

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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*The beautiful tri-moortis of Shree Ma installed in Ananda Jyoti Mandir,
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MATRI VANI

What you consider to be your duty, you will in any case try to carry out—in fact you are doing it. But man's special duty which is the thought of God, the activity of the mind that awakens the desire to know what you really are, on this you should concentrate; and it is most important to make a special effort in that direction. Give your attention to your regular daily practice of *sadhana*. If circumstances will not permit any other exercise, let it be only the remembrance of Him—the purpose of it all being the realization of the ONE, who is manifested in all forms and in all modes of being.

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He who has given you a mouth will also provide you with food. Observe strict truthfulness and be ever mindful of Him alone.

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When the mind centres on what gives peace and one's gaze dwells on what promotes it, when one's ears listen to what fills the heart with peace and at all times there is a response from Him, who is Peace Itself, then only can there be hope of peace.

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To spend your days serving your mother is very good indeed. Endeavour to keep your mind surrendered at God's holy feet—then alone can there be a prospect of the shadows of restlessness growing faint.

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It is for you to concentrate with all your might upon spiritual practices such as meditation and prayer, all the rest He Himself will get accomplished.

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Abide by your duty. To live in the home that he has created for himself is surely fitting for a householder. Do not however neglect the search for your real home. Only when this is found has one truly come home.

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In order to experience all this you have come into the world. In spite of difficulties cling to the thought of God.

God alone is Truth. To be able to engage in worship and *sadhana* is man's good fortune. In all matters depend on Him. Whatever the Fountain of Goodness does must of necessity be beneficent. Do your utmost to fulfil your duties.

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To feel drawn towards anything closely connected with religion means to be attracted towards God, provided the attraction be of a genuinely religious nature. It is important to try and concentrate on the One. Such an effort promises future development of firm faith and single-mindedness.

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Merely to assume the robes of a *sadhu*, while the spirit of renunciation is lacking, will not do. Taking *sannyasa* and becoming a *sannyasi* spontaneously are certainly not one and the same thing.

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Those who meditate on the name of *Brahman* (the Saviour) should use for their *japa* a rosary made of *Tulsi* or of pure sandalwood beads; whereas those whose *Ishta Mantra* represents an invocation to *Shakti* should use a rosary made of *Rudraksha* beads.

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PAGES FROM

“Ma Anandamayee Prasang”

(Translated from Bengali)

—Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta

Shree Shree Ma Comes To Dhaka, March, 1943

I received a letter from Khukuni didi dated 12th March, 1943 mentioning that Ma has come to Calcutta and effort was being made to take her to Dhaka. A similar letter came to Dhaka ashram also with the added words that before leaving with Ma, a telegram will be sent.

Ma is coming to Dhaka after almost three and half years. Hearing this everyone began to express joy. The dark cloud of bad days which has covered all around; as a result of that people are shouting to be saved. Although not being directly connected with the war we all have been badly affected with the heat of the same. The dreadful shadows of the famine have spread all around. Food stuff is exorbitantly high priced and unavailable. Fasting or getting half meal has become a daily affair for most people at the present. Theft, dacoity and plundering is ever continuing. It is difficult to go out of house after dusk. The University hostels have been converted into military hospitals. On account of the movement of European armymen on the road it has become unsafe to move out with women on the streets. Movement of ladies in Ma's ashram has stopped. People have become rudderless as a result of the anxious present and uncertain future. Ma is coming to Dhaka at this very time; hearing this all have become jubilant. It was as if a slight uncovering of light in the midst of incoming darkness of calamity.

15th March, 1943- We sat the whole day in the expectation of the telegram. But the telegram has not come. Bhupatibabu received a letter from Swami Paramanandaji. It was written therein that Ma after being present at Berhampur on the occasion of the *Nama Yagnas* on Sunday, 14th March will leave by Dhaka Mail on Monday and reach Dhaka on Tuesday (16th March).

16th March, 1943-

Seeing that no telegram has come with a doubtful mind we reached the Station at the time of Dhaka Mail. The train arrived in time. Seeing Jatubhai in the train we understood that Ma has come. When the train stopped we found Ma is in a Class II compartment*; after taking her down we took her to the Waiting Room. Ma there

* Note- In those days there were only three classes in trains- Class-I, Class-II and Ordinary class.

enquired if we all were well. I replied- "Yes, Ma. We are well." In the mean-time luggages were taken down from the train and all were preparing to proceed for the ashram. Ma left in a car for the ashram. I returned home and after giving news of Ma's arrival to all again went back to the ashram.

Arriving at the ashram I found Ma by standing at the Panchvati was showing Shahbag to Swami paramanandaji. I went and sat near Ma. Ma said that the room constructed over the Panchvati *asan* was a nice one and expressed the desire to lie down there during the night. By this time many has arrived at the ashram after getting the news, some began to do *pranam* to Ma and offering money at her feet. Seeing this Ma laughed loudly and said to me- "What is this? It was not seen before hand." we also started laughing.

Gradually the ashram began to resound with people's noise. Ma began to speak laughingly- "Ashram should remain quiet and peaceful, and people will do penance while sitting here."

Hirandidi- It is you who gathers people and start the noisy atmosphere! Ma- I donot bring any people, neither do I make any noise. *I never go anywhere. I am in one state absolutely quiet.* If I did run about and create noise, then would this body remain?

Keeping quiet for a while Ma again started saying laughingly- "*I do not go to any one else, donot eat other's food, neither do I speak with others. As a matter of fact, is there any other?*"

Again- "Whatever you do in a finite was that also you do considering as your own. To whomever you go, with whomever you talk, you do the same considering your own whomever to what extent you consider as your own, your dealings are also with them upto that extent. Even whom you consider as your enemy, while talking about him you say that he is my enemy."

People began to gather gradually, Sri Manindra Chandra Dutta, retd. Deputy Magistrate, came to Ma and did *pranam*. Ma asked him- "Baba, are you well?"

Manindra babu- "How can I remain well? If everyone is well then only we can be allright. What bad days are going on, there is no limit of people's sorrows and miseries.

Ma (smilingly) - Yes, baba, the period is as such while in the steamer on my way it was heard that people were dying without food. Some being unable to bear the pain are committing suicide. To what extent are you seeing the sorrow and pain which have been going on all over the world? This is also His play. He is clapping with both His hands. It is He who is creating and is also He who is destroying.

"You again see, God is said to be the Benefactor. What is the purpose of all this sorrow, misery and death? There must be some good even in this. But we cannot understand that. It is hard to understand God's play (leela). That is beyond our com

prehension. That is why we have to remain depending on Him. Where there are hopes and desires there is sorrow. When that is forsaken then there is nothing like sorrow.”

“You said that if there is no wellbeing for all then how can you remain well. Who else is telling like this? Is it you who is speaking this? These are also His words. It is He who is getting this spoken through you. He will do some thing that is He is saying thus. There is definitely some result of what persons say individually or collectively. That you have been expressing feeling of kindness for all, there is bound to be some benefit as a result of this also.”

“You again see, you are speaking about welfare of all, but that cannot be. The world consists of both good and bad. Is it not, baba? If some one wants to do good for all at some place, he is unable to do that fully. He can do to some extent, nodoubt, but cannot do fully. Similarly, if any one wants to destroy all, that also he cannot. Again if seen from another angle you will see that whatever is happening good and bad that is happening wholly. While doing good for all even if one person is benefited, that is also being done fully. Just see, while a calculating if there be problem with even one Zero then everything becomes wrong. When you are going to calculate fully then even that Zero is needed.”

“Ofcourse, there are also such people, who can, if they will, wholly remove the danger of certain places. This also happens through God’s will. He arouses the desires among such great men because He wishes to remove danger.”

I- Ma, I have not fully understood your words. As you have said that if any one wants to do good or evil of all then he cannot do that wholly. Why can’t he?

Ma- For want of power.

I - You have again said that while doing good or bad even if one person is benefited or not benefited that can be done wholly. How this can happen?

Ma- It has just been said that which doing calculation even if one Zero is missed then calculation cannot be done wholly. Because the whole contains the Zero, is it not so? If the part is left out, how can there be the whole? So, while doing good for all even if one is benefited that also is needed for the welfare of all. The ‘all’ cannot be even leaving ‘one’.

Charu babu- Ma, can there be such a state when there is no other? Every one becomes one’s own; and that happens collectively. To be clear, will there be in the world such a day when everyone will be good and there will remain nothing as bad?

Ma - This feeling is also there and that (day) will come. That feeling is there because that (day) will come. Such a condition also occurs when a person does not see another one except himself. Whatever he sees, he sees that as full of I’ only. Is not there many *Yugas* (ages) like *Satya Yuga* etc? Some may see in certain conditions

Satya Yuga within himself. But what we comprehend about "That world", in that will exist good and evil, I-ness and thy-ness, all this conflict will ever remain, because the world is ever-changing. Whatever you speak is true, subject to different conditions.

A certain gentleman asks- "Is there the life there after?"

Ma- Yes, there is,

The gentleman- The change in life occurs as a result of work done. But when the being is first born, where from his past work will come?

Ma- When God revealed Himself in the form of creation, then whatever is happening, will happen and has happened, a certain trend of the same has naturally arisen in Him, Either you term it as *Karma* (action) or result of *Karma*, whatever you say, that also is an unfoldment of that very trend.

The gentleman. - Whatever we do we do that willingly Has God also His will? Has He first made the creation out of His will?

Ma- Yes, God also has His will. The Will power is within Him in the natural way. Don't we call as *Mahashakti*. (Supreme Power)? All creation, preservation and destruction are happening through the influence of that *Mahashakti*. When we talk then we speak from one angle. That is why while speaking we say that first is creation. But in fact creation is eternal.

While talking thus it became past 8 P. M. We did *pranam*. And came back home. After our dinner we went to the ashram again at 10 P. M. Going there we found the ashram silent. The door of the ashram also was locked from inside. We thought that every one was perhaps sleeping being tired on account of the journey. But we were a bit surprised to see the ashram door closed as Ma was there.

17th March, 1943

While going to the ashram in early morning along with Sri Manoranjan Ray it was learnt that Ma has gone to Siddheshwari last night. We also went to that direction. There was found the devotees who have come with her. One by one the devotees from Dhaka also arrived there. Ma had not yet left her bed, at about eight She got up. The car for taking Ma to Ramna ashram was also ready. Ma went along with all to the house of the priest of the temple. Khukuni began to relate the speciality of that place to the devotees who had come from outside remaining, there for some time. Ma went back to Ramna ashram. Many people had gathered there at the Ramna ashram.

Ma began to enquire about the welfare of all. Sri Sachindra Nath Ghosh, the contractor, has also come to meet. Ma enquired about the welfare of his daughters. In this manner it was past twelve. We went and stood near Ma to do *pranam*. Looking at the eczema in Sachinbabus feet Ma asked- "Baba, what has happened in your

feet? Sachin babu spoke about the disease. Ma again asked- "Are you not applying any medicine?"

Saching babu- No, I don't feel any pain.

Ma - Although there may not be any pain now, if this continues for long that will cause problem. When I went to Wardha then a certain person told me of his own about a medicine for eczema. He had also told that it was the sure remedy for eczema, but it has to be applied for a long period in fact it has to be used so long as the disease. The medicine has to be prepared in this manner-Approx 250 gm. of mustard oil to be boiled on fire, then about a quarter quantity of the juice of Akanda leaves to be put drop by drop in that oil and again boiled. If that juice is put into oil while keeping the vessel on the fire then there is a chance of catching fire, so the vessel to be taken down and then the juice is to be put drop by drop. In between the vessel to be put again on the fireplace to make the oil hot. Atlast either tamarind powder or the juice of green tamarind to be mixed boiled and after, that is turned into paste to be taken down from fire. If this medicine is used then eczema does not remain, it is believed.

Hearing all this Sachin babu and I returned home.

About a certain *Siddha* (realized) Ma

In the afternoon going to the ashram Ma was seen sitting on the open ground in front of the ashram and ladies were sitting around her. Some time before evening a certain "*Siddha Ma*" came with a few of her devotees to Ma. It was heard that they were coming from Siddheshwari Kali Mandir. One of that Ma's devotees told - "Ma (that "*Siddha Ma*") has received the command that on a certain wednesday she was to visit Siddheshwari. So, she has been taken to Siddheshwari temple to day.

It was learnt that puja of goddess Kali was not being done properly. Ma (*Siddha Ma*) spoke to the Pujari about that and has told how to do puja.

The *asan* for *Siddha Ma* was put near Ma's *asan*. When "*Siddha Ma*" took her seat Ma began to call her as "Ma-Ma" and started caressing her. Looking at the knotted hair under the cloth over her head Ma touched that with her hand and spoke- "This has also come up? How many have been made?" The lady kept quiet. Bhupati babu related to Ma about the state of *Siddha Ma* as he could ascertain from her. He told that formerly the puja of *Dakshina Kali* used to be performed in their house and at that time their household condition was also quite well off. Later on that puja was stopped. Disaster started since then. One day she saw a girl sitting on the compound wall of their house and as soon as she saw that she fainted. Since then she has been getting into trance. Every morning, she goes into trance. Then she sees that figure and talks. She remembers whatever talks happen at that time. At other times when she goes into trance she does not see anything and neither does she remember whatever she says or hears.

Ma (to *Siddha Ma*)- What figure do you see?

Siddha Ma- A girl of the age of eight or ten years.

Ma - Don't you see any other figure?

Siddha Ma - Yes, I see.

Ma- How do they look?

Siddha Ma- Although in different forms, but look like that girl.

Ma- What sort of feeling then comes in your mind?

Siddha Ma- I feel joy.

Ma- What sort of joy?

Siddha Ma- (Pointing to her devotees)

Don't I feel pleasure seeing them and when they call as Ma?

Ma (smiling)- As you are a mother, so you have spoken like this.

After a while Ma again asked- "If any one asks anything during the period of trance do you hear that?"

Siddha Ma- No.

Ma- Then how do you answer?

Siddha Ma- What happens at that time I don't know. What is asked and what is replied I don't know anything of that.

One of her devotees- Even if a question is asked internally without asking loudly reply to that is received.

Ma- Yes, that can be. (To *Siddha Ma*) Don't you remember anything of the instructions which you receive during your trance?

Siddha Ma- If anything is told relating to *sadhana* that is remembered by me.

As evening was approaching *Siddha Ma*'s devotees wanted to take her home; because there are Ma's young children at home. When *Siddha Ma* tried to get up Ma laughingly stopped her and said— "I won't allow my mother to go." At last *Siddha Ma* "Will come again tomorrow.

Ma- When will you come?

Siddha Ma- In the afternoon between 2 and 2.30 P.M. Saying "all right" Ma allowed her to leave.

After *Siddha Ma* left Ma remarked- "It is a case of sudden revelation of power." I returned to home after this.

After dinner I went to the ashram again with my relative, Sri Jatin Majumdar. Reaching there we saw that Ma had gone to Ramna Kali Mandir. Ma returned to ashram after having some conversation there. After sometime Ma was also taken for her food.

(To continue)

*

ON MA ANANDAMAYEE

—M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj

(1)

I have been asked by friends to write a few lines in appreciation of Mother. I confess I could not find a way to decision so easily. Requests were insistent, but my decision did not for a long time seem to give way. At last, however, I have had to yield and am now trying to comply with their request, though with the greatest reluctance. But what should I write in appreciation? I am simply noting my incompetence. I had already felt years ago, when writing a foreword to Mother's "Life" by Gurupriyā Devī (published in 1938) that it was beyond my power to delineate through words a faithful picture of Mother, showing Her not merely as She truly was in Herself, but even as She appeared to me. I feel the same difficulty and hesitancy even now, perhaps all the more strongly with the deepening of my sense of mystery about Her, consequent on closer and more immediate contact with Her personality.

(2)

I, therefore, sympathise with those to whom Mother is verily a riddle. She is so very unlike ordinary or even extra-ordinary persons known to us that it is extremely hard to make any positive statement about Her with any degree of confidence of accuracy. We know that similar difficulties leading to misunderstanding were experienced in the case of some of the supremely great persons of the past and that as a result many of these persons actually felt that they were not truly appreciated and were even misunderstood by those among whom they lived and for whom they worked. Śrī Kṛiṣṇa, for instance, complained that most people – some of the gods as well – not knowing his true nature looked down upon him as an ordinary mortal. Gautama, the Buddha, too in a subsequent age spoke in the same strain saying that very few people understood him properly.

That Mother's life, even the earliest life, should abound in extraordinary incidents is not surprising, – we are accustomed to such incidents in the lives of genuine saints, mystics and yogins. They exist and have their place of honour in those lives. But all these pale into insignificance before the wonderful poise and bliss of Her sweet but magnificent personality – a personality which, strong as it is, blends into the Impersonal, nay is utterly undifferentiated from it.

Note : Reprinted from a very old article on Ma Anandamayee written by the world-renowned savant originally published on the occasion of Ma's 60th Birthday celebration in May, 1956.

It is well-known that the illumination and liberation of saints and mystics presuppose an earlier stage of ignorance and bondage, followed usually by a period of aspiration, personal exertion and austerities. This stage is usually found in the present life itself, or, in exceptional cases, in a pre-natal state of existence. But in the case of Mother we are told that such a prior state of ignorance never existed at all. The possibility of an ante-natal embodied existence is ruled out on Mother's definite assurance that Her life is not subject to the laws of natural causation and that She has no prior life to account for Her present existence. And even what looked like a path of discipleship in Her pre-marital and early post-marital life was not, as we shall see presently, more than a playful representation of self-imposed discipline in which She condescended to take part merely as matter of sport. It had no meaning for Her subsequent life in any way.

Among the well-known mystics of the world we seldom find any in whom we do not observe a period of gloom and subjective torture antecedent to the descent of Light. Mother had no experience of darkness in Her life, either of the soul or of the spirit nor had She any experience of the descent of Light except as a matter of play. It is said that from Her very birth She was aware of what She had ever been and what She would always continue to be and that there was no possibility of a deviation from Her self-conscious stature for a single moment.

Her self-knowledge, we are assured, did not arise under the impact of an extrinsic element outside of Herself— it was always with Her, being a state of Her nature. It was there already in its fulness, requiring no effort on Her part, nor any grace from above, to bring it into greater perfection.

(3)

Ordinarily three sources of illumination are recognised, viz. (a) *Daiva*. (b) *Ārṣa* and (c) *Pauruṣa*.

In the first case knowledge dawns on the soul absorbed in contemplation of some heavenly form as illustrated by the knowledge of Arjuna coming from Śrī Kṛiṣṇa. This contemplation may or may not be accompanied by the descent of self-conscious grace from the form of the deity concerned; and in the case of descent of grace it may be gross, subtle, more subtle, or even the subtlest depending on whether it is effected through touch, speech, vision or mere thought. Apart from the difference in degree of grace there may be difference in the quality of the grace infused, according as it results in the unification or otherwise of the soul with the source of its knowledge.

There are cases known to history where such knowledge is not found accompanied by conscious grace at all, e.g. the knowledge of the analysis of the five-fold sheath of the soul which was received by Bhṛigu from Varuṇa, or the particular *Vidyā* which Yama imparted on Nachiketā.

The *Ārṣa* variety is called *pratibhā*. It is not derived from anybody's verbal instruction, but is produced from within spontaneously. Its classical example is Triśaṅku who was engaged in continued *upāsanā* identifying himself in thought with the Supreme Brahman. This gave rise in due time to the actual intuition of *Brahman*.

The third or *Pauruṣa* type is the normal variety in which a human Guru communicates his wisdom to a human disciple as Śuka Deva did to Parīkṣit. This type of *Brahma Jñāna* arises in one devoted to one's teacher on account of the virtuous acts of one's previous lives having come to maturity. In this case too the possibility or otherwise of conscious *Śaktipāta* from the human teacher as an accompaniment is to be considered. Whether there is *Śaktipāta* or not, the alternative of *upāsanā* or its absence is also there. The quantitative classification as in the other types is possible even here.

We can easily dismiss the first and the third, as both of them imply the origin of knowledge from a separate source, divine or human, and as they refer respectively to one who meditates on God or who is devoted to Guru. The second variety is also discarded as it refers here to cases of persons who having attained to some degree of perfection have subsequently experienced a fall from the height. It is not true *jñāna* at all. As regards genuine *pratibhā* we shall revert to it later.

(4)

Now what is the nature of the self-knowledge which was innate with Mother?

It is clear from what has been said above that though self-knowledge, on the analogy of lower knowledge, has its roots within, its exciting cause is usually outside, as it is initiated by forces working without us. But it may also be, as already pointed out, due to initiation from within, in which case the external agencies would be no more than merely propagating forces. History records instances of illumination of both these types. The Divine Grace is the most important factor, not only in the awakening of religious consciousness in man but also in its subsequent development in him till the union with the Divine is accomplished. Granting this as a necessary pre-condition of active spiritual life, what is needed in ordinary cases is the operation of a mediating factor through which such grace may become accessible to man. For the bodily and the mental mechanism of an average individual is not capable of bear-

ing the strain involved in the direct transmission of Divine Grace. As a rule God's Grace is said to act on a receptive vehicle free from contact with matter, i.e. on an unembodied soul in a pre-creational state. But if the soul in the process of creative evolution happens to take on a body of impure matter it can no longer receive grace directly from the Divine source, but receives it only through a medium. The medium would be an embodied being whose body may be of exclusively pure matter or pure matter mixed with impure. Barring the immaculate bodies of the heavenly brotherhood entrusted with the guardianship of the world and with the task of imparting knowledge in the beginning of creation we have to consider in this context the hierarchy of Teachers consisting of three well-known groups (*Ogha*), viz. *Divya*, *Siddha* and *Mānava*. The *Divya* or celestial and *Mānava* or human correspond loosely to the *Daiva* and *Pauruṣa* mentioned above. Between these two the *Āgamas* place the *Siddha* or superhuman group. This medium serves the purpose of an *Ācārya* or Guru to the uninitiated seekers after Knowledge.

Thus Grace acts freely and immediately in the case of souls which are not clogged with material vestments. This is possible where Grace does not require any external support for its manifestation (*Niradhikaraṇa Anugraha*) and it acts indirectly through pure bodies on recipient souls endowed with bodies of *māyā*. This is an instance of Grace acting through a support as its medium (*Sādhikaraṇa Anugraha*). By the term 'Grace' we should understand here the special Grace of the Lord and not the general grace which confers benefit other than Supreme Realization.

There are thus two ways of approach to Grace in Indian cultural tradition and the two ways generally meet and seem to be really two aspects of one and the same way. Both are concerned with one's outlook on Guru as the Principle of Divine Grace, functioning in one view by itself, and in the other through its concrete expression in a manifested form available for the purpose. In fact there appears to be no substantial difference between the two trends of thought. In actual practice the object of veneration is held from both these standpoints to be above the entire creation. But one should remember an important point in this connection which is likely to be lost sight of. During Manifestation each of the different Aspects of Pure Order beyond Time, where the sequence is only logical, involves complexities in its features, but in the simple Unity of the Eternal Self-luminous all complications are conspicuous by their absence, for the Transcendent is above all categories. For instance, Guru as an abstract principle is one of the eternal verities. The Universal being pervades All and is one with All; by virtue of its presence it occupies every position simultaneously and is identified with each and yet it retains its transcendent character and uniqueness. An individual human being on the other hand by virtue of the spiritual elevation may

very well occupy the position of a Guru for the time and perform the function connected with this position. This, however, is tentative and endures so long as the merit of the incumbent is not exhausted, whereupon he retires giving place to another individual of the same kind who continues the function and keeps the chain unbroken. This shows that Guru is both human and divine, human in view of the transitional character of the medium adopted by the Divine Power for its own purpose, and divine in consideration of the Supreme Principle of Compassion which is eternal and inspires the medium concerned. The Power of God functions through a man or any other embodied being. For this reason it is enjoined that even a secondary Guru, human, super-human and even celestial, should be looked upon by the disciple as divine. Strictly speaking, the Divine Being is free from all attributes incidental to contingent existence and does not deserve to be called by any of the names associated with human activities.

Those in whom the supreme intuition does not arise from within, have naturally to depend for its origin either on illuminated persons or on revelation. But to one in whom it flashes up spontaneously revealing Truth fully and immediately, external aids are held to be unnecessary. Such a man is believed to be a master of every phase of spiritual life and possesses the ability to impart it successfully to the needy. It is said that the process of his so-called self-initiation is in reality a process of introversion of senses and their subsequent unification with the true Self which awakens the latent divine consciousness. This is the secret of his self-acquired authority. He never feels any urge for resorting to an external teacher for interpreting the sacred word, for his inner sense reveals it to him. This is an illustration of how Pure Light, free from intellectual and conceptual elements, comes into manifestation. In the matter of communicating his wisdom to others, he is guided solely by the consideration of the receptive capacity and other qualities of the seekers. Thus if the minds of the recipients are absolutely pure the beneficent Will of the Master is by itself sufficient to kindle their spiritual sense. But if they are not so pure, external accessories of a formal character consistent with their inner demands may have to be conceded to suit their requirements. Such a unique person is a Guru unto himself and is known as *Akalpita Guru*, possessed of Full Knowledge and Power manifested from within.

But when this self-derived knowledge and power is imperfect he has to remove it and bring the knowledge into perfection by some means or other, e.g. through a mental act viz. *bhāvanā* or contemplation or *japa* or yoga. Thus by constantly turning in his mind the thought that he is verily one with Brahman or by repetition of a potent mantra or by some such means he has to supplement the knowledge he has acquired from within. Such a person is called *Akalpita Kalpaka*. The difference be-

tween the two is that while in the former or superior type of self-illumination the co-operation of the mind, *prāna*, senses or body is not essential, in the latter it is indispensable.

A superficial observer might find in Mother's self-knowledge some resemblance to the illumination of one of the two types mentioned above. If Her subsequent course of life be interpreted as a real process of *sādhana* intended to bring into perfection what She has derived from Her inner Self it would come, they say, under the second category. But if it means simply an outer expression of what She found within and does not convey the usual significance attached to *sādhana*, it would fall under the first category.

A little reflection would however show that Mother's case is exceptional and does not come under any of the two categories. The mere fact that Her knowledge did not originate from a Guru does not take us very far into its mystery. In Vedic tradition we hear of on Trīśaṅku as being blessed with such spontaneous illumination due to his deep contemplation on his self as identical with the Supreme Brahman. Recently we know of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624 A.D.) of Germany, the "God-taught philosopher", as blessed with some sort of intuitive *Jñāna* directly from within or from above.

In the history of mysticism we come across cases of a sudden as well as of a gradual process of the on-coming of Light without the intervention of any mediating agency. The illumination differs, of course, in kind, quality and degree in each case. The self-evolved gnosis of the *Akalpita Yogī* stands also on a similar footing. But we must bear in mind that all this is a result of an intensive action of grace. For from a careful study of works on mystic theology, especially of the *Tantras*, it appears that there are three degrees of grace in respect of its intensity viz. high, medium and low, each of these being sub-divided into similar classes. Thus in a general way we may speak of nine degrees in all, the first being the most intense and the ninth the mildest. The second degree of grace under this classification would by its descent enable the recipient soul to have self-knowledge without the aid of an external Guru. It purges and transforms the soul instantaneously. What is technically known as *Anupāya* or *Śāmbhava Upāya* belongs to this class. Here the *Upāya* or means is no other than the Supreme Power itself or its first manifestation as the Cosmic Will. It is certainly higher than *jñāna* as well as *kriyā*. But it is nonetheless a means to an end and not an end in itself and is intended to convert an animal soul or *paśu* into the divine Self or *Śiva*. Its sole objective is to divinise the soul or rather to reclaim it into its divine status, which lay always inherent within itself.

Mother's self-knowledge as already pointed out is not easily explicable on the

analogy of the cases referred to above. It cannot be interpreted in terms of the experiences of saints and sages. Hence the difficulty of estimating Mother's personality. We cannot ignore the fact that She was never subject to ignorance and the question of saving grace even in its highest degree can never arise in Her case. She played the role of a *sādhikā* in Her earlier years, no doubt, and during this period She seemed to have passed through all the stages of a real *sādhikā*. In this play She started with ignorance and proceeded through various austerities, observing silence, regulating diet, practising *japa* and yogic exercises and performing *pujā* and other similar rites. Dawn of knowledge formed also a part of this play. A sense of agony and dryness of the soul followed by the bliss of union had their own places in this self-enacted drama. The whole affair was an imitation of *sādhana* and it was so arranged that it had all the air of naturalness in it. Her self-knowledge, fortified in its unshakable purity, stood behind this play of self-assumed ignorance and the dramatic impersonation of an ordinary *sādhikā* in quest of Supreme Realization. One should not take it as an illustration of divided self and of its activities — it is rather the outcome of an eternally vigilant and self-conscious Will playing the double part of impersonation of a *sādhikā* passing through the shadows and lights of a disciplined life and of the still Witness behind observing and directing its own play on the stage.*

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* Mother's Life in Bengali and Hindi by Gurupriya Devi published in a series of volumes contains a detailed account of this period. See also : "From the Life of Sri Anandamayi Ma' by Bithika Mukerji.

SHREE ANANDAMAYEE MA

—for the whole of mankind

—Prof. D. P. Bhattacharya

Science investigates, with admirable thoroughness and precision, the world of phenomenon where everything moves and changes; there is nothing that is fixed and stable. The business of the men of science is not, however merely to observe those changes and motions but to explain why they occur; and this they do by discovering general 'laws'—the greater the degree of generality, the better. (Hence the importance of mathematics as an instrument in Physics and Astronomy). It is here, namely, in its attempt to arrive at general laws governing natural phenomena that science is getting closer and closer to Philosophy—to metaphysics, to be more precise.

The scientific process of formulating "laws" which are more and more general and comprehensive is essentially progressive in character; it is a progressive approximation to universally valid "truths", which remain an elusive, ultimately unattainable ideal. In science therefore, there is no such things as "truth" with a capital "T"; it is not Truth, but truths, plural in number and relative in character. Generally, it's method is, as I have just remarked, essentially progressive in nature.

New progress is a concept of utmost importance in our present context. For it is almost inextricably bound up with the central, modern concept of "evolution". Indeed "progress" is inconceivable without "evolution", so that if a man believes in progress he must *ipso facto* believe in evolution. My central contention is that the concept of evolution alongwith its correlative progress, however, fascinating to the modern mind—no matter whether it is East or West—is totally alien to the Indian *Weltanschavung* (world-view). "The world is getting better and better everyday, every year and every century, we human beings are getting to know more and more about ourselves and the universe around us and continue to do so in future endlessly" all this it may sound beautiful, and immensely thrilling to many ears, including those of most of us, Indians; all this may very well be, but it is most certainly not the ancient Indian *Weltanschavung*. This is a point that has to be carefully and constantly kept in mind if we really want to understand how and in what sense the great saints and mystics of later times, down to our own, came to contribute to the ancient immemorial spiritual tradition of India.

The Indian tradition of spiritual philosophy fully admits “progress” in the case of *Sadhaka* or *Yogi* (a spiritual aspirant) where spiritual progress or advance is not a mere concept but a palpable fact. A question nevertheless arises even here; it is this: “Is this spiritual progress endless, so that in every successive age a *Sadhaka* of outstanding eminence attains in his spiritual ascent a new height, a new peak, so to speak, on a higher altitude, setting a new record? The answer, from the Indian point of view, is certainly there, and so is progress-inevitably. But that does not mean that will go on and on and on, with the spiritual horizon ever-receding, as mysteriously elusive as a mirage. For the *Sadhaka*, in the Indian spiritual tradition has a clearly defined goal before him, not set by himself but by his Guru, who on his part, has inherited this vision of the final goal of human existence from his Guru and so goes up this uninterrupted line of ascent that reaches back finally to a great seer (*rishi*) of old.

This tradition- *parampara*- goes back, to the great *rishis* of old-its ultimate source, and these great *rishis*, these illumined souls of ancient times have declared (in our *shastras*) that the spiritual journey of Man, though interminably long and intensely arduous, has an end, a definite aim precisely because there is an ultimate Reality behind phenomena. Regarding the nature of this ultimate reality the Upanishads (for Vedanta), which, according to Indian spiritual tradition are the supreme authority as the subject namely, *Brahmavidya*, tell us that it (*Brahman* or *Atman*) is- existence (*Sat*)- Consciousness (*Cit*)- Bliss (*Ananda*). He is called “*Sat*” in The Rigveda and the Chandogya Upanishad, for He also exists: and so, as there is nothing else. He is described in the Upanishad as One without a second- “*ekamevadvitiam*”. This *Sat Brahman* as pure existence- is utterly beyond human mind and human speech. This is the reason why Shree Anandamayee Ma frequently refers to it as simply.: “That” though the term which she most often uses in referring to *Brahman* as the absolute is “One”). All that can be said in words regarding the nature, essential nature (*Svarupa*) of this *Sat* is that it is a pure experience (*cit*) of ineffable, infinite bliss (*rasa* or *ananda*).

Readers may know that the name of Shree Ma Anandamayee mentioning here for the first time in the strange context of a discussion on the nature of ultimate reality - a subject which must be *terra-incognita* for a woman who had never had any formal education even at the primary level. And yet, though it may sound incredible, that this almost illiterate woman from a far away village of (the then) East Bengal refers, every now and then, in replying to questions to the ultimate Reality (the Divine Ground of all Existence, - in the words of Aldous Huxley); and this she does by using, on most occasions, the word “One” or simply “That” and in doing so, she utters unwittingly, perhaps the last word of Vedanta.

No doubt, she occasionally mentions God - *Ishwara or Bhagavan* in referring to the Supreme: more frequently, it is the Vedantic expression for ultimate Reality - "*Brahman*". This, indeed, is somewhat surprising; for one would naturally have expected is Her repeated mention of the Self, *Atman (atma)* and her central emphasis on self-realisation as the final goal of Man. How central this concept of the *Atman* and *Atmajnana* (Selfrealisation) is in her teaching. I shall try to illustrate by quoting a few passages taken almost at random from a remarkable book by an intensely earnest and astonishingly perceptive German author who, a teacher at a school in Varanasi, chose to remain anonymous. The book has a beautiful title "As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance."

"We must reach that state where we know the One alone and everything as His forms. There is only One- Brahman- without-a-second."

"When the Self has been realised, when one has become absorbed in the Bliss of the Self, then there is no more question of work, of experience, or of sleep, because there is only ONE!"

"..... Finding your Self, discovering who you really are means to find God, for there is nothing outside of Him"

"To find Him means to find Onself and to find Oneself means to find Him"

"Find the One everywhere and in everything and there will be an end of pain and suffering."

The central emphasis on the Self and Self realisation that we find in Her utterances and there are hundreds of others of a similar nature recorded in the 17 volume monumental and most authentic. Diary of Gurupriya Devi-is profoundly characteristic of the speaker: it is also, as I have said, surprising and unexpected. For one who knows her family background, her upbringing, her education) or rather lack of education) and her whole course of life would not expect her to speak in such language; he would expect her, very naturally, to speak the language of "*bhakti*" of love and devotion towards the Divine and thus she would be expected to recommend to all who came to her: as matter of fact this is exactly what we do find: for wherever she went there would usually begin, soon after her arrival, choral chanting of divine names - *Nama-Samkritana* - in which she herself would sometimes participate; and this *Nama-Samkritana*, followed sometimes by devotional songs would often go on for hours on end.

Then the scene changes: conversation starts, with all sorts of questions, being asked by all sorts of people, ranging from simple, uneducated, but devout women, to

cultivated and highly educated persons including quite a few foreigners. When the interlocuter is sincere and earnest (for otherwise, she gave the right answer, he (or she) won't understand, being not yet ripe for it) the answer comes: and the answer is always astonishingly, incredibly prompt, and though sometimes it may sound somewhat paradoxical and enigmatic, owing to our failure in understanding, it is rightly followed, admirably clear and precise.

From the passages quoted earlier, one thing emerges clearly which is of the utmost importance in any study of Shree Shree Ma: it is this: In every utterance of hers especially, when she is replying to questions from earnest spiritual seekers, there is almost always a reference to some "tatva." This important Sanskrit word is difficult to render in English or any other European language. In English it may be rendered, roughly and according to the context, as "reality", "the true or real nature," the "true" principle or the "essence" of something.

Tattva is one of the key concepts of Indian philosophy-especially the Samkhya philosophy; it is also central, as we have just noted in the utterances of Shree Shree Ma. This may sound strange, for philosophy is hardly the thing one would even remotely associate with Ma-for obvious reasons. And yet the fact remains, that she hardly ever says anything, in replying to question, that does not end up in a *tattva*. And this is not all; for what is even more remarkable is that *tattva* surprisingly often turns out of the "*parama tattva*" - Ultimate Reality. It is to this "*parama tattva*" that she would refer by her favourite word, "the One", often using another word along with it, "akhanda" signifying "undivided whole" a word which clearly points to complete non-dualism *purna advaita*". Together, they - *eka and akhanda* - reminds one of the favour. "ekamevadetiya" (one without a second) of the Chandogya Upanishad.

And the most remarkable, the most amazing thing about Shree Anandamayee Ma, to my mind, is the way in which almost every statement She makes, no matter what the statement is about, irresistibly leads up to and ends in the "One", - the ultimate Reality. To those who are not sufficiently familiar with her ways and her manner of speaking this way sound strange, even "absurd". It is not so. It is not so because she demonstrates, with a logic that is compelling and totally convincing, that as there is nothing else in the Universe but the om, nothing can be really explained and rendered fully intelligible without a reference to Him.

Hence all roads lead to Rome. Bringing the distinction nearer home. let us call it Delhi. Starting from Howrah, we shall pass through a number of big stations *en route*

Patna, Moghalsarai, Allahabad, Kanpur and so on, each station signifying (metaphorically) higher and higher stages in our spiritual progress. But we must not stop at any of them, but fix our minds steadfastly, unwaveringly on our final destination-Delhi, which stands for Brahman-knowledge or self realisation. (to Shree Shree Ma, as we have seen, they mean the same thing, which is entirely in accordance with the spiritual tradition of India. "This body speaks of the Supreme Quest." She once remarked.

This last statement is profoundly true; and it is also profoundly characteristic of the speaker for whom this "Supreme Quest" is all that ultimately matters, all that give value and meaning to human life. This is the supreme message of Shree Anandamayee Ma to mankind. It is not something new; there cannot be anything new that can be added or "contributed" to the spiritual heritage of India, for everything is there. There are only differences in *emphasis* among comparatively modern saints and sages of India-difference that are either to individual temperaments or needs of the times, or both.

Creation means diversity (Sameness and uniformity characterise according to Samkhya Philosophy, the state of "*avyakta*" (unmanifest) or "*prakriti*" (Primordial Nature), which proceeds and follows creation). Hence, no two persons are exactly alike; even if they are both highly advanced spiritually, there must be differences-even if they are spiritually on the language and modes of expression. Their realisation, however, will be the same; here, there can not be any real difference, any contradiction. It is the same with those who have attained the highest realisation which is selfrealisation or *Brahman*-knowledge (the number of such fully illumined, liberated souls, it should be noted, is exceedingly small in all ages, even in India). Only language, which essentially deals with the world of duality (*dvaita*) when confronted with the task of describing the ultimate Reality almost breaks down under the strain; it cracks and bursts, so to speak, in trying to express the utterly ineffable. This is why even Shree Shree Ma, who, (despite her semi-illiteracy), has such a splendid command of language, can hardly find words to describe the Reality: She calls it the "One" or simply. "That" and stops at that. And so while speaking to those who came to see and listen to her, She would concentrate on the *means* of getting at the One, and the means that she frequently and characteristically, recommended was to bring the Divine mentally closer and closer to us, so that finally He is realised as our very self (*atma*). Thus, She combines harmoniously and beautifully Samkhya and Vedanta, and by doing so, brings us right in the midst of the perennial and central stream of the Indian spiritual tradition.

Closely linked with the central emphasis there is another thing which must be mentioned here, for it has profound importance and relevance for all of us in our day-

to-day life; it is this; Supremely indifferent to everything that is transitory and mundane. Shree Shree Ma at the same time intensely alert and not infrequently, keenly attentive, to little details that might have seemed trivial to most of us, through a series of incidents, faithfully and vividly recorded by Gurupriya Devi in her invaluable Dairy. Shree Shree Ma has opened our eyes to the tremendous. Truth that nothing in this universe is accidental or fortuitous, that every event has a cause and a consequence, that things which seem, at first sight, insignificant and trivial have a meaning. Our sense of the triviality of the objects around us and of fortuitousness and meaninglessness, things that happen to us and to others is the result of ignorance. Every object, every event, every action is charged with meaning, because the One is present everywhere, because it is the "One" who has become the "Many"; because there is nothing else.

It would not be entirely fanciful to think, as I do, that the smile that lit up her face so often while she talked, was due partly to the fact that She saw things that we do not, I say "partly", because it (her smile) expressed much more than a touch of mild amusement of our ignorance: it expressed deep tenderness and compassion; above all love and this tender concern and loving kindness that flowed out from her in such divine abundance, was extended not only to us, Indians, but also, and equally, to foreigners from many countries, especially from the West, who visited her. They came in large numbers and with great expectations, and their expectations were never disappointed. Indeed, what they received often far exceeded their expectations, that when they return and sometimes lingering here longer than they had originally planned, their whole schedule being somewhat upset by the irresistible attraction they felt towards the Mother- with their modes of thought and feeling, even their ways of life changed in various degrees. This is not surprising at all, for *Anandamayee Ma is not for us alone*. She is for the whole of mankind. It happened to originate in this ancient land of ours, sanctified by the presence of the great rishis of old who bequeathed to the world an imperishable treasure- *Brahmavidya*, the full revelation of the nature of Reality, the spiritual Reality behind phenomena.

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THE PHYLOSOPHY OF VEDANTA

—Dr. Devavrata Sen Sharma

[Continued from before]

It is proposed to briefly discuss the thought projections of Advaita Vedanta under these heads :

I. The nature of ultimate Reality in Advaita Vedanta :

The nature of the ultimate reality has been described in Vedanta from two stand points, negative and positive. Looking from the negative stand point, the ultimate Reality called Brahman is indeterminate in nature (nirviseṣa). It is beyond the reach of our finite intellect and words because of its infinite nature. The Taittiriya Upanisad declares that Brahman is the Reality wherefrom words turn back together with the mind, not having reached it. (यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह) Brahman is nirviseṣa (not any particular, not qualified) nirvikalpa (indeterminate), nirupadhi (unconditioned) niranjan (without stain) and niskala (without parts). Brahman can be known by neti, neti (not this, not this). It is only in negative terms that we logically speaking can speak about Brahman.

The Mundaka Upanisad speaks of the Brahman in similar terms. The Brahman is unseen; It is that with which there can be no dealing; it is incapable of being grasped; It has no distinguishing mark; It is unthinkable; It cannot be designated; It is advaita without a second. (अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणमचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्यम् अद्वैतम्). The sages, in fact, had the transcendent nature of Brahman (turiyarupa) in view while describing the nature of Brahman in this way. A spiritual seeker, however, can have immediate experience of Brahman (aprosanubhuti) by following mode of Sadhana laid down in the Vedanta. Once he has this experience in which the knower, knowledge and known are dissolved, he is immersed in the bliss nature of Brahman (anandaghanasvarupa).

Brahman also can be looked from positive stand point, looking from the positive stand point, the Brahman is all-pervasive Reality that permeates every thing that exists in the world. In fact, the vey term Brahman literally means that which pervades. This is Saguna description of Brahman and is usually referred to in masculine gender as opposed to nirguna Brahman referred to above in neuter gender. The Mundaka Upanisad give the following description of the Saguna Brahman-नित्यं, विभुं, सर्वगतं, सुसूक्ष्मं, तदव्ययं यद् भूतयोनि परिपश्यन्ति धीराः (The wise regard Him as eternal, all-pervad-

ing omnipresent, extremely subtle, imperishable, the source of all beings.)

Subjectively, Brahman is described as of the nature of Sat, chit, ananda (Pure Existence, pure knowledge and pure bliss) and is realised as such by the seekers of Truth. Objectively, the Brahman is Satyam Jnanam and anantam. Satyam is sat (excellence) jnanam is knowledge and anantam is bliss. Brahman exists by Himself, the Absolute Reality, He is consciousness and bliss when viewed objectively.

II. The nature of world phenomena :

The dominant trend of Advaita Vedanta, as seen in the Upanisadic descriptions, is to regard the world phenomena as real. It has been said there that Brahman assumed the form of multiplicities of the world by exercising, His power as Maya (इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप इयतः. There are three stages in His self manifestation as the world, first *sisriska* (सिसृक्षा) the will (संकल्प) to manifest Himself as the world—एकोऽहम् बहुस्याम् followed by the manifestation of the cosmos, the final stage is that when the Brahman, having manifested Himself as the world, enters into it (तत् सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत्) The Chandogyupanisad succinctly puts it सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म (III, 14, 1) All this is verily Brahman. The world manifestation exists in the Brahman, it is the Reality in immanence from. The Taittiriya Upanisad Says यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जातानि, येन जातानि जीवन्ति, यत् प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति — From Brahman all beings are born, and having been born, it is through Him that they are alive, and it is He to whom all beings return, and in whom all are ultimately dissolved."

The concept of Maya in the Upanisadic Vedanta is different from what we find in the Sainkara Vedanta. Maya is the inscrutable power (sakti) innate in Brahman, exercising which He manifests Himself as the world.

III. The Nature of Human being :

Human being in essence is not other than Brahman. The Mundaka Upanisad sheds light on the relation between the individual and the universal this way-

यथा सुदीप्तात् पावकात् विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः।

तथा अक्षरात् विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापियन्ति॥ (II, 1, 1)

"As from blazing fire, sparks of the like form issue forth by thousands, even so, my friend, the jivas are produced from the Imperishable, and finally go there."

The Brahman in human body is called the Atman. The Atman is the metaphysical self that resides in the psycho-physical framework created by Him. The psycho-physical framework is the repository of the Atman existing on the mundane plane. The psycho-physical framework is made of five Kosas layers enveloping the metaphysical self, namely annamaya kosa, pranamaya kosa, manomayas kosa, vijnanamaya

kosa and anadamaya kosa, arranged from outer to inner layer. The anandamaya, vijnanamaya and manomaya kosa, constitute the psychic vehicle, the pranamaya kosa the vital vehicle, and the annamayakosa forms the gross physical vehicle.

The Vedanta then talks about three states of existence which an embodied being is familiar with—The waking state when sense functions to grasp the objects of knowledge, the dream state when external sense becomes inactive but the intellect continues to have constructive imagination and deep sleep when all senses, including intellect become quiescent, The essence, the atman cannot be apprehended in any of this states. It is only when the sadhaka transcends all these empirical states of existence, he realises his true self (atman). The Atman is Chaitanya (pure consciousness), prakasa (pure illumination) that shines by itself and also illumines the sense-objects. The atman is drasta, Being drasta (the subject), the atman cannot be an object of knowledge (विज्ञातारं केन विजानीयात्) but one can realise its nature by becoming one with it. Then the subject, the object and its experience dissolve into the one integral whole (अखण्डवस्तु) which is called the Brahman.

IV. The Goal :

The destiny of embodied being is to become Brahman. विद्धि Says the sruti. Know thyself, the true nature. To know is to become, as the true self can never be object of knowledge. The Prasna Upanisad uses a beautiful metaphor to describe the duty of man which is as follows. नारूपे समुद्र इत्येवं प्रोच्यते एवमेवास्य परिदृष्टुः इमाः षोडशकलाः पुरुषायणाः पुरुषं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति, मिद्येते चासां नामरूपे पुरुष इत्येवं प्रोच्यते। स एष- अकलोऽमृतो भवति। (VI, 5)

Just as the rivers that flow towards the ocean having reached it disappear, their name and form are destroyed and they are called the ocean, in the same way these sixteen constituents (5 organs of sense+ 5 organs of action + manas + 5 subtle elements of the physical body) of this spectator tend towards Purusa (The self. Vachaspati derived the term purusa as that which resides in the pura the physical body) On reaching Purusa, these conglomerate of various elements called physical body disappear, their name and form are destroyed. That One purusa continuous, partless and immortal.

When embodied being recognizes his real self he is freed from sorrow, cycles of repeated transmigrations. The Mundaka Upanisad rightly observes -..यदा (जीव) पश्यति अन्यमीशं (आत्मनां) अस्य महिमानं इति (सः) वीतशोकः (भवति) "When the empirical self (fettered by bonds of ignorance) sees the other, the lord (Metaphysical self), realises His greatness, he is freed from sorrow."

It must be pointed out in this context, the ultimate Goal in man's life, according to

Upanisadic sages is the attainment of the state of immortality (अमृत्व) and not liberation. The word mukti or moksa is seldom found used in the Upanisad but the term amritattva occurs frequently. Both are not synonymous terms, from mukti or moksa is negative ideal. When one attains mukti, that implies end of his individual existence. As Thakur Ram Krishna Paramahansa described mukti by using a metaphor—a doll made from salt wishing to know the nature of ocean took a dip in the ocean-water, it got dissolved in the ocean water. It could not grasp its nature in the same way, a spiritual seeker aspiring to know Brahman, becomes the Brahman but cannot enjoy the bliss arising from his realisation of his Brahman-nature. Thakur Ramkrishna therefore aspired to experience bliss arising from his union with the Divine and remain immersed in massive bliss. He aspired to experience immortality, remaining in embodied state. The Upanisadic ideal of amritattva is positive ideal, hence the Upanisadic sages preferred this idea.

The Upanisads do not lay down a particular mode of spiritual practice or Yoga for all seekers of Truth. It appears that the sages were aware of the varying capacities and inclination of seekers of spiritual Truth, therefore one particular mode of spiritual discipline they felt, would be unsuitable for all seekers. There is no denying the fact that the Upanisads in general preferred the mode of Yogic discipline based on Knowledge (Jnana). This is testified by the following passage occurring in the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः मन्तव्यः दिनिध्यासितव्यः — Atman should be verily "Seen", heard about from sruti, contemplated upon, reflected continuously upon. It is significant to find that sage has used the expression द्रष्टव्यः first, to signify the starting point in the path of Yoga. When the spiritual Teacher (guru), who has firmly established himself with Brahman-nature (brahmanistha), utters the mahavakya Tattvamasi (That thou art) before his disciple, well qualified for embarking on the spiritual path, the disciple immediately obtains a glimpse of real Brahman nature, This is due to existence of the power of revelation innate in the mahavakya used by the guru as mantra. Unless the disciple is made aware by the guru of the goal he has to attain, he can not possibly commence his spiritual journey to realise his true nature. He then finds corroboration from his study of Sruti texts. He continues his spiritual journey by contemplation and reflection on the meaning of mahavakya till he has the direct experience of his real self. "Aham brahmasmi" (I am Brahman) is the anubhavavakya which results from deep reflection (निधिध्यासन) by spiritual seeker. The rest of the mahavakyas represent the different steps in the realisation of his Brahman nature.

Two passages from the Kathopanisad shed light on the Yoga prescribed for the sadhakas desiring to achieving immortality (अमृत्वः)

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयंभूस्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन्।
कश्चिद् धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षद् आवृत्तचक्षुरमृततवमिच्छन्॥(II, 1,1)

It is said here that the Lord (स्वयंभू) has equipped the embodied being with instruments of knowledge or senses that have natural tendency of moving out to grasp external objects in the world. The embodied being therefore experiences the external world only. He is not able to experience the core of his being, the real self which lies deep within with their help. It is only when some "wise men" desirous of achieving immortality in the world, stop the outward movement of their senses (आवृत्तचक्षु), they are able to obtain direct experience of their real self. Here, the sage advises the sadhaka to divert his gaze from the external world to his inner being the pure self, to achieve the Goal.

Another passage is as follows :-

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।
यमेवैष वृणुत तेन लभ्यस् तस्यै आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम्॥(I, 2,23)

The self cannot be realised by hearing discourses on sruti-vachana by the learned or by sharp intellect nor by deep study of Sruti by the sadhaka all by himself. Whom so ever the self (आत्मन्) selects as the fit person (for realising his true nature), the self reveals its true nature before such sadhaka. The self (आत्मन्) is self luminous in nature, but it is not "Seen" by the sadhakas on account of veil of ignorance covering their "eyes", the instruments for experience by them. It is only after the sadhakas succeed in removing the veil of ignorance from their intellect, open their "eyes" (अपावृणु) the self selects such sadhakas (वृणुते) to reveal its true nature (तनुं स्वां विवृणुते), such sadhakas realise their true nature.

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THE FIRST SANNYASI*

—Dr. Bithika Mukerji.

Ma Anandamayi's wanderings in late March, 1934 took her to a wayside temple in Salogra near Solon situated below the hill town of Simla. Solon was the capital of Baghat State. There was a cave adjoining the temple. It was so small that no one could lie straight or stand upright in it. Ma Anandamayi accompanied by Bhaiji and Hansa Datt Tewari from Dehradun came to this cave, located a few miles beyond Solon and a little way below the main motor-road between Kalka and Simla. Hari Ramji's brother Madan Mohan Joshi was a doctor in Solon. He already knew about Ma Anandamayi and came to pay his respects to her. He found her sitting in this cave, looking completely at ease and her usual radiant self. Recently there had been snowfall in the hills and it was bitterly cold in the cave but Ma did not seem to feel any discomfort.

Ma was invited by Dr. Joshi to come to Solan. H. H. Raja Durga Singh of Solan was known to be a Prince of many sterling qualities and also of a religious nature. He was very devoted to a sage called Sogi Baba who was residing in Solon at this time. Although the Raja had heard about Ma Anandamayi, he, in the beginning was not keen to have *darsana* of 'a woman saint', although he had endorsed Dr. Joshi's invitation to Ma Anandamayi to his state.

Ma at this time instead of visiting Solon came back to Hardwar. She had a sudden *Kheyala* that the ideal of renunciation as a way of life could be exemplified by one of her older devotees. She chose Shashanka Mohan Mukherjee for this role. She sent word to Shashanka Mohan at Dhaka to join her in this hill town. She also sent a message to Swami Shankaranandaji, a new devotee in Varanasi, inviting him to come to Hardwar. Shankaranandaji was already a *sannyasi* and it could be presumed that he would know about the ceremonial act of renunciation to be undertaken by those who wished to enter an ascetic order.

The establishment of ten ascetic orders of *sannyasi* is traditionally ascribed to Adi Sankaracharya (8th century A.D.). Before his advent, the Hindu ascetics were not organized into orders with specific mantras imparted and received in a ritualistically specified form. The man ready to renounce the world is expected to apply to a Guru or the head of a monastery. If the latter is satisfied then alone he may be initiated

* Dr. Shashanka Mohan Mukherjee, a physician of repute in East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and one of the earliest devotees of Ma.

and received into the brotherhood of that order. The disciple has to make up his mind first to disassociate himself completely from the world; to relinquish all ties of family relationships; all sense of obligations and duties. In short it is a new life begun in complete freedom in order to pursue a course of one-pointed search for Enlightenment.

Ma Anandamayi was full of enthusiasm for this project and was very pleased when Shashanka Mohan accompanied by Didi Gurupriya arrived in Hardwar in answer to her letter. She was staying at a *dharamsala* and everyone gathered there in response to her summons. She said to Shashanka Mohan, "Some arrangements had been made at Solon for us, but I had this sudden *kheyala* and so we came away to Hardwar instead. These holy places are conducive to *sadhana* and attract devout and holy men. I have already suggested to Shankarananda that he should look for a suitable Guru for you. Chaitra Sankranti the last day of the Bengali year (13th or 14th of April) is an auspicious day. Time is short, so all arrangements must be expedited."

Shashanka Mohan was taken aback at these words. He was not prepared for this radical transformation of his life; moreover it was unthinkable for him to bow his head to some, nameless, Guru at this stage in his life. Rather unhappily, he answered, "I cannot think of any other Guru. I do not think I can commit myself to anyone else. I have always believed and hoped that you will guide me. Why do you now ask me to accept another Guru?" Ma answered *gently*, "You know that I cannot confer *sannyasa* on you." To this he unhesitatingly replied, "But I have no need of anything that you may not do for me."

Ma then said quietly, "Well, in that case, there is no necessity for these arrangements. Nothing need be done after all" She became grave and said no more. The cheerful look with which she had opened the conversation vanished completely.

It was evening. Shashanka Mohan withdrew from Ma's presence and was seen to go out and sit on the bank of the swiftly flowing Ganges for many hours. On the other side of the river wooded hills rose to great heights. What thoughts did he grapple with? He was a proud man, more accustomed to command than to obey. The prospect of giving up every prop and support of a long and familiar way of life and to have to embark on a voyage into the unknown must have shaken him to the core of his being. He was the head of a large family, almost a clan. Perhaps he debated whether it would be right to put himself out of their reach for ever. He would have no duties towards anyone anymore. He must have thought about his daughter also. He could not be a guardian to her and thus she would be alone in the world and in the way of life she had chosen for herself. These however are conjectures. He did not share his thoughts with anybody. What happened was that he came to Ma late at

night, touched her feet and said quietly, "I blurted out the thoughts that came unbidden to my mind. I am now ready to carry out your *kheyala* and to do as you say."

Ma's countenance shone brightly; she was immediately full of plans for the important event. She told him, "You have no reason to think that you will have another Guru. There is but One Reality."

Sri Mangal Giri Maharaj, a *sannyasi* of great eminence in Hardwar, agreed to initiate Shashanka Mohan into the order of the Giris. The disciple is required to perform the ultimate of the ritualistic *yajnas* to renounce connections with the world. In the sacrificial fire is consigned all modes of understanding of oneself as an individual, his society, family and even his own caste and creed. The "I" is sought to be set free from all limitations so that it may seek to identify itself with the One and thus with the whole world. A *sannyasi* belongs to no one and to no place and therefore to everyone and every where.

Ma and a handful of her companions watched this solemn ceremony, the highest pinnacle of achievement for a man born and bred in the Hindu tradition. Shashanka Mohan after leading a full and useful life in the world, was eminently fitted now to renounce it for its greater benefit. In the Indian tradition it is believed that there is a suitable time for different tasks in human life. The role of the ascetic is not less important than that of the teacher or the householder or the student. Ma by her *kheyala* for Shashanka Mohan, seemed to endorse the ancient tradition. So on Chaitra Sankranti, 1934, Shashanka Mohan was initiated into *sannyasa* by Sri Mangal Giriji Maharaj. His new name was Swami Akhandananda Giri. When, dressed in ochre robes, he came to make his obeisance to Ma after the ceremony, she said to him, "You have so far rendered constant and unremitting (*akhandana*) service to your family and to your profession. From now on devote yourself with the same consistency to Self-realization."

When Ma's *kheyala* came that Shashanka Mohan should be initiated into *sannyasa*, a more suitable candidate for this high status could not have been chosen. He had rendered exemplary service as a doctor all his professional life; he had shouldered ably the burden of his family for many years and yet, when he came under the influence of Ma late in life, he started on a course of *sadhana* which required concentration, fortitude and above all perseverance. His complete reliance on Ma and his obedience to her *kheyala* belonged to a category by itself. He was not a man without a sense of humour. His grave countenance hid a very buoyant spirit. In his last years he saw many changes in Ma's life and the number of devotees increasing beyond anyone's wildest imagination. He was never out of his depth in the new situations and till the last days of his life stood steadfast in the service of his Guru as he knew her to be.

A different note was struck by his youngest son Nandu, who had a relationship of friendly badinage with Ma. He took a photograph of his father standing in his loincloth with a staff in his hand. Nandu inscribed the words Haven't you reduced him (to mendicancy) enough? "In Bengali (Aikhono Ki Hoyni Ma?" This photograph still hangs in the Ashram of Vindhyachal.

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Reference

An excerpt from the book to be published shortly: *The Post Gracious Presence: Sri Ma Anandamayee remore* by Bithika Mukerji.

Ma's Mystery

– Michael Allgaier

Wrapped in yesterdays and tomorrows,
You are That Moment Which contains all others.
Covered by the colors of multiplicity,
You are That Light which contains all others.
Eternal, Shining One, I bow to You.

SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE MA

– An epitome of India's Heritage

—Dr. Prafulla Chandra Dutta

The activities and teachings of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma were expressed for the benefit of Mankind. Her spontaneous utterances and activities were prompted by some divine "Kheyal", not by the intellect or mind, but by some divine "lila".

Rituals—Ma started her life with a revolutionary spirit against conventional system of distinguishing *Adhikāri* (competent) or *Anadhikāri* (incompetent). Convention is that a Sudra (a person without a sacred thread-upabit) and women should not utter the word of Aum (*Pranab*). But the word came not forcefully and spontaneously from Ma's mouth. Ma herself spontaneously uttered vedic language or hymns in *Yagna*. In Ma's presence afterwards many Jagnas were performed by the devotees, *Ati Rudra Yagna* etc. All *Yagnas* were for the benefit of mankind.

Once Ma was seen to pay *Namaz* (prayer) with one of his muslim devotees. She paid *namaz* spontaneously and perfectly and heartily. The muslim devotee was amazed and said that Ma did the *namaz* more perfectly than our usual *namaz*. Sometime She uttered spontaneously hymns of the Quran in Arabian language.

Upanayan for female devotees—The revolutionary activities of Ma's Kheyal involves upanayan of sudras and women. She said, "The Kheyal is coming and will be done accordingly, but I want to know what the Shastras say. Pandits of Benares said "in very early days women took upabits like men. But as now the system has been abolished, how can we support this idea?" Gopinath Kaviraj said, "What Ma said, that will be the *shāstra*, *Shāstra* will follow Ma, Ma need not follow *Shāstra*." A number of female devotees have been given *upabits*.

Ashram—When Ma Anandamayee was asked about starting ashram Ma replied,— "There is only one ashram, covering the whole universe. Only one exists. This body belongs to that ashram."

Devotees insisted on an ashram, where they could sit together freely and pray to God. Ma did not discourage, because that is also a way of developing aspiration and for attaining a stage in the spiritual voyage. Thus have been established by now a large number of ashram buildings (more than 28) in India. But Ma reminds us of the truth that, the ashram with boundary of concrete walls do not belong to Ma. She resides in a universe which has no boundary and that only one ashram exists. What is that ashram? Ma replied—"where there is no *shram*, is the ashram" Ma explained that after attaining which, there exists no *shram*, no trouble, no conflict, no feeling of

hardship, no worry. It is infinite in space and time. Brahmacharya ashram, *Grahasthya ashram*, *Vanaprastha ashram*, *Sannyasya ashram*—all ashrams merge into one. How can we attain that ashram? He who has attained that ashram, discovers the one in all diversities. Internal ashram should be discovered through love.

Ma discovered many new and sacred places. Most of such places are related to many miraculous Lila and Kheyal. She herself one day guided by the divine force entered a forest area, where there was a temple of Kali, which was called Siddheswari. By instruction of Ma a Vedi was constructed near the temple. On that Vedi Ma used to sit for a long time. A room was built there leaving the *Vedi* untouched. Ma said that it was a place of *sadhana* of Bholanath in previous lives.

Similarly Ramna Ashram was also constructed in Dhaka. A similar place of Its Bholanath's *sadhana* was discovered by Ma.

There is a history behind the Vindhyachal ashram also. There was an ancient temple. Numerous idols of gods and goddesses were concealed under the earth. This fact was not known to the public. Only Ma heard the voice, some deities asking Ma to liberate them from the earth.

Naimisharanya was the place where Bhagavat Purana was compiled by the Rishis (sages). Ma discovered the sacred place and installed a unique temple where all the Puranas have been preserved.

In this way Kalyanvan was also established on the basis of Mother's vision that a number of sages were loudly uttering the word "Kalyanvan". In that place ashram was constructed.

Kanyapeeth—Divine will worked through selected instruments (Gurupriya Devi), who with the blessings of Ma established the Kanayapeeth (Brahma Charinis ashram) for girls, where they are taught all modern subjects along with the Vedas and the Upaishads etc. in the *Rishidhara* so that they are truly awakened from inside. Ma introduced the practice of Veda reading among the girls and the sudras.

Similarly, a *Vidyapith* has been established for boys. The boys lead the life of Brahmachari there. The education system there is same as Kanyapeeth.

Caste System—Regarding the question of the caste system, which is regarded as an incurable disease, Ma belongs to the category of those prophets who consider the Indian society as a living organism. It has changed, is changing and will change, but no artificial arrangement for reforming society should be encouraged. It will automatically change according to the need of the society.

Unity is Diversity—The basic principle of Indian culture is unity in diversity. Ma firmly stands on the same idea. In ashrams erected by the devotees we have seen so many devotees assembled there to have a darshan of Ma. Some were sannyasis and some were householders. Some were Tulsi beads, some Rudraksha, somebody had *Trishul* in one hand and a *danda* (staff) and a begging bowl in the other. One person

was a Sannyasi of *tirtha* line, another *Saraswati* line, a third was that of Giri, a fourth *Puri*, one was *Vaisnava*, another *Saivite* and yet another *Shakta*. Some Jain, some Sikh, some Parsi, some were Muslim or Christian. Even the foreigners from different parts of the world assembled there. All said Ma was guiding them all according to their requirements. Ma stands as the power of Unity at the center of these diversities. We observed Ma was fostering all the diverse religious lines of approach just like all the worldly mothers, who nurture their off-springs. Ma was also engaged in fostering all the multifarious currents of religious aspiration of the world. How can we then discover any special doctrine in Ma?

Sadhana—In the spiritual field Ma considered the society as a living organization; which follows certain living and dynamic processes of development. Every organism has its own way of thinking, working and fighting for the survival. Every organism is *sadhaka* and every activity or struggle is *sadhana*. Indefinite number of living bodies are struggling for a harmony in the diversity of external appearances and behaviour. Diversity is necessary for the development. So we see every person has his own way of progress. Shree Ma helped the aspirants through advice and instruction according to their position (*sthiti*), where the person stands. *Ma said* “every one *Nastik* or *Astik*—all are *Sadhakas*. Though she appears to know *Astongo* Yoga system—the movement of *Kulokundalini* (serpentine power). She revealed this only the day. She revealed her identity to *Bhaiji*. She did not prescribe any particular religious path based on yoga system or any other system. She said, “As many are men, so many are ways to Truth or Beyond.” No two organism are totally identical physically and mentally. *Sadhanas* therefore must be different for different men according to their *Samskaras*.

Ma further said—“Attend every religious ceremony or system of all *sampradayas* and pray to *Ista* or Guru, Oh! My *Ista*!. Oh my Guru! make me feel, make me understand how beautifully you are maintained here also.”

Ma used some new terminology on the completion of a long course of dehydration of the mind. That is removal of attraction of pleasures of the world. There are four stages by which mind becomes completely pure or free from worldly hankering, (i) *Bhava Samadhana*, (ii) *Vyakta Samadhana*, (iii) *Gupta Samadhana*, (iv) *Purna Samadhana*.

On day a sannaysi met Ma and told about his happiness in *Bhava*, Ma remained silent. Other devotee of Ma, asked, “Is he a very advanced sannaysi?” Ma replied—“Yes, but he is enjoying it; instead of enjoying, one should proceed steadily.”

Stage in the life of *Sadhaka*—Different experiences may be found by *sadhakas*. Ma compares these experiences as a person sitting in a train observes many things outside the train. All are not written in *Sastra*. A *sadhaka* should not be attached much with the outer running objects. He should be a *Drasta* (observer) and will be able to move further distance. *Samadhi* is a *samadhana* or completion of a course of

travel. After *samadhana* the *sadhaka* wants rest in a rest room available on a road side. In the morning he will start again for the destination. If someone is attracted by the pleasure of the rest house, he will not be able to proceed further, but will be absorbed in facilities of easy life and cannot proceed further. He enjoys the *Darshan* as a good fortune. He cannot come out from the stage of rest, unless the *Sadhaka* proceeds towards his destination with a non-attached mind. He should be pure *Drasta*.

Regarding *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa samadhi*, Ma said, *Savikalpa* samadhi means alteration of *Samadhi* and *Vyuthan Nirvikalpa* means no such alteration. The question of *samadhi* and *Vyuthan* does not arise. Prolongation of *samadhi* is nothing but a prolongation of the time period of sleep in the rest house. *Nirvikalpa* samadhi is above these changes. You will have to go beyond these stages staying aloof from the events of the body and the mind and attain supramental *Buddhi* or powerful consciousness by which you will proceed toward Infinite Truth.

Expanding God—To some Ma suggested to worship God in the idols, rocks or trees are gradually to expand the concept of God in every rock, every idol, every tree, every river and so on. To some she suggested to utter a name of God and then gradually realize God in every name and every sound. To some others she suggested to look upon the crowd or people as God and then to spread the concept to the humanity. To some complaining against family troubles, Ma suggested to discover the creator in his creation (the family and troubles). To some Ma suggested that God is formless, nameless, adjectiveness etc. if some one argued, God is non-existent in his concept, Ma would say “You are correct, as you are at such a position, where God appears to be absent.”

To some Ma said—Find the self. Realization of the self is the realization of God, the realization of God is the realization of the self. To some, she said, “Liberate yourself from the diversity of the world and plunge into the One.” Again she said, “To plunge into the One is not the aim of life, you will have to go beyond, where the conflict of One or many dissolves, where infinite ‘Yes’ or infinite ‘No’, infinite truths, infinite untruths infinite creations and infinite destructions remaind together, all one infinite, but none are barriers to others. “It is inexpressible by worldly language. “it is That what it is” Ma said, *God is beyond all dualities*, nay, the question of beyond and not-beyond also does not arise. “How can one understand this—one cannot realize that after crossing the intellect. For that, one has to start from where he is standing, with the help of his religious guide. Thus the personified God expands into *Brahma*, qualified *Brahma* expands into non-qualified *Brahma*—which merges into a consciousness inexpressible *Mahasunnya* or *Mahabhava*.

Gurutattva—Regarding *Gurutattva* Ma’s contribution is clear pointing out a principle that a Guru is nothing but God. Therefore, the word Guru cult should not be confused with personality cult, because you say *Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu Gurudeva*

Maheshwari. So long you find a Guru as a limited person, you really have a person, not Guru. The word Guru cult is a misnomer. Guru cannot be limited as my Guru, your Guru or some other's Guru. Actually Guru remains spread over the universe. Guru is the universal teacher, not bound in any cult, creed or ideal or formula.

Dr. Lipski is correct to state that Ma Anandamayee does not support personality cult. Guru is not a person, and a person is not the Guru. Guru is one, The One God comes to guide you from within. But so long as you are inattentive to the inner voice of the Guru, Guru helps you through spiritualization of rituals or local performances relative to local culture.

The activities and words of Ma Anandamayee arise from the universal root called "Avyaktam" which are beneficial to all. "No words come from this body, which is nothing but beneficial to Mankind"—said Ma.

*

Life

*Life is Beautiful there could be nothing simpler than that
Life is noticing the subtle things, the butterfly fluttering,
the cuckoo singing, the raindrops falling, the flower blossoming.
Life is a rainbow that harnesses our dreams within the bounty of its colours.*

*Each second, each minute, each day is but a little life,
to be cherished as the most precious thing,
Life is acknowledging the Supreme Being,
Life is the enthusiasm that envelops us all.....*

*Life is being proud of our nation, its progress, its achievements,
Life is to be lived, to be enjoyed and to be laughed with,
Life is sharing of the sorrows, about finding pleasure in the pain,*

Life is about love, thoughts, feelings, empathies.....

MA ANANDAMAYEE

—Her contribution to the world

—Prof. Koshelya Walli

A human being is the crown of God's creation, One who is possessed with the power of discrimination and willpower. Man is not satisfied with mere eating, sleeping and creating progeny. He craves for something more than the material facilities. Despite having all the amenities of the so-called modern life, there are moments in a person's life when he feels vacuum in the heart of his heart, pines for something for his/her self-fulfilment Herein Mother Anandamayee's association through Her words comes to his/her rescue. The individual concerned, definitely a fortunate one, gets what we call inner peace.

Usually, we all say we believe in God but practically we lack true faith in the Almighty. Ma's words serve as Guide in the development of true faith in ourselves and in God or Truth or Cosmic Energy, She makes us understand since everything belongs to Him. There is no other alternative but to surrender to Him. If at all we are to be anxious, we should be anxious for Him alone.

Intellectually, we might have read Ma's Vak (utterances) a number of times but like the flow of water on a stone, that lip reading does not help us except that Ma's Grace helps us in understanding Her words and we try to sustain the flow of His name in every breather so as not be without Him. According to Ma, without Him, we can't have the peace of mind.

Mother is the Source of making us walk on the right track of God-Consciousness. The words uttered by Her have Her Vibrations. We may not be able to see Her with our gross eyes, but if we really love Her, She definitely cleanses us of our blemishes, black spots and negative attitudes in our day to day life, and takes us into Her Arms. Only we need be receptive. Let us throw our faults and merits, if any, into Ma's lap, only and request Her to make us an object of Her Grace to make us worthy of pure love, pure understanding, firm faith in ourselves to have true faith in that Omnipresence, so that the Omniscient works in us to have inward and outward awakening, to be established in our true nature.

Revered Mm. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj, when asked-What is Ma? Who is Ma? Replied-"Ma is Shakti Herself-Durga. Such an embodied Emancipated Soul comes very rarely on this earth for the benefit of mankind."

Ma is Dynamic Energy for the benefit of mankind. We find Ma's ashramas in Delhi, Varanasi, Calcutta, Agartala, Vindychal, Haridwar, Baroda, Kankhal, Almora, Bhopal, Dehradun, Jamshedpur, Kedarnath, Naimisharanya, Pune, Puri, Rajgir, Ranchi, Uttarkashi and in Bangladesh. Due to the grace of Venarable Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj and Ma Herself, I had several opportunities to visit Varanasi ashram. This ashram located on the bank of Ma Ganga, has an arrangement for ma's devotees to reside, runs Kanyapeeth—a residential educational institute for Brahmacharinis, Kumaris. In this educational institution education is imparted to girl students residing in Kanyapeeth from the beginning to University level. In these times when the national policy of India in a way has bid farewell to teaching of Sanskrit from primary level, Ma's ashramas are nourishing and nurturing the tree of Sanskrit—the backbone of Indian culture, thereby preserving the source of Indian culture.

Ma's Vedic path to live a true Sattvic meaningful life is a direction to a traveller to a right destination. Ethical values, observance of yamas and niyamas in one's daily life make one fearless, truthful and self-dependant. One develops soul force to face the buffets in life with fortitude and forbearance.

These days social service has become a fobia, fashion a means for gaining popularity, name, fame, awards and chakras, citations and what not? I am reminded of revered Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj's words. Once he quoted a Sanskrit verse—duty of service, is very very difficult to be understood. Even Yogis are not able to understand it. Seva means selfless service—service for the sake of service. Those of us who really own an innate desire to be of service to humanity, have to be worth of being of any service to humanity. Such a soul has to be of God. One can be of God if one thinks of God in every breath of one's life. According to Ma, we should think seriously how long we were without the thought of God? What did we do throughout the day today? One who thinks in this manner, is blessed by God, otherwise death is the fate. Happiness, unhappiness, sorrow will have to be forgotten. One, treading this path of God, path of self introspection and correcting oneself side by side to be worthy of God's grace, is eligible to render what is known as "Social Service".

It is said that mind is faster than air. According to Ma, mind is controlled by engaging it in the thought of God—thinking of God always—while sleeping, eating, talking, walking, working and the like.

'Satsanga'-Association with the good is the royal road to the destination of identifying are true self that is part and parcel of the whole. Ma says that true faith in God comes when He is remembered in every breath.

Man visualizes the world from his own view-point according to his own self-development. The sages and seers see the mantras—According to Ma, when a persons'

state of development is such that his/her wave length is at par with that of the Seers he/she utters the speech like the seer-speech what we call in Sanskrit- (Vak). A seer of mantras is in possession of - the ultimate knowledge. When one is established in real swabava, one is able to do whatever is in fitness of things to be done, one is not to make effort. In ignorance and veiling, efforts are required and advice is sought.

That this world be a better place to live in is the innate desire of every constructive human being, but mere wish wont help. We have to contribute to attain this goal. We have to engage our lives in Japa and thereby communion with God. The more we try to contemplate on Him, serve Him through selfless service of the needy, the downtrodden, the weak, the more He will be revealed to us. If each one of us makes sincere effort to utilize our talents and do our duty in the name of God and Truth, we surely help ourselves, our neighbourhood, and thereby the creation.

To have an urge for better world, better circumstances and better environment is not enough, one has to contribute towards this attainment by doing oneself what one wants others to do to achieve the goal. Here, a reference to a girl-child and her father would not be out of a context. An I.A.S. Officer, very much busy with his official life was very much attached to his only little daughter. The child seeing her father would surround him and not let him to attend to his files at home. Father saw a world map lying nearby, cut it into pieces and asked his child to set these pieces right and make these as one map as it was before. The girl sitting in the corner of her father's room looked into different pieces turning the same and looking on the both sides. She was amused to see legs, hands, head etc. on the other sides of the pieces. She started joining these different parts of the body and found that this way she shaped a human being on the other side of the map. She at once, went to her father and said-"Papa!Papa! I have prepared the map." Father looked at the map and got wonder-struck, asked his dear child-'How did you prepare it?' The little girl smilingly and happily replied-'Father! I set the man right and the world itself was set right". Herein has a message for us all. We have to set right our own self the world itself will be set right.

Our Ma's whole Life in this playground of world is a living example of this Truth. Mother's first sight would calm down the storm in minds of Her visitors. Tears would trickle down from their eyes knowing not how and why? Ma would be ever ready to help each and everyone of this universe to take resort to right path to reach the final goal of self realization. We lacked receptivity and Ma observed-the activity of the mind that detracts man and takes him away from the remembrance of God is called wrong thinking.

Says the Gita-A doubtful mind goes to destruction. From faith in ourselves, in God, right association with right persons, good looks and the like help us to live a life

of communion with God.

The path of God is like the edge of the sword. The infinite variety of appearances and manifestations of modes of becoming and state of being, of species and types, all the numberless distinctions as well as all identity are but He Himself"-says Ma. That is why the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi would quite often say that we have to hate sin and not the sinner.

To have enough innate strength, we have to implement the words of Ma. She says-"Never, relax your efforts until there is enlightenment. Let no gaps interrupt your attempt, for a gap will produce an eddy, whereas your striving must be continuous like the flowing of oil, it must be sustained, constant and unbroken stream."

According to Ma, we should reserve some specific time for God-to remember Him, to engage ourselves in Japa of a particular name and mantra while sitting in special posture and gradually add to the time and the number of repetitions.

To conclude, ma Anandamayee is Herself a source of Indian culture and spirituality. I deliberately use the present tense, for, She despite having left Her physical body, is still present, in subtlety. Only we need to be receptive, have faith and positive attitude. Usually, we have tremendous time to do every other work wanted or unwanted, desired or undesired, but when it comes to God, we lament and mourn-"O I do not have time. I am to attend this work and that work!" The basic truth is that we are literates but not educated. We have wholly identified ourselves with our body, mind and intellect. We swear by our cultural heritage day in and day out, but we are not in know of even the basic tenets of our culture and spirit.

If we really love and revere Ma Anandamayee, the fittest tribute would be to earmark a specific point to time in Her name and remember Her with love, gratitude and dedication. Ma is the living embodiment of Indian culture and spirituality.

To remember Ma means to remember Cosmic Energy or Truth, or any other name and likes in the name of God.

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