal, March 1936

With best wishes

MINDFUL INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT COMPANY

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MATRI VANI

Accepting all conditions of life—whatever they be—as His gift, abide in fortitude and do service.

* * * * *

Endcavour to keep your thought centred at all times on the Divine Name or Form that appeals to you most. Let your mind be turned exclusively towards God—then, and then only, may you hope for peace.

* * * * *

How can a man who is harbouring thoughts of suicide expect to become a Sannyasi ? The idea of suicide does not even enter the mind of those who consider themselves candidates for sannyasa. A spirit of extreme self-denial and renunciation is the attitude that affords the greatest aid towards this exalted state. Vow to be truthful in speech and refrain from letter-writing. Do not talk to women, nor allow your gaze to rest on them.

* * * * *

To live in the joy that springs from the mind's constant occupation with things divine is man's duty. Thinking of anything other than God is what creates sorrow. Be it Mantra Japa, be it meditation, worship, the perusal of Sacred Texts, the simple awareness of God or a like device, be it Kirtan or religious music — all these are different modes of the Divine Presence. One should always remain engaged in one of them, in fact make it a point never to be without Him. Bear this in mind ! This is what this little child requests from Her friends and also Her fathers and mothers.

* * * * *

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

* * * * *

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

* * * * *

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

* * * * *

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

* * * * *

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

* * * * *

They imagine this body to be far away, but actually it is always very, very near. How could it possibly leave anyone ? The question of distance arises solely from their point of view. Whenever they can get a holiday let them come and meet this body.

* * * * *

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



PAGES FROM
"MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG"

—Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupta

[Translated from Bengali]

[Continued from before]

29th May, 1941, Dehradun, Raipur Ashram—

At eight in the morning Sri Ma came and sat in the hall. It has already been mentioned that we had made arrangements for us to sleep in the same hall and our beds also used to remain spread as during night. Our bed consisted of only one small *durrie* and one blanket each, upon that there was one thick coloured bed sheet, which used to look quite dirty due to dust etc. Sri Ma's attention fell on our beds today. She enquired.— "Are you habituated to sleep on such a small bed or trying to adjust with all situations after coming over to this place"?

Jitenbabu replied - "Manmohanbabu has told me that while sleeping in his home he needs six pillows and here managing with one only. We stay in our homes in a different manner, because there we are the monarchs. I am the monarch in my home. Amulyababu is also the monarch in his own home. No one is there higher than us. So, everything depends on our status, and here we are very insignificant beings". Therefore, our beds also are of the same condition." Everyone laughs.

Ma replied laughingly, "Monarch of one's own house signifies the ruler of only a limited area. You are not the monarch of all regions and also of all situations. You should further note that if in your home your children are sick then you won't be able to have a wink of sleep even while lying on a cushioned bed. Then at times it may come to your mind that even if you had to lie on the floor and the children would get well you would be prepared for that as well. So, you see that you are only the "monarchs of wants". If good sleep comes that won't wait for a bed. Whereas if you are in mental distress even good beds won't give you comfort. The nature of worldly things is such, when you crave for comfort, discomfort also will come. So, one should try to be the "monarch" in all conditions - both comfort and discomfort."

"That's why I am telling you that, what I tell others also. Keep apart for Him atleast one day in a week, or in a fortnight, or even in a month. On that day, you should remain in a room, will not talk useless talks, spend the whole day in

meditation, japa and reading of scriptures etc. The *asan* or bed upon which you will spend that day to be put apart. If you follow in this manner, you may be much benefited."

I- Will there be any benefit through this ?

Ma - (Turning to Jitenbabu) Do you also say like that ?

Jitenbabu - (Smilingly) No, I don't want to say so, because Amulyababu has fallen in danger by saying that."

Ma - (To Manmohan) Baba, what do you say ? Do you also say that no benefit is derived ?

Manmohan - I don't say that. Benefit may be derived through this, again may not be derived.

Ma (with a smile) - Baba wants to please Amulya and me as well. (Everyone laughs). (Turning to me) You cannot say that nothing is achieved. If you say so then hereafter if the children are not inclined to study then you won't be able to make them study. Because when children after trying to learn their lessons once or twice escape after leaving their books you try to make them learn their lessons by even scolding or beating them and afterwards you find that even by studying unwillingly they become scholars later on.

I- Ma, the advice on *samyam* which you are giving has not been heard for the first time today. Have heard it before also and have even tried to at accordingly. But no result was obtained. On the other hand it was found that all sorts of problems increase on that particular day of *samyam*. No spiritual feeling is obtained. Seeing all this it comes to the mind that there is no need of all this. When time will come all this will happen automatically.

Ma - I will say that you have not done anything of the *samyam vrata*. Because your attention has always been directed towards the fruit. If you want to obtain hand to hand result then doing a particular work or not doing is almost the same. You do not want to bear any trouble for spiritual matters, but you never step backward while trying to gain reputation and recognition.

I- It is not that I do much for those things also.

Ma-That also does not speak of a high state. There is no endeavour - no enthusiasm towards anything, this is a state of inertia. Is it good to remain in a state of inertia ? What one has to do towards spiritual progress has to be done with a sense of duty. One has not to think about the result. But know it certain that result will surely be achieved if one really works. Even by saving one *paisa* after one, the total will come to one rupee. Every action has a result. Why speak about doing something only ? To see something, to touch something - everything has an

influence of its own. Because of all this the question of *satsang* and good influence of a particular place comes up. And because of this a *sādhaka* does not allow to get his *āsana*, cloth and bed etc. to be touched by any-one. The qualities of what we eat or what we think about enter within us and those things transform us too.

"It has been said before also that whatever we see in this world, if seen only from the point of view of happiness or sorrow, then that only creates the sense of bondage in us. While perceiving trees, mountains, flowers etc. we think - "Oh, how beautiful these are !" Then the qualities of those things enter into ourselves and as a result of that more and more new feelings generate in us. But perceiving those things if we are able to accept them as different forms of God, if we are able to consider that God Himself is in the form of this beautiful flower, fruit etc. then only pure thoughts will develop in us. So, nothing should be seen or done with an hankering for worldly pleasures. Because till you are saved from the feelings which are generated from such desires there is no question of salvation. Of course, through God's grace the root of all desires can be destroyed in a single moment. That is, however, a different thing. We should better proceed on the path of gradual development. From that point of view one has to nourish pure feelings through repetition of *Nama*, *japa* and *dhyāna* according to one's capacity."

"One should not feel disheartened by seeing that no result is soon achieved by doing something in this path. *Samskāras* accumulated through lives after lives have created heaps of garbage in our midst. Until they are removed completely the hope of divine feelings being developed is not there. However, it is seen that even through only a few day's endeavour some may realize something. In these cases it has to be considered that such persons have taken birth with good *samskāras*. So, their path is being unfolded easily. If one goes on working, result must be achieved - one has to work with this feeling. If there is no *Guru* of anyone, there is no harm, because *Guru* is present among all. If one goes on working, He will come up Himself. But while speaking from the general point of view, it is better to work under the shelter of the *Guru*."

It was past nine in the morning while such discussions were going on. Nepaldada commenced the reading of the "*Sādhan Samar*" After the *Path* was concluded Nepaldada asked Ma - "Ma, there are rules mentioned in the scriptures for doing *japa* etc. sitting on *āsana*. But if anyone continues to do *japa* without sitting on the *āsana* will there be no result ?"

Ma - What have you said ? Why there will be no fruit ? Which *āsana* did this body use ? While at Bajitpur whatever *japa* etc. was done was done by sitting on the mud ground only. That ground also was damp and wet, and furthermore as I

used to sit in one place for a long time the colour of the ground also used to be changed. An *āsana* was used first by me at Dhaka and that also as per the words of Sri Atul of Sadhan Samar Ashram. Whenever I sat on the ground, he used to say, "Ma, by sitting on the open ground the body current gets lost by entering into the ground". But when I did not agree to sit on an *āsana* even after all this, then he said - "Ma, if you don't sit on an *āsana* then we are also much inconvenienced, because we also cannot then sit on *āsanas*. Upon these words I did not disagree to sit on an *āsana* and since then *āsanas* are in vogue. (Laughingly) Now, it has become such that whenever I go out even on a car an *āsana* is put upon the cushioned seat. However, as per *sāstric* injunctions use of an *āsana* is better for the purpose of *japa* etc. First a *Kushāsana*, upon that a blanket or any other *āsana* which is available in the market, and that is to be covered by a silk cloth. Sadhus say that if this is followed then the body current is not lost and remains within the body. That is why while doing *japa* some type of silken cloth and *chāddar* are used.

I - The Yogis advise to be very cautious about purity of *āsanas* etc. Such rigidity is not in vogue among the Vaishnavas.

Ma - Yes, but all the *sādhakas* do not allow others to touch their clothes & *āsanas*.

Nepaldada - It is said to be mentioned in the *sāstras* that in the *Kali Yuga dikshā* should be taken according to the *Tantra* system. But those who have been initiated only with the Vedic *mantras*, will they not be able to do any progress through their work ?

Ma - This body will say that if the initiation according to the Vedic rules becomes alive then the fruits of *Tāntric dikshā* will also be revealed in that. Some may attain salvation by doing *japa* of *Gayatri mantra* alone. One can reach the destination if one proceeds correctly on any path.

I - In course of time *Tantric mantra* may become more fruitful than Vedic *mantra*.

Ma - Yes, that can also be. There may be different systems for different periods. But there is difference of opinion among sadhus regarding *Kāla* (period of time). You also say that certain sadhus have remarked that *Satya Yuga* has already arrived. Again some say that - "This is the evening of *Kali Yuga*." The real thing is - One *Kāla* (period of time) may seem to be different to different persons. To someone this is *Kali Yuga*, again to another this is *Satya Yuga*. As for example, it is said that perhaps it is mentioned in the *sāstras* that *sannyāsa* is not possible in the *Kali Yuga*. But you see that even in this *Kali Yuga* some have become *real sannyasis*. It may be so said that the words of the *sāstras* are being falsified. But in

fact that is not. It should be understood that for whom *sannyāsa* is being arranged, this is not the *Kali Yuga*. The recognition of a *Kāla* is through one's own feelings. This *bhāva* has connection with *āsana* and other things also; when bodily action and *bhāva* become one then there remains no body complications. The fact that you cannot sit in one *āsana* for a longer period is because of the fact that your action has not been unified with your feelings. when that becomes unified then you will see that there will be no fatigue in whatever you do. When you sit at a stretch; when you move, you move without any break."

"At times this body is made to sit in a train in a certain position. I sit in the same position for even eight or nine hours. When they come and make me sit in a different posture then I sit accordingly. On certain occasions when I am looking at something in front I look on and on; there are many a decorated shop on the right and left, but there is no attention towards that. Look does not move even towards the top or the bottom of which I am looking at. There is no body movement also. Don't you speak about '*Trātaka*' - looking at things for long without any movement of eye lids ? But '*Trātaka*' may also be of various types. The conditions of this body about which it has been spoken, may be termed by you as '*trātaka*' of the body. The gist is that if one proceeds through one path that itself shows in time direction for countless paths."

[To continue]

*"From me the world streams out
And in me it dissolves,
As a bracelet melts in gold,
A pot crumbles into clay,
A wave subsides into water."*

—*From Ashtavakra Gita*

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY*

—Prof. T.R. Anantharaman

It is an undeniable fact that our country achieved many wonderful things in the scientific, cultural and spiritual fields during many millennia of its ancient and pre-historic periods. However, as a rule, with our mundane pre-occupations and our eyes turned to the affluent Western nations, most Indian of today do not evince much interest even in knowing when and how these remarkable achievements were accomplished. One such area where our forefathers could record their truly stunning insights over three thousand years ago relates to Science and Spirituality, referred to in modern Hindi as विज्ञान and अध्यात्म, and in our ancient Sanskrit scriptures as अपराविद्या and पराविद्या.

The word 'Spirituality' is used a great deal nowadays in newspapers, books and conferences, but if we go round and talk to our countrymen, even the so-called educated ones, we realize what vague notions most people have on this highly important and extremely relevant subject. Of course, most people will swear that they have great interest in spiritual values and some will even point out to us that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently included "Spiritual health" in its definition of total health. Thus, we must all be concerned with cultivation of not only physical and mental health, but also spiritual health. However, with the widespread ignorance in regard to Spirituality in theory and practice, where and how do we start in our quest for the appropriate way to understand, interpret and propagate the essentials of Spirituality ?

Incidentally, the word "Spirituality" seems to have been coined and used for the first time by Swami Vivekananda, the most famous disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1863-1902). Following his memorable and stirring addresses at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1892, the Swamiji returned to India to a glittering and heroic welcome, and told his countrymen at a meeting that "there is one great truth that India has to teach the world, because it is nowhere else." He called it "Spirituality, the Science of Soul." It was his view that "in this land of ours, the fountains of spirituality are still there, they will have to overflow and flood the world to bring in new life and vitality to the nations, which has almost worn down, half killed and degraded by political ambition and social scheming."

*. Courtesy : *Jnana Pravāha* Bulletin No. 6

Swami Vivekananda said further that "our life blood is Spirituality; if it flows clear, vigorous, strong, everything is right; political, social, any other material defect, even the poverty of the land, all can be cured if the blood is pure." We admire him very much, but we must also listen to him. We must get back to our Spirituality.

Where is this Spirituality, how do we get to know about it ? Here again this very simple question if we ask Indians, where do you get information about Spirituality ? They may quote some western people who have learnt something from India and they will not put in their own word. Swami Vivekananda, on March 4th 1897, in a crowded public lecture at Star Theatre, Calcutta talking on Vedānta and Upaniṣad said, "Vedānta, the Philosophy of the Upaniṣad has been the first, as well as the final message on the spiritual plane that has ever been given to man." Briefly, what he says is : a great message was given to us and you find it now in the Upaniṣads, it has not been bettered, not been improved, there has not been any real addition to its original, thus it is also the final message.

And, what is an Upaniṣad ? Bring Upaniṣad in our educational system. Most of our students do not know even what Upaniṣads are, what are the names of the Upaniṣads, what these contain. I quote, another great Indian Sri Aurobindo: Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo were outstanding intellectuals, who were concerned with the society and had their own spiritual experiences also. They were able to understand the currents and cross currents of our society, which is given more and more to science and technology. So, what they said is even more important than what people said 400-500 years ago. So, Sri Aurobindo said, "The Upaniṣads are the supreme works of the Indian mind, the highest self-expression of the genius. It is a sublime poetry, greatest creation of the talk and word, not a literary poetic master piece of ordinary kind, but a large spiritual revelation of the most direct and profound character. They are a record of the deepest spiritual experiences, documents of revelation and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness." Even this language shows that the man was inspired while writing it. "An inexhaustible light, power and largeness", so he wrote around 1920, in the *Foundations of Indian Culture*, which appeared in a series of articles in the 'Arya'.

Prof. Max Müller, was a very well known scholar who served for many years as the Professor for Comparative Religion in University of Oxford. Originally from Germany, he ended up in England and he is known as pioneering translator of the *R̥gveda*, *Sacred Books of the East*, etc. Writing on the Upaniṣads, he observed, "these philosophical treatise will always maintain place in the literature world as among the most astounding production of the human mind in any age and any country". What do we do to this treasure ? We are not taking them out, leave alone, the common people, the labourers, even to the intellectuals. The people have no

chance to learn anything, because Sanskrit is gone. So now, we will learn German, we will learn Russian, we will learn many things to go abroad and finally to get more increments and to be recognized as a person who knows the foreign languages. But our own language, the greatest of all languages, how we have neglected it? It is a sin and high time to realize it.

Prof. A.A. Macdonell, who succeeded him in Oxford University as the Professor, wrote a well-known book '*A History of Sanskrit Literature*'. Amazing, how the western scholars, mostly sitting far away, could do so much library work on India? They did not have today's Internet and so on, they had to collect their data, very painstakingly and yet they wrote wonderful books. This is also a very wonderful book, written in 1899. When he comes to the Upaniṣads, he says: "Here for the first time in the history of human thought, we find the Absolute grasped and proclaimed." *Brahman* is not simply an idea, a thought, it is grasped, That is the great thing. Brahman has to be grasped, It has to be realized. *Brahmavit*, is not the person possessing intellectual knowledge, but who experiences It, who realises It. He has used many expressions.

Let us go back to 3000 years or more. We do not know, when the Upaniṣads were written and where they were composed. I am also looking into this to see whether we can get some clear ideas when these things came out, when it was written, it is different matter. For a long time there was a system of oral transmission. This is the Indus Valley civilization. For now we find a teacher and disciple for a beautiful dialogue, father and son, husband and wife, it is full of such wonderful beautiful conversation, like the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, like the discussion of Gautam Buddha with his disciples. A disciple, named Śaunaka, who goes to his teacher Āṅgīrasa. Now, Āṅgīrasa is the *ṛṣi* who comes as *pravara* in many Brahmin families, he asked him (Muṇḍ. Up. I.3). What a beautiful question, no student will like to raise such a question, but he asks him and with great respect, by knowing what, all that is, all the things becomes known. I want to know everything, what I am to do. I think, if this question is posed now, many of our teachers will go to library and finally say, I am sorry, I cannot give you the answer, But Āṅgīrasa responds, as we see in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*.

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यत् ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च । (Muṇḍ. Up. I.4)

Very clear and straight to the point answer. Two types of knowledge are there to be mastered, one is called *aparā vidyā*, and the other is *parā-vidyā*.

Here, अपराविद्या is called Science and पराविद्या is called Spirituality by Brahmanvid. Humility of the *ṛṣi* is noteworthy, they will never say, they have found

something. He says, this is what we have heard. This is what our forefathers have given us. But in recent days, when you write something, first you are very keen to put your name in capital letters. There they didn't even mention and they simply told this. So, there are two types of knowledge. As you know, *Vidyā* comes from root *vid*, *vid* is to know. The word science comes from *Sire*, a Latin root, which means to know. So, both science and *vidyā* have the same derivation, so, two types of knowledge. They are two different things. It is brought out very clearly.

And then he defines, what is *parā-vidyā*. सा पराविद्या यया तदक्षरम् अधिगम्यते (Muṇḍ. Up. I.5). That is Spirituality, the science of the Supreme, the science of the Self, the science of the Spirit. He can use so many words. Again the word *adhigamyate*, it is not talking about it, you grasp It, you realize It. That is Spirituality. That by which finally the Imperishable is grasped and then he tried to show. Then what is *aparāvidyā*? Every thing else is *aparāvidyā*. So, he mentioned everything at that time known, everything written, everything intellectual 'तत्रापरा ऋर्वेदः सामवेदः अथर्ववेदः शिक्षा, कल्प, व्याकरणम् निरुक्तम् छन्दो, ज्योतिषम् इति ।' (Muṇḍ Up I. 5) All that is *aparāvidyā*, which consists of the Vedas, phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, metric and astrology. In fact even the Vedas, they may talk of *Brahman*, the moment they put in word and try to imprison, something which cannot be imprisoned in word, निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह (Taitt. Up. II. 4). The moment he put it in intellectual framework, it becomes *aparāvidyā*. This is a very great analysis in depth, done by our people well over 3000 years ago.

Now, I go to another very well known Upaniṣad, ईशावास्योपनिषद्. It has only 18 verses. But the meaning, the depth of the meaning, the poignancy of the words is amazing. You go on reading again and again eighteen verses. No one knows who the author is. Each verse is so full of meaning that you can write a chapter on it, and there are three verses which deal with *aparāvidyā* and *parāvidyā*. The first one.

अन्ध तमः प्रविशन्ति, येऽविद्याम् उपासते । ततोभूयोऽिव ते तमः य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥ (Iśa.9)

Those who worship altar of science only, enter into blinding darkness. And those who meet spirituality only, enter into still more blinding darkness. It's a fantastic statement and we have to ponder over it. Why he puts it like this? Those who worship at the altar of science, you find lots of people, who give importance to science only, ignore everything else. They will face problems in life, sometime blinding darkness, they don't know in which direction they are to go. This is applicable even today also. Many problems are there which cannot be sorted out by science.

What about spirituality ? Those who swear by the spirituality, who condemn science, ignore science, push it into background, they will face more problems in life. You know, what we call *Śarīra-yātrā*, the body grows, the body also itself becomes qualified for many things, and for that the main contributions are from science, technology and engineering. People shout about things, but they use cell-phones, they travel in jet planes and they live in five-star comforts, they want good food, Spirituality has not given all these things. Science has given it. So, the *Śarīra-yātrā* is the main base of your life, without it what you have achieved, that is provided by science. So, give due respect to science, technology and engineering, which has made it possible for you, the cloth you wear, the seat you sit on, all have been given by science and technology.

अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्ययाऽन्यदाहुर्विद्यया । इति शुश्रुम धीराणाम् येनस्तद विचचक्षिरे ॥ (Iśa. 10)

And then he says these two different things. *Vidyā* has its own, but it has different purpose, different domain. I am not telling you this, thus we have heard, from brave explorers, who have analysed and explained this to us. These are two different things, we have to understand also what does it mean and practise. And then comes the beautiful combination here.

विद्यां च अविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह । अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ (Iśa. 11)

So, one who masters Spirituality and science both together, he conquers death through science and reaches immortality through Spirituality. Very profound statement, here we have to understand also whatever the talks in the minds of ṛṣi who gives the statement. This verse finally says, each will do something, science will help you to overcome limitations of human existence. All problems you face from nature, from violence, everything science will help you to solve. One day it will help you to overcome death. This is fantastic vision. It is coming now that in another 200-300 years, you can keep man alive for centuries. Our people think for शतम् only for hundred autumns, now you see that man can live for much longer time. But living, what is the use of it! Elephant also lives, animals live, birds live. But man lives for some purpose. He is happy, he has sense of fulfilment, but it has not come through science. It विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते— It is only through Spirituality and through cultivation of Spirituality, proper understanding of Spirituality, through the experiences which come where you taste the bliss of immortality. Wonderful message in just three verses.

[To continue]

ANANDAMAYEE MATA

— Dr. M. Hafiz Syed

It will not be unreasonable to suppose that this outer solid seeming world has not been created or has emanated without any definite purpose. The all-powerful, the all-wise, the all-compassionate *Ishwara* must have had some definite reason and objective in manifesting this world. It may appear *Mayic*, illusory, because it is constantly changing, but it has an underlying *Divine Life* immanent in it. The real purpose of this manifestation may be rightly said to be known only to Him, who is the Source of our being. Many guesses have been made and many explanations have been offered as to the Why and the Wherefor of this Universe. But no one has yet given a satisfactory and convincing answer. It is rightly said that unless one becomes one with the Reality one cannot possibly understand the real purpose of this outer world. Suffice it to assume that as it has sprung from a wise source it must have some definite objective.

According to ancient Hindu thought, there are two paths for man to tread: the *Pravritti* and *Nivritti marg*, the former for the spiritually backward and the latter for the spiritually advanced.

In response to recurring spiritual need of mankind various teachers of spiritual eminence have come and gone. They come from age to age to elevate mankind and to destroy the evils that may have crept in the society.

Only such beings are called *Siddha Purushas* (Perfect Beings) who by virtue of their strenuous *Sadhana* and intense moral purification and spiritual realization attain a state of being which awakens in them cosmic consciousness. They have no separate will of their own. They merge their individuality in the Supreme Reality and are more guided by it than by their own *Sankalpa*. They are also called *Nitya Siddha*. There is no limit to the spiritual height. They become not only *Ishwara* in course of their spiritual evolution but *Maheshwara* and *Parameshwara* also.

None but a spiritually evolved soul can understand or fathom their spiritual depth. To an ordinary soul the life and activities of such beings appear no better than a mystery. They are capable of doing things which appear impossible to others. Their desire is calmed, their passion eliminated. They are not repelled by anything repellent, nor attracted by the attractive. They come to this world with a pure motive of service of humanity.

If we examine Anandamayee Mata's every day life and Her activities in various spheres in the light of this fact, we find that She comes up to the highest standard of these ideals. No one has yet been able to gauge Her spiritual depth or measure Her spiritual height. She has been a puzzle and engima to so many of us. Even Her devotees fail to understand Her. Only a spiritually realized soul can understand what She is in reality. Those who think that She is an incarnation of the Divine, came down to earth to relieve its sufferings, are not wrong. Perhaps those who identify Her with *Sukadeva* or with Shri Krishna, are right because She appears to tread in the foot-steps of the Lord whom we call by various names. Although Lord Sri Krishna was the fullest manifestation of Maha Vishnu, he lived His life like a normal natural being without asserting His divinity and all that it connotes. He played with children and frolicked with His eternal companions and devotees, the much mis-understood Gopis. When statesmen and men of learning assembled, in their midst He played the role of a mediator. When the time came for waging a war, He first did His best to persuade the warring parties to desist from the internecine course, but finding them adamant and heedless to His advice, He served as a charioteer of Arjuna and took part in the mighty war of Mahabharat in all seriousness. He was ever considerate and helpful to His old friends and playmates. Similarly, Shri Anandamayee Mata plays every role in Her life as a wife, as a daughter and as the *Sakhi* as carefully as Lord Sri Krishna played His own part in different spheres of life. She observes the *Varna* and *Ashram Dharma* scrupulously and yet She treats an Indian and a foreigner alike. She is kind and compassionate to the young and the old alike. Her Grace flows out to every body, of whatever social status he or she may be.

It is clear to an observant eye that the purpose of Her emergence on this earth, is deliverance of the people from the miseries of the world.

There are four kinds of *Karmas*: *Sakām*, *Nishkām*, *Ishwar Arpan* and *Swābhāvik*. Her activities obviously belong to the fourth category. Like Shri Krishna, it may be said of Her that there is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Her, nor anything unattained that might have to be attained and yet She mingles in action, unwary men all around would follow Her path. She is not content to teach us by words of mouth only, but sets practical examples to us how to do things in right manner. Often in a Kirtan, She recites God's name herself and so inspires us to recite it with the whole of our being. She is one with the Supreme Reality and She sees One Life vibrant in every atom. She sees the indwelling self in all. Once She is reported to have said, "Every body's satisfaction is my satisfaction. Every body's happiness is my happiness."

On another occasion She assured us in the following soothing words :— "The Lord does not wait for your spiritual fitness. Like the flowing Ganges He goes on bestowing His compassion on all. This is His nature. This is His being."

One of the greatest proofs of Her spiritual greatness is that although She has not learnt anything, any sacred scriptures of any religion, yet She is capable of answering subtle philosophical questions put to Her by eminent philosophers or scholars and satisfying them completely. Let us remind ourselves in this connection what Lord Krishna taught us : "All the Vedas are as useful to an enlightened *Brahman* as is a tank in a place covered all over with water." She is in touch with every plane of the invisible world and this outer world as well. While sitting in one place She is capable of knowing what is happening in other places. She knows where Her presence is urgently needed and which soul is crying for Her help and guidance. Outflows Her Grace to bring relief and solace to the distressed. Most of Her work is done in silence which is more eloquent than the discourses of learned men. The best thing for us would be to surrender ourselves to Her and let her utilise us in any way She likes. We must merge our will in Her will, because She has merged Hers in the Divine.

"It is false to speak of Realization. What is there to realize ? The real is as it is, always. All that is required is this. We have realized the unreal. We have to give up this attitude. That is all that is required".

—Maharshi Ramana

METHODS OF SELF-REALIZATION ACCORDING TO YOGAVĀSISTHA

—Prof. B.L. Atreya

Yogavāsistha, whoever its author and whatever the time and place of its composition, is a work of the utmost value for those who strive after Self-knowledge and Self-realization. Here an attempt is made to present in brief some hints this great work has given on the process of Self-realization.

All those who have tried to probe into the nature of man have found that the depths of human personality are unfathomable. All the little we know about ourselves indicates that we are in reality co-extensive with the infinite Universe and immeasurable in powers; and transcend all the limits of time, space and individuality. A modern writer, John Herman Randall, has given expression to what modern knowledge has discovered about the nature of Self in the following words: "No other view is possible than that the true Self in each individual is a form under which Reality, or the Life-Principle or God, finds expression. We are forced to admit that in their deepest essence all beings are one being, and all individual selves are one Self; and there are no such things as private, separate, exclusive, individual beings or selves, save in the false and illusory thinking" (Randall : *The Spirit of the New Philosophy*, p. 157).

In a recent work, Tyrrel, a great psychic researcher, writes, "Thus actual experience vindicates the view that Selfhood is indefinable, inexplicable in words, incomprehensible to the intellect, which can no one grasp it than an animal can grasp the differential calculus. The monadic view of the Self is a pragmatic illusion forced upon us by the practical mind" (*The Nature of Human Personality*, p. 114). "The great and central fact is that the higher we ascend in the scale of awareness the more reality opens to us. Ascension in this way brings direct awareness; and this is, and always has been the immortal road to Truth" *Ibid*, p. 119).

The author of *Yogavāsistha* who soared very high in Self awareness, has told us on the authority of his own personal experience that the personality of man is nothing short of the Infinite, Absolute and Omniscient *Brahman*, the very being and essence of the Universe. Thus says he : "He knows truly who knows that the Self is Infinite Consciousness, which is immanent in all things, omnipotent and without a second. (Y. V. IV. 22-28) He knows truly who knows that the Self is the Infinite

Ether (of Consciousness) which has within itself all time, space and movements (IV. 22. 25). Like pearls in a thread, all these objects are beaded in me (IV. 22. 31). In fact, everything in the Universe is a part of myself" (IV. 22. 33).

For some reason or other, we have limited ourselves of finite, ignorant and pragmatic individualities with the consequence that there is struggle, conflict and suffering in the world of finite individuals. To get rid of them we have to regain our consciousness as the Supreme Reality and reinstate and reinstall ourselves in our real and really never-lost Godhead. This is the ideal before those who are tired of wandering in the ocean of the miserable world, and the process which leads to the realization of the Ideal (called Self-realization) which is, in India, called *Yoga* which may be translated into English as re-union of the limited self with the unlimited and transcendental aspect of our being. *Yogavāsistha* calls the ideal as the "installation in Godhead" (*Paramatmani Sthiti*—VIa. 128.50) and says that this experience is characterised by "immense joy" (*Mahat sukham*)—(VIa. 128.51).

The process of *Yoga* or the union of the limited with the unlimited or of the pragmatic with the transcendental aspects of the Self is, according to *Yogavāsistha*, to work along all the three levels of the individual life, namely, physiological, psychological and the spiritual. On the physiological level, the physical and electromagnetic forces and powers of the body and its environment should be brought to focus and control; and the mind should redirect them inwards. This is called *Prāna-nirodha*, *Prāṇāyāma* or *Prāṇavilaya* in which all the finer physical forces are harnessed for spiritual concentration. On the mental level an effort is to be made to resolve and dissolve all the hidden complexes of desires, aversions, love and hate, etc. by becoming fully conscious of them and by realising that the real and lasting satisfaction of our life can be achieved only when a balanced, peaceful and unagitated state of mind is experienced. This process is called *Mano vinigraha*—bringing the mind under complete control. And on the spiritual level, the individual has to dehypnotise himself into his absoluteness, infinitude, and godhead by a double process of *denial* of illusory limitations, perceptions and conceptions and affirmation of one's Godhead, Infinity, Omniscience, Omnipresence and Blessedness. thus says *Yogavāsistha* : "Yoga, in brief, means three processes, namely, the Inhibition of the activities of *prāna* or the vital forces, the control of mind and affirmation of the One Reality" (VIa. 99-27). The process is described in great details in *Yogavāsistha*. We shall only make a reference to what according to *Yogavāsistha* is not a necessary part of the process. *Yogavāsistha*, unlike other great spiritual works, is very uncompromising on this point.

"It is not necessary for Self-realization to live in a forest, to undergo any penances (VIb. 199-30), to perform or renounce any actions; to perform any ritual (VIb. 99.31). Pilgrimages, distribution of alms, bath in sacred rivers, meditation on any object, performance of any sacrifice, etc. are not required (VIb. 174. 24). Reading of any Scripture, taking shelter of any Guru, or worship of any god or goddess is not necessary (VIb. 197. 18). No Scripture can make us realize the Self if we do not make our own attempt along the right interpretation of our own experience, and thereby have the direct intuition of our Real self" (VIb. 197. 18: VIa. 41. 15). *Bhakti* or devotion to any particular god or goddess is not required for attaining self-realization. Nobody can confer Liberation from limitations as a boon on any person, unless the latter deserves it by his own right. "One is one's own friend or enemy. If one is not one's own saviour, there is no hope for him (VIb. 162. 18). What is not attained through one's own constant efforts, *vairāgya* (indifference to worldly concerns) and control over sense, cannot be attained through anything else in the three worlds (IV 43. 18). Gods, like Vishnu, however long propitiated and however pleased, cannot bestow Self-realization on one who does not think for himself (IV. 43. 10). Nothing great (in the spiritual field) is ever achieved through any god, *guru* (teacher) or wealth (V. 43. 17). If a spiritual teacher could raise one to the height of self-realization without one's own efforts, why can he not raise a bull, an elephant or a camel to that status (IV. 43. 16) ? Those who, leaving the God residing within their own hearts, run after other external gods, are like those fools who throw away the precious gems in their hands and run after ordinary glass pieces (V. 8. 14). The artificial and showy ways of worshipping God are meant only for the ignorant and for those whose minds are not fully matured and are restless (Via. 38.25).

TEACHING WITHOUT WORDS

—Arnaud Desjardins

[Translated from French]

From the first day that I met Ma Anandamayi I have had the conviction I was not in the presence of a human being, but of a Being of an altogether different world. This realisation dawned upon me in September, 1959. Since then I have stayed with Ma in 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 and much later on and every time I have had this feeling. How is one to describe this stupendous impression? 'Divine'? 'Supernatural'? But I falter before the mystery which these terms represent and therefore not dare use them!

I am a European with a Christian upbringing, engaged in my profession and family life. Apart from a few colloquial words, I do not understand either Hindi or Bengali and Mataji does not speak English. With the exception of about one hour in all of conversation with her that I was granted with the help of interpreter, I have thus never understood what she said or replied to questions. And yet have I for her sake undertaken many journeys to India and spent many months close to her, sometimes under rather difficult conditions. This proves the power of her influence even over one to whom the Hindu tradition in which she is rooted is foreign.

For years the photos of Sri Ramana Maharshi have—for me as well as for many others in Paris—been a real teaching. A few minutes of attentive silence in front of his picture—and his sublime look would teach me more than the reading of the best book. (I am speaking of the only real knowledge, the one which transforms those who acquire it.) I have never missed the opportunity of meeting a Frenchman who had had his *darsana*. It is through these living witnesses that I conceived the overwhelming desire—more powerful than all other desires—to meet a Sage, a liberated Being, one who has realized his Self, a *Jivanmukta*.

I expected infinitely much during my travels in India and this meeting and the discovery of Mataji has certainly not disappointed me. Since then I travelled to Kanhangad to be with Swami Ramdas and Krishnabai. Those also were luminous days of intense living. The *rājasic* and *tāmasic* impressions of Paris have not been able to wipe out the cherished memory of those days. But Swami Ramdas spoke English and his replies, his parables and remarks, so full of humour, would give to

the ever insatiable mind the only valuable sustenance. The part that Swami Ramdas played in the lives of so many in the west can be explained even to our modern mentality, enslaved though it be by rational logic.

What on the other hand, appears to me most amazing is the function of a Master, of a spiritual preceptor that Ma has taken on towards a French visitor, who has been and truly remains her pupil. Above all I should say she has gradually made me understand the meaning of the Gospels and of the message of Christ. Thanks to Ma, the word of Jesus has now for me become a word of life. And she also has opened for me the door to that universal treasure-house called 'Bhagavad Gita' and has made me discover Sri Krishna.

Nothing can be further removed from the life at Paris which I lead, working for the cinema and the television, than the atmosphere of Mataji's ashramas. Hindu orthodoxy, the observance of caste rules, the importance attached to rites and ceremonies may seem to have nothing whatsoever in common with the problems that confront modern man in the worldly and materialistic life of a European metropolis. Nevertheless, I can bear witness to the fact that the teaching of Ma, even though it has been communicated without words, has completely transformed my life in Paris. Intellectually, she has given me the conviction that a metaphysical perspective exists, that is unique and universal, a 'Philosophia Perennis' that teaches us that all our problems have already been solved although we are not aware of it: "He is all in all, He alone is." But she also teaches us that Realization must be all-embracing, However far away, I may feel from her ashrams, from the purity of those white robes, from the beauty of the kirtans, amidst the violence, the contradictions and disturbances of professional life in Paris, Mataji or at least what she stands for is always with me within me. And I remember the famous words. "Kurukshetra dharmakshetra ..." and also: "Act is the play of the world" (Yoga Vasista) and I know who is the doer and who is not.

It seems to me that for foreigners the relationship between the master and his disciple is the most interesting feature of Hinduism at the present time. That some people think that the entire significance of their lives has changed because they have had the *darsana* of Ramana Maharshi, Ramdas or Ma Anandamayi is a certainty which can neither be proved nor contradicted. One may verify the recounting of a miracle, one may—in the name of Christian orthodoxy—be surprised to hear Beings other than Christ say "The Father and I are one": one may be flabbergasted at the social phenomenon which the glory of a woman represents who does nothing

else, but teach us to seek God. But the shock of her gaze and the meaning of the slightest of her gestures is a personal experience. Those who have seen have believed. And those who have understood the words of Life Eternal have taken to the Path.

What ally does Ma's Realization find in us that vibrates in tune with her? At what depth of our being are we touched? All those whose experiences I have compared with mine have had the same impression of certainty. That is how it is nothing to be added. All the rest has always been conditioned by 'buts' and 'ifs', by 'moreovers' and 'thens'. Face to face with the Master there is only certainty and clarity and that extraordinary experience of life beyond time, which liberates from all fear. Nevertheless it is not easy to be with Mataji. None of our old tricks works and we are all the time exposed and denuded. Never before have I been so divinely happy as in the presence of Ma Anandamayi, yet also have I never before been so ill at ease and so utterly shattered. I knew that a painful transformation had to be wrought within me: I had come for that purpose and I knew that this transformation had to be accomplished with my consent and active co-operation. It is not enough to remain passive in the presence of a sage: one has to lend, to deliver oneself voluntarily to his influence.

"For none is it easier than for the flies to follow this body wherever it may go" Mataji has said, referring to herself, "but that does not enlighten them." Mataji asks us to work unceasingly and to make tremendous and sustained efforts, so that these very efforts may one day be transcended—and then comes effortless being, the spontaneity of one who has in the very midst of the 'battle field' attained to inner freedom beyond action and reaction.

For years before my first journey to India I asked myself the question: "And if it were true?" How can one help posing this question with a trembling hope, when one hears about the great Sages in India who "by a single look can change a whole life." When one reads accounts, describing their supernatural presence that is a living witness to a world quite different from the one in which we believe ourselves imprisoned? The reply, the certainty: "Yes, it is true!" I found in the *darsan* of Ma Anandamayi. At times her eyes gaze into the far distance and her expression is of a supernatural beauty which defies all description. What does she see at such moments? What is the significance of the presence among us of a Being so totally different? Her face is so powerful that, week after week, lost in the crowd, I was unable to detach myself from it; so irresistible was the impression of intensity and

fullness that I felt with my whole being. In the presence of Ma, at last something actually was happening in my life. And I have gained the certainty that everything is possible for her.

But one has to admit that the almost miraculous aspect of Ma, the attraction she exercises over thousands and thousands of people misleads certain persons who have observed this to see in it more a manifestation of the abnormal than of the supernormal. My gratitude of Ma is even greater for what I feel I receive from her in Paris than for the extraordinary moments experienced in India. I do not seek any explanation: The oneness of the Self, the awakening of the inner Guru are enough. But the fact remains: after returning to Europe from my trips to India my relationship to my own surroundings of which I had suffered for so long changed radically. I have understood that our being conditions our life. I know that by the grace of Ma Anandamayi and Swami Ramdas something has been transformed in my being. Of course, I have kept on the mantelpiece of the room in which I spend most of my time the photo of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the first picture of a sage I possessed and that I looked at so much for years together. It was this photo that made the desire to visit India grow in me. And at times I have the feeling that it is Ramana Maharshi who has guided me to Ma Anandamayi.

Near her I have found the Life that is beyond all created things, yet is also in all of them and against which no power in the world, no difficulty, no tribulation or anxiety can prevail. Since my first visit to Ma at Varanasi, I have discovered the Life in myself. I can understand that certain people negate the existence of God or of the *Atma*. But Life? Who can object to opening himself to Life and to letting himself be transformed by It? Christ said: "I am the Life. I shall give Life to all who come to me". I know that Ma is Life and that she gives Life to those who come to her. Why then should it be difficult to call her 'Mother', to call her 'Ma'? For not only does a mother protect and guide, scold and comfort, a mother is first and foremost she who gives birth, who brings you to life. And I know—and there has not been a week during these years that has not brought confirmation of this fact—the fact that my life actually started in September, 1959 in Varanasi. A life into which I have no doubt been born with the *samskāras* of existence before that time and which is wrapped up in impurities, fears and contradictions, but which has revealed itself—once for all—as being in truth beyond those limitations.

How many times in France has one not put me the question: "What have you received from this woman saint?" One expects a reply, I know, that will conform to what one reads in books about the *chakras*, *kundalini*, or *nirvikalpa samadhi*. But the answer is much simpler and for myself at least, much more significant.

"What I have received from this woman saint is myself. I was dead and I have come back to Life. I was born of the flesh and I am born of the Spirit." Whatever may be my sin and my impurity, now and for ever, Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi, my mother, and I am your son. Jai Guru, Jai Ma.

"This body tells of one sovereign remedy for all ills: God. Trust in Him, depend on Him, accept whatever happens as His dispensation, regard what you do as His service, keep satsang, think of God with every breath, and live in His Presence. Leave all your burdens in His hands and He will see to everything; there will be no more problems."

—Ma Anandamayee

JAGAT-GURU MA ANANDAMAYEE: A TRUE REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA'S CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

— Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly

Every civilization has its secular and spiritual cultures; the former consisting of literature, music, sculpture, painting etc. and the latter consisting of *dharmā* (moral life) and *mokshā* (method of liberation from desires). The material aspect of civilization in all the three broad phases of its evolution, viz, agricultural, industrial and electronics, is expressed through its quest for *artha* (economic activity) and *kama* (institution of marriage). The secular culture of any civilization may or may not be influenced by *Moksha*—aspiration, but must be influenced by the level and content of its *dharmā*-aspiration.

In this brier essay, I shall confine the discussion mainly to the spiritual culture of India from the Vedic period to the end of twentieth century; though some reference will be made to the secular culture from time to time, as and when it will be found that the latter is deeply inspired by the former.

In this broad canvas of the development of the spiritual culture of India, I shall mainly focus my attention on the chief contributions of some outstanding personalities or super-men like Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Buddhadeva, Tulsidas, Sri Shankaracharya, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Anandamayee Ma. For as in the polity, great kings and political leaders give new directions to the political history of a country, as in the economy technological inventions give rise to new modes of productions, so in the spiritual heritage of a nation, the contribution of spiritual giants looms large in the horizon and a new *dharmā-chakra* (cycle of spiritual and moral evolution) is ushered in by the life and teachings of the spiritual supermen of each period. And in the course of unfolding the spiritual heritage of India, we shall discover that Ma Anandamayee was the consummation of five thousand years of spiritual life of the vast majority of the Indian people.

Ancient Indian Culture

Ancient Indian Culture had two main phases, viz. the Vedic and the Buddhistic phase. The Vedic phase from the Rig Veda to the Srimad Bhagavad Gita was a

dynamic, theistic, synthetic and integral manifestation of culture in a predominantly agricultural civilizaion and the Buddhistic as well as the Jaina phase, was a non-Vedic, non-theistic, static, negative manifestation of culture, inspired mainly by the other worldly norm of *Nirvana*, though based on the *dharma* of *Sheelcharan* (eight fold path of good behaviour).

Vedas are the eternal and most authentic scriptures of the Hindus. Vedas have two main parts, viz. *Karmakānda* (rituals based on hymns and fire worship) and *Jnāna Kānda* (philosophy and mystic yoga), known as Vedanta. Out of one hundred and eight Upanishads, eleven principal Upanishads, e.g. Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitariya, Taittiriya, Shwetashwatara, Chandiyoga and Vrihadaranyaka, are the source books of Vedanta, and are known as *Shruti Prasthāna*, as revealed to different *rishis* or enlightened saints, later on codified by Maharshi Veda Vyasa and commented upon by Acharya Shankara. Maharshi Veda Vyasa also compiled the Brahma-Sutra for giving a logical codification of the important aphorisms of the Upanishads, which is known as *Nyaya Prasthāna*. Practical or applied Vedanta is known as *Smriti Prasthāna*, which is found in Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, a part of the great epic Mahabhārata, compiled by Maharshi Veda Vyāsa.

The central message of Vedanta which epitomizes the main stream of ancient Indian spiritual culture, is found in the Ishopanishad, Kathopanishad and Bhagavad Gita. The first two verses of Ishopaishad declare : "Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is enveloped, controlled and owned by God, the Lord. One should therefore, enjoy life in a spirit of renunciation and sacrifice and should not covet the wealth of others, knowing well to whom they belong. One may aspire to live for one hundred years, if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that of detached work will not bind him to the law of *Karma*. There is no alternative to this way for the devotee."

The central thesis of *Nishkāma Karmayoga* for the devotee of God is summarized in these two verses. Regarding the enlightened status of the realized soul the Upanishad declares in the sixth verse. "He who sees everything in relation to the supreme self, who sees all entities as His part and parcel and who sees the Supreme Lord within everything, never hates anything nor any being." Regarding the necessity of learning scientific knowledge about nature and spiritual knowledge about the self, the eleventh verse declares—"Only one who can learn the process of science and that of transcendental knowledge side by side, can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death and enjoy the full blessing of immortality."

The eighth verse of the last chapter of Kathopanishad declares "Superior even to *avyākta* (undifferentiated nature) is *Purusha* (the supreme self or God), all pervading and entirely devoid of any indicative mark, knowing whom every creature can be emancipated and can attain immortality." This established the *Purushottama Vāda of Bhagavad Gita. Verse fifteen of the same chapter declares.* "When here (in this very life) all the knots (desires) of the heart are rent asunder, then mortal man becomes immortal—This much alone is the teaching (of all Vedanta)".

The Essence of Hindu Culture:

The framework of ancient Indian culture, later on known as *Sanātanadharma* of Hindu culture, is found in the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Manu Smriti. In the words of Mahabharata : " Immortality as well as mortality are both established in the body of (everyone); by (the pursuit of) delusion, one reaches death; by (the pursuit of) truth, one attains immortality."

- (a) Life was viewed by the ancient Indian *Rishis* (wise seers of truth) in this integral nature, evolving from the lowest animal man, governed by this vital impulses to the highest divine man, aspiring for communion with Brahman (God). For this type of evolution of the human soul, which is an eternal part of God—*mamaivāṃso jivaloke jivabhutah sanātanah*, four goals of human life were enunciated, known as the *Chatur Varga* or *Chatur purushārtha*, viz., *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *moksha* i.e., moral duty, earning and consumption of wealth, regulated sex life within the institution of marriage, and aspiration for final liberation or realization of God. Every good citizen was expected to produce and consume wealth in a righteous manner,—*Samyakajivika* of the Buddhists, and lead a normal family life in the path of moral duty to society, and ultimately make efforts for the realization of God, through liberation from the bondage of desires. It was the duty of the state or government of each period to lay down, look after and ensure infra-structure, social and political, for the achievement of the *first three goals of life, which fall within the domain of Smriti Sāstra* suitable for the period. The fourth goal of *moksha*, which falls within the domain of *Sruti Sāstra* of *Sanātana dharma* (perennial philosophy), was meant for the most evolved souls, who are not satisfied in the mundane affairs of life alone and who aspire for the unfolding of the divine nature of man. It constitutes the spiritual culture of Hindus and it is the duty of saints, seers and enlightened *āchāryas* (commentators of *Sruti Sāstra*) and *Gurus* (spiritual guides) to lead the aspiring souls towards the achievement of this

goal. *Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, Sankara, Tulsidasa, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Yogananda, and Anandamayee Ma* fall within this category of *Jagat-gurus* (world teachers).

- b) To make the realization of all the above four goals of life easy and natural, the life span of the Indian Aryan was divided by Manu, Jānvalka and other lawgivers, into four *ashramas* (*chaturāshramas*) or stages of life, viz., *Brahmacharya* (celebrate student life), *gārhasthya* (dutiful life of house holders), *Vānaprasthu* (retired life of social workers) and *Sannyāsa* (fulltime spiritual seekers and preachers). A talented and bold soul, getting an inner call for liberation or for preaching the realized truth can, however, adopt *sannyāsa* at any stage of life, as in the case of Sukadeva, Buddhadeva, Shankaracharya, Sri Chaitanya or Swami Vivekananda.
- c) The third most important constituent of the Hindu social system, conducive to the above two elements, devised by the *Rishis* and law givers, as feat of social engineering for a spiritually evolving society, was the *chatur-varna* system. i.e. classification of human beings into four *varnas* (functional castes according to *guna* (aptitude and nature) and *Karma* (profession). Lord Krishna declared : *chatur varnyam mayā sristam guna karma vibhāgashah*. "The four-fold *varna* system was created by Me, by the differentiation of *Guna* and *Karma*." These four natural *varnas* or classes (later on classified into castes) were called *Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra*. The *Brahmanas* constituted the class of intellectuals, who learnt the four main subjects, e.g. *Anvikshiki* (Logic, Philosophy and Mathematics), *Trayee* (the three Vedas—*Rik, Sam* and *Jajur*), *Varta* (political economy) and *Danda Niti* (the science and art of administration), and performed social duties like teaching, performing vedic sacrifices and priesthood. The *Kshatriyas* constituted the class of soldiers and administrators. The *Vaishyas* constituted the classes of agriculturists, cowherds and traders. Manual labourers hired by the other three classes were called *Sudras*. According to Lord Krishna, men belonging to all the four classes achieve in deliverance through devotion to God and social service-oriented performance of moral duties

Methods of Hindu Sadhana : Hinduism being a universal religion, suited to the aptitudes and aspirations of all types of *mumukshu jivas* (souls aspiring for liberation) is not confined to any single method of *sadhana* (technique of liberation),

like that of the Buddhists, Jainas, Christians, or Muslims. It has adopted a large variety of *Yoga-Sadhana*.

- a) *Synthetic Yoga of Gita* : Swami Vivekananda conceived the ideal of a universal religion in terms of *Yoga* (union with God), which can satisfy the aptitudes and aspirations of the man of action, the man of devotion and the man of discriminative knowledge. In his words: "The worker is called *Karma-Yogi*. He who seeks the union through love is called the *Bhakti-Yogi*. He who seeks it through mysticism is called the *Raja-Yogi*." Thus we see that what Swami Vivekananda meant by universal religion or *Yoga*, is actually a synthesis of *Yoga*, as found in *Srimad Bhavavad Gita*, which is a universally accepted scripture of *Sanātana Dharma* of Hinduism. Anandamayee Ma laid the greatest emphasis on the recitation and practical application of *Gita*.
- b) *Vedic Panchāgni Vidya* : The Vedic *Karma-kanda* was mainly based on fire worship and mystic hymns. The *Kathopanishad* (I, 3, I) and the *Brihadaranyak Upanishad* (VI-2) also make references to the *Panchagni Vidya*. The three year long *Akhanda-Gayatri Maha Yajna* was performed at Varanasi Ashram from January, 1947 to January, 1950 and *Ati Rudra Yajna* in May, 1981 at Kankhal Ashram in Ma's presence.
- c) *Upanishadic Jnana Yoga* : Ma laid great stress on Upanishadic discourses as the Upanishads are the basis of Vedantic *Jnana Yoga*, which leads to the dawn of spiritual knowledge just by listening to the perennial *mantras*, spoken by enlightened souls to listeners who have self-discipline and faith.
- d) *Pancharātra Sadhana & Vaishnavism* : The Vaishnava or *Bhagavat sadhana* is based on the literature of the *Pancharatras* and is closely linked to *Geeta* and *Bhagavats*. In the medieval period Ramanuja, Nimbarka Madhava and Ballabha in the south and Sri Chaitanya (1486-1534 A. D.) in Bengal popularized the *Bhakti* cult and among devotees of Ma Anandamayee also this is the most popular method of *sadhana*.
- e) *Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Kriya Yoga* : The classic technique of eight fold *Raja Yoga* is found in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* and the methods of *Hatha Yoga* are found in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Gheranda Samhita*, *Siva Samhita*, Arthur Avalon's *The Serpent Power* and Theos Bernard's *Hatha Yoga*. The technique of *Kriya Yoga* is explained as the method of *Kundalini Yoga* in works of Swami Yogananda. Ma Anandamayee, being a realized soul from Her very birth like Shuka Deva, had no external guru, but seems to have

passed through all the eight stages of *Raja Yoga* before attaining first *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* and then *Sahaja Samadhi* in Her youth.

- f) *Tantra Sadhana* and *Murti Puja* : *Tantra Sastra* of India, though pre-Vedic in origin, was codified and popularized much after the Vedic period.

Like Vedanta, Tantra has also many schools like monistic, dualistic and qualified monistic. But as monistic Vedanta has ultimately stood the test of rigorous reasoning, so also monistic Tantra has finally stood the test of reasoning and time. Out of the *Divyāchār*, *Virāchār* and *Pashvāchār* schools of Tantra sadhana, Sri Ramakrishna got his *siddhi* (realization) through the *Divyāchar* method of sadhana, in which *murti puja* (worship of icons), *mantra-japa* and *kundalini yoga* are the chief elements.

Ma Anandamayee also was a great advocate of *Divyāchār tantra sadhana* and apart from installing idols of divine deities in different ashrams, she presided over innumerable annual pujas of Shiva, Durga, Kali, Krishna, and other Hindu gods and goddess in her ashrams as well as houses of devotees. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, the greatest indologist of the 20th century and one of the chief devotees of Ma Anandamayee, has also expounded the theoretical and applied aspects of *Divyāchār Tantra*.

Ma Anandamayee's Special Contribution to the Spiritual Heritage of India : Ma Anandamayee emphasized not merely the synthetic *sadhana* or *yoga* of Bhagavad Gita, but went to the extent of permitting *divyāchāri tantra sadhana*, as earlier practiced and preached by Sri Ramakrishna in the nineteenth century. All the festivals of Hindus e.g. Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Saraswati Puja, Shiva Ratri, Janmashtami, Jhoolan Purnima, Holi etc. as well as Bhagavat Saptaha, Samyam Saptaha, *Rudravishek*, *Shata Chandi*, *Sahasra Chandi*, *Akhanda Nama Yajna* etc. used to be performed in the presence of Her with due *sastric* rites and zeal. Recitation of and discourses on Upanishads, Gita, Bhagavat, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Devi Bhagavata, Durga saptasati Chandi and Chaitanya Charitamrita were regular features of *satsanga* (spiritual congregation) wherever Mother used to stay.

Over and above this integral approach to Hindu *sadhana*, She used to encourage devotees of Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism to practise their own methods of *sadhana* with full faith and devotion. For a *brahmajnāni* of Her stature, having the compassionate heart of the universal Mother, all methods of Yoga are different paths leading to the realization of God, or *Brahma* or the

Supreme Self. Ma Anandamayee was the ideal *sthitaprajna* (Yogi of steady wisdom) who has known *Brahman* in reality. The Joy-permeated Ma Anandamayee of Swami Yogananda's 'Autobiography of a Yogi' always lived in '*Sacchidananda* consciousness', according to Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo.

Ma Anandamayee descended to this world from the supramental plane of Sri Aurobindo's cosmology to present to mankind the model of the best type of *parabhakta*, of the divine personality of *Brahmavid Varishtha*, who combined in Her unique personality, the equilibrium of mind and compassion of Lord Buddha, the absolute monism of Adi Shankaracharya, the *parabhakta's* ecstasy of Lord Chaitnya, the *sarva dharma-samanvaya* of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansadeva, the *mahayoga* of Sri Aurobindo. But all this integral synthesis combined in the divine body of the beautiful, ever-smiling Mother, so that Her children may at last discover a lovely and affectionate *Ishta* (Spiritual Goal) and a supreme *Guru* (world teacher) for emulation and worship. She is the epitome of *Sanātana Hindu Dharma*, the universal religion, in all its aspects of Vedanta, Vaishnavism and Tantra *Sadhana*.

OUR LAST VISIT TO MA

— Shradha Davenport

[Continued from before]

Our car and driver were excellent and we arrived in Delhi by 9:30 a.m. Once we got to our hotel, I called Mr. Roy at the airline office to see if our missing duffel bag had turned up. He said that it had not and that we should come to the office the next day to fill out claim forms.

That and other business in Delhi were taken care of that and following day. It was late when we returned to the hotel. Swamiji and Prangopal had hired a very nice air-conditioned car for us at 10:00 a.m.

I repacked our things so that four bags could be left at the hotel. We would return to Delhi for our departing flight in eight days and would not need those bags in Kankhal.

The hotel employees had gone on strike and we were unable to get breakfast there before leaving. When our driver arrived, we asked him to take us to a very nice vegetarian restaurant where we had a sumptuous meal.

It was extremely hot that time of the year and we appreciated the air-conditioned car.

In Hardwar we stopped at the bank of Mr. Ram Panjwani. Swamiji had spoken about our staying at his dharmasala and he had saved two rooms for us. We took our things to the dharmasala and put them in our rooms. Satya and I had downstairs room which was air-conditioned. Swamiji and Prangopal had a room upstairs and it had no air-conditioning. It was a nice place to stay and rickshaws were readily available just outside the door.

After situating our things, and getting ready, we went to see Mother. Hardwar was beautiful and I enjoyed the ride down the familiar streets to Mother's ashram. There we saw several old friends. We were greeted by Swami Tanmayananda, Atmananda (just arrived from Dehradun), and Swami Keshavananda, who lived at that ashram. Brahmachari Nirmalananda was there and several of Mother's girls whom I had not seen for a long time.

When we walked back to Mother's little house we found Her sitting on the side porch. A small group of devotees stood there with Her. We moved to an open spot by the porch railing where we could stand near Her. As we pronounced, I saw that Mother appeared to be very sick. She looked into my eyes as though to tell me how

ill she felt. It was exceedingly painful to see Her like that and be completely unable to do anything. I could not even touch Her. She sat with us for a short time, then went into Her house.

We spoke with Atmananda for a while and met Swami Vijayananda. Bhaskaranandaji gave us the letters which Panuda had read to Mother for us. Gadadhar gave us a letter from Madhavananda, and Swami Keshavananda had Chitra's letter for me.

It was so good to see everyone again, but my heart was heavy with concern for Mother. I knew that She said from Her point of view, "There is no difference, no change. Everything is the same." But from my viewpoint, in *maya*, there was a great change; and I dreaded with all my being the profound darkness which I knew was coming. How strange it was that in spite of our "knowing," it seemed that we were like actors in a drama and had to act our parts as though they had validity.

After eating at a restaurant we went to the dharmasala for the night.

At 9:00 a.m. we were back at the ashram, but Mother did not come out. We went to see the satsang hall where a Bhagavat Saptaha was to be held. It looked beautiful. Then we walked across the street to the old part of the ashram where we had spent many happy hours with Mother on our earlier trips. Didima's Samadhi Mandir and the Shiva Mandir were on that side. We went to do pronam at each one. Bhaskarananda, Atmananda, and Swami Keshavananda were outside. We talked with them for a while then left to go for our room meal and to do a little shopping.

Darshan was to be around 6:00 p.m., but we went a little early. There were a few people waiting to see Mother, including a young brother and sister, Roy and Shirley Hilson, who had come to India from South Africa. They had been to see Mother Krishnabai and Satya Sai Baba, and wanted to have Mother's darshan before going back to South Africa in a few days.

Before long Mother came out onto Her porch. Once again we were blessed to stand at the railing less than four feet from Mother.

Mother's darshan that evening was so powerful and personal to me that any words are inadequate to describe it. Again, Mother looked at me with such sad suffering eyes but, at the same time, they were filled with such sweetness that I felt as if my heart would break. As She looked into my eyes that way, I came the closest I ever had to remembering that blissful experience which she gave to me with those same eyes in my first darshan, my dream. If She had held me with that gaze for even a moment longer I feel that I would have swooned.

The rest of that darshan was wonderful. It seemed that I was breathing the lofty air of Mother's divine realm. My mouth was completely dry and joy filled my

being. Mother stayed with us for a long time. When She left, it was with another sweet look from Her folded hands.

What a blessing to love that perfect lover. She is everything to me. Without Her, there is only darkness.

After breakfast the following morning we went to the ashram. Mother was sitting in the long room which was just inside the door of Her house. The room was like a wide hall or enclosed porch with window all along the two outside walls. It was very much like the room upstairs in the old ashram side. Mother's bed was against the back wall, parallel to the back of windows next to the entryway. Those windows, which were hinged like shutters, had been opened, and while standing next to them the four of us were able to see Mother quite well. Soon we were joined by Atmananda, then Ram and his bride Parvati also came there.

For about an hour we stood like that enjoying the lovely darshan. Mother kept looking out at us. There were people inside on the floor beneath the windows. They sat facing Mother and having some conversation with Her. During that time Mother often looked towards us and smiled as we stood at the windows. Then she told the girls to bring prasad out to us. We were given dried coconut and rock crystal candy.

When darshan was ended we talked with Atmananda for a long time. She told us about some young school girl who had just come to Mother and how She had instructed them as to conduct and doing mantras.

Atmananda also told this story which Mother had related to those inside Her room as we were standing at the window. "Some mahatma had come to a place where a king, queen, and others were. They invited him to take food, but he refused, saying, 'I cannot take here as you are not having satsang and I will only take food where there is satsang.' Then he started walking away. The king, queen, and all started walking just behind him. The mahatma asked, 'What are you doing?'

They replied, 'We have heard that when people walk in the footsteps of a mahatma, they are having satsang.' The mahatma then returned and took food from those devotees."

We appreciated knowing that story of Mother's and thanked Atmananda for telling it to us. Then we went to the dharmasala for a rest before evening satsang.

Swami Nirmalananda and Prangopal had already gone to the ashram when Satya and I left the dharmasala at 5:15 p.m. When we arrived Mother had not yet come out. We took pictures of the ashram grounds, Mother's house, and the site of

the great Ati Rudra Mahayajna which was to take place from May sixth to May sixteenth. Then we visited with friends as we all waited to see Mother.

It was quite late when Mother came out into Her porch. She looked so sweet, and again we were blessed to stand up near Her. She gave us many loving looks and I felt so grateful to simply be there.

After that wonderful darshan we went to eat, then Roy and Shirley Hilson came to our room for a short visit. It was midnight when I went to bed.

The next day when we came to the ashram Mother had already given darshan and was back inside Her house. We went to a side window and peered into where she sat upon Her bed. She smiled and looked at us lovingly for some time. Then She sent an orange and a banana to each of us. Someone had come for *diksha* so we pronounced to Mother and walked to the outer courtyard.

In a little while we saw Swami Nirmalananda and Prangopal coming from the old ashram side. We all went again to Mother's house and were able to see Her for a few more minutes, then left for the afternoon.

That evening Mother was going to the Purnananda Ashram and we planned to accompany Her there.

At 5:20 p.m. we returned to the ashram. I had a swollen ankle and sat by the Yajna Kunda mandir to rest it. Satya walked across the road to where the old Ganges flowed and filled a large bottle with that holy water. We would take it with us when we had to leave in a few days.

Dr. Ghosh came to where I sat and asked if something was wrong with my foot. I told him that for some unknown reason my ankle was swollen. He left for a minute and when he returned he had some Ayurvedic medicine for me to take. He said that it would reduce the swelling. I was very touched by his kindness.

Satya came back with Ganga jal, and as he did Dasu drove Mother's car to the edge of Her house. On the hood was a beautiful little white silk flag with fringe all around it. In the center, sewn with sequins, was MA in Sanskrit. We stood near the car so Satya could take movies, then we intended to get a rickshaw and follow Mother.

While we stood waiting, Mr. and Mrs. Ram Panjwani arrived in their car. We spoke with them and thanked him for our nice accommodations. We asked if we would like to go in their car, with them, to follow Mother. We were delighted to accept.

Mother came out and Satya filmed Her getting into Her car. Then we quickly got in the back seat of the Panjwani's sedan and he followed Mother's car for some time. Mr. Panjwani asked if we would "like to arrive there ahead of Mother?" "Oh,

yes !" we replied, so he took a short cut getting us there just ahead of Mother. Satya got to film Her arrival and the sadhus of the Purnananda Ashram as they welcomed Her.

A "Vedanta Sannmelan" was being conducted. Mother was carried in Her invalided chair into a large pandal and down the long aisle through the center of the assembled crowd. A wide platform faced the gathering where asanas had been prepared for the speakers and a special asana was waiting for Mother. Next to Mother was a sannyasini who spoke for some time and led the devotees in chanting.

We stood on a slightly elevated area to the side so that we could see Mother. She looked at us several times.

The people there were very respectful to Mother. After each sadhu had spoken for a few minutes, the last one told everyone that Mother was now leaving and to please not make it difficult for Her. He asked them to stay seated until She was gone. Mother turned and looked at us, smiling. We quickly moved next to the exit and waited there for Mother to go past. Everyone kept his seat as requested and Mother was taken to Her car. We were very impressed by that ashram and the devotees there.

Mr. Panjwani had to go to his office so we took a rickshaw back to Mother's ashram. When we arrived Mother was sitting in the large satsang hall. There was plenty of room and I was able to sit just behind the girls very near Mother. The darshan was wonderful and unhurried. We all pronounced, then stood as Mother left the hall and went to Her house.

Mr. and Mrs. Panjwani had invited the four of us for dinner. We went to the dharmasala to get ready, then walked the short distance to their lovely home. Their son was very fond of kirtan and asked us to join him in singing God's Name. We enjoyed the kirtan and then were served a very delicious meal. Afterward we sat on their large balcony and were treated to coconut ice-cream as we visited with our host. It was a lovely evening and did not end until about 10:30 p.m. We walked back to the dharmasala tired but filled with the joy of that day.

Swami Nirmalananda came to our room the following morning and we decided that we had better do our shopping for incense and a few things which we wanted to take back to California with us. I did not want to think about it, but time was slipping away.

We went to the Bara Bazar shopping area of Hardwar near Har-ki Pairi. The narrow winding lanes between the shops were extremely crowded. Someone said

that the next day was a holy day when many people would come to bathe in the sacred Ganges.

That evening we went to the ashram a little after 5:00 p.m. It was "Ram Navami," the birthday of the Lord Sri Ram. Many people had come that day from Delhi as well as local people.

Mother did not come out until about 7:00 p.m. She was very sweet and sat with us for a little while then went inside with the Mahant Sri of Nirvani Akhara and we returned to our rooms. Satya got ice cream for the four of us and we talked until about 9:30 p.m.

Next morning we had a short visit, then got ready to go to the ashram.

Mother was in "Room #6." That was in the wing north of the satsang hall. Gadadhar was preparing to do Mother's puja. We went there and stood on the verandah with Swami Nirmalananda and Prangopal. Gadadhar brought all of his puja articles and Ram came with him. Gadadhar said that Mother would sit on the verandah and Satya was going to take movies.

Mother did not come out, so Gadadhar and Ram went into the room. The "temple guard" of the day would not allow us to go in. Gadadhar had asked twice that we be permitted in, but the answer was, "NO !" After the puja, Gadadhar brought prasad and gave us Amul chocolate bars and mangoes.

We waited for a while and then Mother came into the hall. She greeted the pandit and the sadhus who were seated there, then took Her seat. The Mahant sat to Her right.

Mother lay on Her side. I sat right in front and had a wonderful view of Her. Behind Her asana, hanging on the wall, was a truly remarkable piece of art work. On a long panel of white satin someone had applied beautiful figures of the Lord Sri Krishna and Sri Radha. Their colorful costumes and all the work was simply lovely.

As I looked at Mother I prayed to Her mentally, telling Her of my love. She looked into my eyes for a very long time. I felt as if I were melting into that infinite ocean of love which is Mother. Tears of that love washed my face, still She looked into my eyes and held my heart. There is nothing in this life without Her, She is my life, my love, my *prān*. I shall never know that love except in Her, the Self of my Being.

Twice She blessed me with that look which enchanted my soul.

Later, when Mother had gone to Her house, we came to the dharmasala. I rested while Satya went to take movies of the bath at Har-ki Pairi.

[To continue]

THE SUPREME REALITY & ITS ULTIMATE REALIZATION*

— Dr. R. Badri Narayan

Self-understanding is mankind's one of the most ancient pursuits. Questions like "Who am I", "What is my relationship with the world around me?", "What is eternal in this world; where everything that I value and is dear to me—my wealth, youth, prestige and my life itself—is perishable?" engaged the human mind, and with this began the subject of philosophy, the study in pursuit of the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, the eternal truth.

Indian philosophy did not, however, originate out of any wonder about the known or curiosity for the unknown, but out of a practical need to overcome the evils and sufferings of life. The views propagated were originally developed and uttered during many generations by isolated seers and thinkers, and were later collected into groups in the form of *Sutras* or aphorisms, and thus into different systems of philosophy. All the systems so developed believe in the law of *Karma* and that all the sufferings of life come to an end with the attainment of liberation (*Moksa*). However, six of them, namely *Vaisesika*, *Nyaya*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Mimāṃsā* and *Vedānta*, are accepted to be the chief ones. Of these, *Mimāṃsā* deals with the *Karmakāṇḍa* of the *Vedas* and *Vedānta* with the *Jñānakāṇḍa*; the other schools also believe in the *Vedas* but make indirect reference to them.

The *Vedānta* philosophy is largely based on the writing of *Upanisads* (the last part of each *Veda*). These were records, as they came and which ran into more than hundred volumes, of the extraordinary experiences of several generations of saints and seers. They have been systematized later in the *Brahmasutra* and summarized in the *Bhagavadgita*. These texts together form what is known as *Prasthānatraya*. There is wide divergence in the interpretation of these texts by different *Ācāryas*, and accordingly different schools of *Vedānta* have developed. We shall come to the chief ones later, but mention may be made here that one of them, the *Viśiṣṭadvaita* School, drew its inspiration also from the mystic Tamil saints—the Alvars of 5-7th c AD whose utterances (running into four thousand verses) emphasizing alongside the Sanskrit *Upanisads*, and were termed as *Tamil Veda* or *Drāṃilopanisad*. It

* Courtesy: "Vedanta and Yoga" Bulletin

heralded the beginning of *Bhaktivāda* in India which gradually came to the North and found its fulfilment and culmination in Sri Chaitanya (1485 AD).

The Vedānta philosophy in all its forms calls the Absolute Supreme Reality by the name *Brahman*—which is also known as *Ātman*, *Purusa* or the Self. The Supreme logical idea is God, who is *Saccidānanda*, existence-knowledge-bliss. The real in itself is *Brahman*. The real, as logically defined, as *Iṣvara*, who rests in *Brahman* and who does not cease to be *Brahman* in becoming *Iṣvara*.

Corresponding to *Brahman*, the eternal Reality behind the everchanging universe, the sages also conceived for every living being, an indestructible individual soul (the *Jivātmān*, or simply the *Jiva*) which existed and will continue to exist beyond his birth and death. It is this *Jivātmān*, the individual soul, about which Sri Kṛṣṇa spoke to Arjuna in the Gita (Ch. II. 12-25).

Brahman has been identified in the *Upanisads* with *Pranava* (*Onkāra*), and both with *Parabrahma Srikṛṣṇa* in the Gita. Associated with them is that three-fold power (*Sakti*). A lower power (*Aparāsakti*), which is *Jada-rupa* and *Acit*, is its *Māyāsakti* that has been termed in the Gita (VII. 4) as *Aparāprakṛti*, and by the *Vedāntins* as *Avidyā* or Ignorance. This *Māyāsakti* makes the One appear as many—the singular *Brahman* reflected as the multiplicity of the illusory world. A higher power is His *Cidrupa Jivasakti*, which is the essence of the individual *Jivas*. These are both His non-essential characteristics, His essential one (*Svarupa Lakṣana*) being His transcendental *Cit-sakti*, His *Yogamāyā*, a universal principle under which He keeps Himself veiled. It is this effulgence, which is the *Bhargas* of the *Gāyatri* hymn within the solar orb that people contemplate upon to invoke His grace and in order to realize Him.

Brahman and the Cosmic Energy can be seen as one entity: it is called *Brahman* or *Purusa* when inactive; *S'akti* when involved in creation, sustenance and dissolution; *Purusa* and *Prakṛiti*. The *jnani* wants to know *Brahman*, the devotee wants to come near God, complete with His infinite auspicious qualities, and worship Him.

Purusa can appear as the created beings; as the unchangeable *jivātmān*, and as *Paramātmān*, God, *Iṣvara*, or *Purusottamā*; in three different forms, *Jagat*, *Jiva* and *Iṣvara*, the three Realities - *Cit*, *Acit* and *Iṣvara*, (*Tattvatraya*). *Paramātmān* again has two aspects - with or without attributes, which latter stands for the Absolute. In other words, God is pure Consciousness, pure Bliss, but can be either personal or impersonal. In *jnāna*, we see God as impersonal, in *bhakti* we see Him as personal: two aspects, static and dynamic of the same Reality, the integral *Brahman* or the supreme *Purusa*.

The goal of human life, of the human soul, is to attain eternal bliss—not pleasure; no pleasure is eternal - and for this one has to attain oneness with the Infinite; union with the Supreme Universal Soul; return to the truth of the Divine, now clouded by ignorance of *avidyā*; transform human soul into the Divine Soul, and the life in Nature to a life in God. The soul then begins to move towards the higher Truth, extinction of ego and desire, egoistic action and thought. Two things are necessary for the discovery of the true individuality, for knowing one's self and building it in the nature. First, to be conscious of one's psychic being behind the heart and, next, the separation of the *purusa* from the lower *Prakriti*, from the *Gunās* of the *Prakriti*. In the same way as *Prakriti* herself becomes the cause of bondage and suffering (G. XIII. 19), its attributes, the *Gunās*, seem to bind the imperishable *Ātman* (*Dehi*) with the body (G. XIV. 5). He, who is indifferent to honour and ignominy, is alike to the cause of friends and foes, and has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings, is said to have risen above the *Gunās* (G. XIV. 25).

The embodied soul can transcend the three *Gunās* and attain *Brahman* by worshipping Him through the *Yoga* of exclusive devotion. By this process it is not the inner *Purusa* alone that remains detached (for, it is always detached, only one is not conscious of it in the ordinary state, wherein the true individual is veiled by the activities of the outer Nature), but it is the *Prakriti* also that is not disturbed by the action of the *Gunās* or attached to it. When one lives in the true consciousness of his self, he feels that all desires come from outside only, from the universal lower *Prakriti*. All the ordinary vital movements are foreign to the true being; they neither originate in the soul nor do they belong to it; they are waves from the general Nature. In the highest state of *Jnana-yoga* the aspirant sheds wholly and finally all desires, and lives in the inward mental concentration of the Self alone.

The nature of the meeting between the individual and the Divine Reality that pervades the universe will, of course, depend upon the relationship between the two. The different schools of *Vedānta*, (based on the interpretations by the various *Acāryas*), although admitting an integral relationship, differ on its type or extent. Its three main schools are: *Advaita* (non-dualistic monism), *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified monism) and *Dvaita* (dualism). Sankara (AD. 788-820), the chief exponent of the *Advaita* school, views the entire universe as nothing but immutable *Brahman* without attributes; to him, *Iśvara* himself is, in a sense, a product of *Māyā*, it being the highest approach to the *Nirguna Brahman* possible for the individual soul. The world is an apparent transformation (through *Māyā*) of the *Nirguna Brahman*; *Jīva* being, in reality, all pervading and identical with *Brahman*, but regarding

doer or an agent when it is individualized by its accessories and adjuncts. The Divine within each one of us and a Divine that pervades the universe are, in fact, eternally one but kept apart by a veil of ignorance of *Maya* - (*Jivo Brahmaiva Nāparah*) and there is no liberation without the realization of this oneness: *Brahmatmaikatvabodhena Mokshah Sidhyati Nanyathā* (*Viveka Cudamani*- 56).

The *Visistādvaita* school that has been mentioned earlier received fresh impetus from the teachings of Sri Yamunacharya in the tenth century and a sound philosophical basis in the hands of Sri Ramanuja in the eleventh. Briefly, this philosophy is: God is the Supreme Reality, He is the whole, of which individual souls are the parts. As inseparably associated with God, the individual soul is eternal; as distinct from Him, it has a free will, given to him so that man may eventually detach himself from the mesh or ignorance and grow into his divine status. The object of human pursuit and the aim of human existence (*Purusārtha*) is to secure eternal servitude to God, which, translated into ordinary language, is service to humanity. It, therefore, believes that the human soul is very close to the Divine, basically one with Him and yet different by virtue of retaining its individuality. The two are the same in the sense that the *Jiva* can completely realize *Isvara* within his own individual self, making it complete (*Purnamidam*) leaving the *Paramātman* (*Adah*) also complete. They are different because neither the *Jiva* loses its identity nor does *Isvara* become any less so after the process.

[To continue]

MY RECOLLECTIONS

—Ravindra Singh

Anuj

My second son Anuj was 2 years only when we went on Badri-Kedar Yatra. My elder brother with his family in one car. After halting at Rudra Prayag we reached Son Prayag by evening. The weather became very bad and cold with rains and storms. There was no proper arrangement those days. From Sone Prayag we had to walk up to Shri Kedarnath, almost a distance of 13 miles. Anuj became very ill and had an attack of broncho-pneumonia, We did not know what to do. No reliable doctor was available. Only a BAMS practitioner gave some medicine. The whole night he was in my wife's lap covered with blanket, on the rear seat of the car, praying to Ma and Lord Shiva. We were losing hope. The next morning he woke absolutely recovered and fit. That is Ma's *kripa* and from there we walked all the way up to Kedar Nath and had *darshan*, Next morning we walked back to Sone Prayag. On way to Kedar there was a landslide. From Rudra Prayag we went to Shri Badrinath ji and stayed ther three nights and came home safely with Ma's *Kripa*.

Jai Ma.

Anuj's Mundan

Ma was in Kankhal, I had a feeling and told my wife that Anuj's *mundan* ceremony would be done at Ma's place. So all of us left for Kankhal and straight to Ganga "Ghat". Here he was shaved with the accompanying cermoney. He was given bath and then brought to the Ashram. Ma was standing in front of the Shankaracharya Hall, as if waiting for Anuj. We bowed to Ma and did *pranama*. I told Ma that it was his *mundan*. We made him also do *pranam*. He was less than three years old. Ma looked at him with a smile and from the plate she dipped her finger in the *Roli* and made a *swastic* sign on his shaven head and put some rice flower on it. *Mundan* ceremany was not planned and Ma was not informed before hand. It was Her way.

Ma spoke to Anuj. "*Dadi sa roop paya hai, vaisa gun bhi paya hai ?*" You have the beauty of your grandmother, have you also her virtues. ?

Rest of my children also, if they think of God, it is only Ma-Ma. As I perceived Shri Shri Ma over the years, I saw millionaires and billionaires, Rajas and intellectuals, all falling, praying, begging and weeping at her lotus feet so that She may grant them the fulfilment of their desires. There have been even Prime Ministers begging for their lost powers to be restored to them. One thing I have noticed that no one could bluff Shri Ma whether he was a great *Mahatma* or a politician. Ma was ever-loving and ever-forgiving, but no one could prevail upon her, no matter how witty. And then, I have also witnessed mighty souls, who came to her only for her sake, for the sake of the Supreme Self, that Shri Shri Ma embodied.

Jai Ma.

Last Darshan

Ma was in Kishenpur Ashram on the top floor of her room with a window on the east side from which she could see the river Rishpana valley. She was very ill we were told, most of the time in bed. I could have full *darshan* of her and do *pranam* quietly. She did not talk. Some time her glances falling on us. Udas ji was there at Her feet. I came home and got the news that Ma had dropped her mortal body.

Jai Ma.

Bliss, Beauty, Peace, combined in Ma

R.B.Ch. Shcr Singh, my grand father was breathing his last. My *Choti Nani Ji* became very bold, her face glowing, she ordered us to sing Ma's name in the room. I could see his single breathing, my *Nani* telling him, think of Ma, all say Ma. Everyone was singing Ma *naam* kirtan and he was gone.

Jai Ma

My mother passes away

My mother was 86, just two days before leaving the body, she complained that she had pain in her stomach. She was taken to Nursing Home. I slept there with her in the hospital. Doctor refused to open the stomach because nothing came out in other tests. Next day in the morning he said we could take her home and let her depart in peace. I asked my mother if she would like to go home. She refused and in full consciousness, all family members were there and Ma *Naam Kirtan* started and slowly we saw her passing away.

Jai Ma.

My elder brother's death

Two years after my mother's death my elder brother Bhupendra Singh suffered a lot in his last days. He used to have fits often for the last ten years. During his last days he was taken to a nursing home where his kidney also failed. He was brought back. I had placed Ma's photograph on the wall in front of him. book came with Ma's photographs. He looked at all repeatedly. He also passed away in peace at home, with "Ma's Name" in his ears.

Jai Ma.

Death of my father

He was 92 years. Two years after my mother he felt congestion in his chest. My elder son Arjun had come on leave. My wife, Arjun and I kept watch at night. Around 12 Arjun peeped through the window, my father saw him and gave a smile. The same night, at about 3 am. I woke and went into his room. He was gone. He always kept the picture of Lord Shiva in front of him with Parvati ji and Ganesh ji and Ma's picture on the wall hanging in front of him.

He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva of Pundri. He used to tell us many stories regarding Pundri Shivji. Strange things happened. When his body was laid down on pyre and fire was given by me, two bulls came and started doing *parikrama* of the "Chita", not allowing any one inside the circle and they kept on till the last and went away. God knows where ?. Every one saw this. Ma only knows!

Jai Ma