

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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Writings from devotees about their own experiences, not entirely personal or private, throwing some light on Sri Ma's behavioural pattern with people who came close to her, are also specially invited.

All articles must be clearly written, preferably typed, on one side of the sheet only and sent directly to the Managing Editor.

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MATRI VANI

The soft moonlight appears more soothing after the scorching heat of a summer's day.

* * *

If you are really searching for God with your whole being, you are bound to find Him.

* * *

There is nothing in this universe that may be treated with disregard or contempt.

* * *

He acts his Divine play in infinite ways.

* * *

Remember that spiritual endeavour must be coupled with purity of heart.

* * *

In order to keep the mind constantly fixed on self-realisation to not even look in the other direction.

* * *

To consider oneself great and others small because of any merit or position of prestige one may have acquired, is a serious mistake.

* * *

Regard this vast universe as one indivisible cosmos and all distinctions between high and low will then disappear.

* * *

A man who respects himself will have even more respect for others.

* * *

When love is wanting the Lord of love recedes in to the far distance and will be difficult to find.

* * *

Day and night God's name is repeated in order to realize Him.

* * *

In the exact degree that you give up, so will you receive.

* * *

You should constantly remain occupied with spiritual enquiry and investigation.

* * *

The Divine call is bound to come to everyone.

* * *

To ceaselessly invoke the name of God is the most effective and easiest way for purifying the mind.

* * *

Truly it is not you who call Him, but He who calls you.

* * *

By frequenting the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth you are free from all worries and find rest in the Supreme.

* * *

The easiest and most effective means for purging the mind is to associate with saints and seekers of truth.

* * *

To the extent that we harbour unkind or narrow thoughts, we increase the cause of evil in the world.



REFLECTIONS FROM EUROPE

—Richard Lannoy

I had been away in Europe and had not seen Sri Anandamayi Ma for many months. The car drove along a track and came to a halt before an unfinished dyke. All around was silent in the night. Two boys gestured into the blackness and told me the Ashram was some way off in the middle of a plain. Carrying my bundles I set off through the thorns and scrub. Soon I could make out a small light and the dark, indistinct silhouette of buildings. As I approached I heard a gong sound—it was a quarter to nine and the time of silence. On tiptoe I came near to the terrace and could make out a small building and a single lamp. Figures were seated; there was no sound at all as I peeped into the room but in the flickering light I could distinguish Her seated, wrapped in a white robe, motionless. It was as if this small concentration of silence, serenity and power were quite outside of time, as if it had always been so, had remained just so, an oasis of quiet, subsisting beneath the flux and activity of life and my own mobility, my journeys, my time spent in travelling across the sea in Europe and Africa. There had been no apparent interruption, for I felt, as I stood silent in the doorway looking towards Her, that in spite of myself this domain of stillness had resided within me all those months too, but that I had been blind enough to close myself to it and to ignore it. Ever since I first saw Sri Anandamayi Ma I have felt that Her ways and doings, Her activity, Her presence, were not entirely exterior and separate, but had its correspondence within myself, were subtly contained within an inner realm of which I have very little knowledge beyond a dim sensing that it exists there. Furthermore I feel it a necessity as well as a duty to make myself more aware of its constant presence and activity and that because the circumstances of my life demand it I cannot depend on frequent contact with the exterior, cannot depend upon being in Her presence very often.

Mine are circumstances not in any way dissimilar from those of millions of people involved in the complexity of living, but who feel a need for periods of complete quiet and freedom from rush and anxiety. Such periods are not necessarily devoted to religious study, but are nevertheless basically a time when spiritual questions are most likely considered. Man turns from work to quieter occupations, to relaxation of many kinds, to amusement, entertainment, to his dreams, to his children playing about him, to the scenic world, to beautiful architecture and works of art. He does these things as instinctively as eating and sleeping. The rhythm of

life demands that we take refreshment, nourish our minds, rest from the strains and worries of work, from the constant necessity to find money enough to keep ourselves alive. The resources available for our relaxation are extremely diverse, in Europe and America almost fantastically elaborate. More and more people in the world have access to libraries, cinemas, the radio, more and more opportunities to discover for themselves the riches of the human heritage, the repositories of wisdom in all cultures. The potentialities inherent in such an opportunity are enormous, so long as the individual is himself prepared to discriminate in his studies and to apply his knowledge to constructive activity. It is impossible to enumerate the benefits of the wide modern dispersal of knowledge. Synthesis of cultural influences is moulding many of the noblest projects in contemporary society and I would cite the Pestalozzi village in the Swiss mountains where orphans of many nationalities are being cared for, educated and the physical ravages of starvation alleviated by medical skill. But the very ease with which people may now have access to the heritage of civilization and can pick and choose from every culture of past and present whatsoever they may be attracted to, has led to very considerable restlessness and to intellectual gymnastics which dissipate the concentrative potential of study into aimless amassing of facts. We have lapsed into a belief that a perceptive far-ranging intellect will end all confusion and solve every problem. If this were really so our ideas could be satisfactorily evolved by an electronic calculating machine.

India herself is in a ferment of change and it may be fairly said that the terrors of famine have been considerably reduced and that her people are more prosperous and hopeful than they have been for a long time.

One cannot regard these things as purely materialistic developments, for man is not born liberated from his physical limitations, and until that is achieved he must need work. We are not such perfect instruments as to be in a position to sit back and do absolutely nothing but wait for God's will to be done. Thoreau, one of the inspirers of Mahatma Gandhi, once said that "the average man spends his life in quiet desperation." People have more in tones of anger than of sorrow often remarked of my home city, London, that the inhabitants have no vitality or freshness and no stillness; but the sad fact is that the demands of a monstrously artificial city life drain the energy from them. Both collectively and individually they are responsible for their own condition, as much as the people of any community, but when an immense fatigue settles upon a people, the saddest fatigue of all, that is

induced by wars, the helpless desperation of a man before his dwindling reserves of joy calls for inspiration by great leaders possessed of dynamic spiritual force.

And where are such leaders to be found ? Whatever may be said for the fact that the ultimate source of spiritual regeneration lies solely within the breast of the individual, and within the Self alone his salvation, it needs a giant of strength to maintain and develop the natural flow of the spirit, as it were, against the main current and trend of a whole people. The consciousness of modern man is complex and delicate; it is the result of mass education and the stimulus of a complex industrialized and technically organized society, with swift global communication. The very ease of contact between the peoples of one nation and another, and the multi-racial nature of the big universities have brought about a high intellectual consciousness of problems on an international scale. It is as if the mind of modern man has almost-overreached itself. This delicate organism, should it go wrong, may take years for a psycho-analyst to unravel and be led to recovery. There is too little time and too little money for this kind of lengthy treatment, itself the outcome of the increased consciousness achieved in the present century by the pooling of knowledge from every research study in the world. We cannot simplify all this by ignoring it or thinking we can escape from it, because a momentum of mental energy has gathered, of such power that to dam it up would end in disaster. Assumption of a false simplicity would leave a residue of uncommanded, seething mind untouched by formal, outward renunciation.

You may be wondering why I am emphasizing at length the complexity of the world, in a journal devoted to things of the spirit. I am attempting to clarify the situation which must be facing many of us who, whether from our own choosing or from circumstances approach Sri Anandamayi Ma with our minds as yet still greatly confused by our environment in a world of complex business and intricate daily affairs wherein lies our source of livelihood. Many of us are not Indians but travellers from all parts of the world, conditioned very differently to follow customs unknown in India and enmeshed, perplexed, driven to despair by the apparent hopelessness of a strife-torn world. Around us our colleagues, friends, families, bear the marks of a spirit mutilated by contemporary events.

Yet, when we come face to face with the momentous simplicity of Sri Anandamayi Ma the power of such calm can instantly dissolve inner turbulence. Whenever I re-experience this encounter I am awe-struck that Her impeccable simplicity is yet so strong, Her bearing containing and emanating such grandeur as to annihilate the knotted mesh of discursive thought and release an energy that at once stills and clarifies my mind. I do not wish to suggest that any particularly

violent conflict surges in me, but I know that, as I travel through many countries to picture with my camera the lives of their people, the drama of the world encroaches upon the comparative delicacy of my personal inner life. How frail the human being involved in the bigness of political and social ferment really is ! Yet one feels so secure and rich within, as soon as one finds oneself again in this magnetic presence. Whenever I see Her I am reminded of two great artists—Rembrandt and Beethoven, who, as their vision of immortal things was stirred after many years of creative effort on a splendid, yet grandiose scale, were finally purged and attained an austere simplicity in their paintings and musical compositions which bore the mark of serenity. The accounts which I have read of Her life lead me to believe that Sri Anandamayi Ma has however never had conflict, struggle or climax, but has resided always in the grace of pure attainment. Besides a luminous Joy, Her appearance yet conveys the gravity of the challenge She presents to us—for She calls out in our hearts the urgent, fundamental need for true humility, and we become very, very honest about the feeble soul which we smother with an apologetic, pondering mind. Forgetful of the fact that in the mind we have the swiftest instrument with which to bring about a centralizing of meandering ideas, when we approach Sri Anandamayi Ma we recognize that She embodies every quality and level of genuine experience. We discover that paradoxically, renunciation calls not for the curtailment of our faculties but brings our whole being to bear upon the dynamic surge of our inner momentum—which is one-pointed, arrow-like, desirous of attaining Joy. How much we know about pleasure, how little about Joy !

Many people have commented upon the feeling, not only of profound contentment which they have felt in the presence of Sri Anandamayi Ma, but of a sense of boundless richness and strength within themselves. She has this unique power of revealing to each in his own way the vitality of his psyche. This is no arm-chair comfort, for She brings this about by Her own example of beautiful simplicity and Her way of exhorting us to do work of the simplest kind, in itself no shirking of hardship, and the assumption of mature responsibility. I feel that this work-a-day background is of some considerable significance wherein lie the fundamentals of spiritual effort, because in recent years many people in Europe and America have sought comforting creeds in Asia rather from a wish to evade their own psychic problems, than from an integral desire to face crucial and elementary steps in their sadhana. The medium of routine, even of routine religion has provided them with the fatal excuse of decking out their own weary souls in exotic trappings. It is probably the gigantic scale of world problems and the apparent

ineffectuality of the individual which has caused this kind of panic and made many feel an inner poverty. The way to avoid this tendency to "assume borrowed feathers" is surely to become aware of the riches of our own true selves. The absolute simplicity of Sri Anandamayi Ma presents an urgent challenge to the most crucial personal problems that we are most liable to shirk. There is scarcely any doubt that many who depart from India after brief contact with its mystical tradition are the dupes of their own attempt to adopt anything exotic rather than face themselves. I feel that with Her profound compassion and with Her practical and individual guidance Sri Anandamayi Ma helps one to avoid these pitfalls.

There is a terrible crisis of religion in the West, because we have failed to maintain its vitality in the face of modern civilization. As a result we feel impoverished and empty within, for the signs, symbols and wonders that inspired our forefathers have mysteriously lost their potency, and we must plot new maps for new territory conquered by the mind. We have lost the power to abide in the solitude of the soul and to find contentment at the sources of life, for this instinct has been smothered or disturbed by the stress of life today. There is no meditation now in the West such as could create Chartres Cathedral in the 13th Century. Through tragedy, heroic struggle and "quiet desperation" Western man may indeed still grow to his full stature, and by a miracle many do achieve serenity. Sheer effort has led Western man away from the profound riches of the soul and from the noblest in his traditions to a condition of separateness, of individual isolation. Significantly enough the most universal sign of a need for religion and an attempt at least to supply a substitute is maintained by the much increased awareness in the West of great religious works of art. The need is there but a way to find serenity is very sorely needed.

No corner of the modern world has felt the absence of this great crisis, but India is fortunate in that Sri Anandamayi Ma lives there, offering welcome and abiding contentment to whomsoever feels an inner need for Her help. To those for whom the world is an almost ineradicable distraction that has split man in two and divided him from himself, by Her simplicity and compassion She presents the supreme challenge. She guides, She inspires, She helps one to cease from shirking one's true responsibilities; above all She leads us to fundamentals, to sincere humility without which there is no beginning. For those who are afraid of life, afraid of God, afraid of religion, She guides them by the supremely beautiful example of Her own pervasive Joy. She begins by offering happiness but She also promises man his birthright—realization of Self.



Written by the renowned author of the widely acclaimed book, *"Ma Anandamayi Her Life and Wisdom"* some time in the fifties.

CONVERSATION WITH WESTERN DEVOTEES

—Vijayananda

[SIX]

The Basic qualities of Yoga

Q. What place does fearlessness have in 'sadhana' ?

V- Fearlessness is Realisation. This is what Janaka was told by Yajnavalka in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Learning to be fearless is a sadhana in itself. Fear comes from duality. Fearlessness resides in Unity. When I was isolated in my hermitage in the middle of the Himalayan forests, in danger of being attacked by wild animals like bears, as well as by brigands there, I was able to work on the mastery over fear, not just in all its physical manifestations, but also in the slightest of its mental traces. The important thing is to confront the cause of the fear instead of avoiding it. At the beginning Ma tried to make me afraid, to see if I was impressionable : she used to put on her airs on greatness, but I 'over-reacted' and she did not continue. Fear, vis-a-vis certain factors is, however, useful for a 'sadhaka'. The spiritual aspirant has to protect himself against all kinds of influences, if his energy is not to be dissipated. Ordinary brahmins live in constant fear of impurity, of contamination : this is a stage in their 'sadhana'. However, it is important for them to know that Realisation is beyond all fear. Thus an equilibrium is created between the fear of the debutant who wants to do everything well, and the complete fearlessness of the realised being.

Q. Wanting to tell the truth under all circumstances, isn't that being too scrupulous ?

V- Telling the truth is a fundamental quality in Hinduism. The motto of India is "*Satyameva Jayate*", 'Only truth will triumph'. In the Bible, this is not the case. Abraham more or less lied to the Pharaoh in letting him believe that Sarah was not his wife. Jacob deceived his father Issac, by making him believe that he was his brother Esau. Behind this veneration of truth at all cost, there is among the Hindus an understanding of the mechanism of spiritual power. They often express the idea that someone who tells only the truth for twelve years, will then see all his words come true. The utility of this complete respect for truth is clear as far as spiritual transmission is concerned. Internal experiences are very difficult to evaluate from outside : it is very easy to make someone believe that one has achieved a certain

level of realization, when actually it might not be true. The only ways to guard against this is the complete honesty of the person undergoing these experiences. The more advanced a 'sadhaka' is, the more the smallest details become important. What is not a fault in an ordinary person, becomes one in an advanced spiritual aspirant; just as a vulgar word would not seem shocking if spoken by a clumsy, dull-witted servant but would sound quite ugly if spoken by a well-bred person. This idea is very well expressed in one of the Jataka tales :

"One day, Buddha, who was then just an ordinary monk, sat down to meditate under a tree which was opposite a beautiful lake full of lotus flowers. The fragrance of the flowers permeated the air all around. Buddha got up to smell one of these lotuses.

"Thief !" he suddenly heard. It was the spirit of the tree calling to him.

"What have I stolen ?" asked Buddha

"The fragrance of the lotuses. No one gave it to you !"

The monk stayed still. A little later into came a stout peasant, who entered the lake and plucked all the flowers.

"Is he not a thief ?" asked Buddha.

"No', replied the spirit, "Because he is a lout, for him it is not a sin, but you, you are a spiritual aspirant".

Q. Ma once said that one must avoid anger completely. Someone then remarked that the 'rishis' (sages of the Hindu scriptures) often became angry. Ma had replied that to be a 'rishi' was only one stage on the path to Realisation. What do you think ?

V- As for 'rishis', Ma used to say that if a 'rishi' had the power to curse (to destroy), he also had the power to bless (to create). A power that one obtains through the practice of truth can also be used in a negative, destructive manner. Anger and sexual desire represent the two major deviations of the 'Kundalini' which starts walking up. These two forces dissipate the energy and one misses what is really important - the door that could lead us to the next room. One then has to wait for some time before conditions are favourable again.

Q. How can one transform anger into a positive sentiment, as they advise in some tantrik sadhanas ?

V- It is a very specific and difficult yoga. The first thing is to control anger.

Q. Are chastity and awakening of the 'Kundalini' linked ?

V- Complete '*brahmacharya*' is not indispensable in all 'sadhanas'. Otherwise, there would've been very few 'sadhakas'... Married people can do very good 'sadhana' by developing a spirit of self-less service, for example. Of course, it

would help if they use moderation in their physical relationship. Physical relations, even if they may not weaken the body, or the intellectual capacity of the mind, deaden subtle sensitivity and diminish the force of meditation. For those who wish to follow the straight path of yoga, absolute chastity is the rule. It is not a question of forcing back physical desires, but rather a question of providing a catalyst for the process of consciousness. The non-satisfaction of these desires leads to a questioning which enables one to go to the very roots of the mind. This holds true not just for sexual desire, but for all other desires as well. Before the first awakening of the '*kundalini*' it is better if the spiritual aspirant has the habit of control of desires; this is what all spiritual traditions demand, it is not confined to Yoga. Some people object to the fact that the rishis stayed with their spouses in the forest. But they lived a life which was oriented towards religion from early childhood, in a society organised for protecting their way of living. In our times even if married life is in accordance with a certain way of life, children might be the cause of some trouble. Of course, if a hermit in his cave thinks of nothing but women, it is better that he returns to the world and get married. However, for the small number of people who choose to follow the straight path of yoga and of the awakening of the Kundalini, control over sexual desire is the first gate to open. As far as I was concerned, I was helped a great deal by my massive 'affective transfer' on to Ma, right from the first time that I was with her. After having worked on myself thus, I was again able to look at beautiful women with pleasure, but it was not the kind of pleasure experienced by ordinary people. When one has really renounced the world, one can look at it with pleasure.

Q. Subjacent to asceticism, is this not a kind of hate of the body ?

V- It is amusing to see how many of their own problems the people of the world can project on to ascetics ! Hate of the body is a bad effective transfer of anger redirected against oneself. This is false spirituality. It is not a question of dissociating oneself from one's body, like one dissociates oneself from one's car, without wanting to destroy it.

As far as fasting is concerned, if some one is very greedy, missing a meal every week may be a good ideal, but that is all. For achieving Realisation what counts is not the suffering of the body, but the understanding of the mind. At an advanced stage of '*sadhana*', fasting could be to some people a way of completely dissociating themselves from their bodies, but this is only a very short phase.

Q. Why are Indian sages wary, in general, of Tantrik gurus ? (By Tantrism, the questioner means the *vamachara*)

V- Because, having an understanding of instinctive and emotional functioning, these gurus have developed the faculty of being able to influence this functioning in others, without having developed the necessary purity of mind. Spiritual seekers do not realize that these two aspects may be dissociated, one from the other, and thus let themselves be exploited, financially, psychologically and sometimes, sexually. Tantrism seeks the immediate awakening of the Kundalini. For some rare persons, this could lead rapidly to Realisation, but for most, it is very dangerous. It is like teaching someone how to accelerate, without having taught him how to brake or how to turn the steering wheel. It is possible that the presence of an instructor-guru becomes indispensable, almost a question of life and death, because he has to prevent all those accidents which could happen. In the path of mental observation, as for example in *Jñāna-Yoga* or in Buddha's way of meditation, the awakening of Kundalini is the final stage. Buddha had his awakening of Kundalini (symbolised by the temptations of Mara and the sexual ideas re-activated by the visit of Sujata and her two servants), just before his Realisation. At the moment of his Realisation, he was fully prepared to face up these temptations.

Q. In following the path of *Jñāna-Yoga* and in repeating, isn't there a risk of losing touch with reality ?

V- The real risk in practising the '*Jñāna-Yoga*' is arrogance. I have seen many Westerners becoming arrogant and believing a little too soon that they had achieved identification with the Absolute. The Hindu 'sadhakas' are more humble. On the other hand, when '*Jñāna-Yoga*' is practised well, it is the best way of returning to reality, because it helps to lift the veils that hide this reality.



MATAJI ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS

Christmas at Agarpara

On the 24th morning Mataji, along with Her party, motored to Patna and remained the whole day in the Station Waiting Room. Sri N. Bakshi, I.C.S. (Rtd) Bar-at-Law, a great devotee of Mataji, had made all arrangements for Her departure for Calcutta the same night by the Delhi Howrah Express.

Mataji alighted in Agarpara Ashram on Christmas Day, 25th morning, remaining there for an unusually long period, i.e., for seventeen days. During that time She visited a number of places in Calcutta. Mr. James George, High Commissioner for Canada in Ceylon, came to Mataji with his whole family having motored all the way from Dhanushkodi to meet Her. All of them were spiritually minded.

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Sankrant at Varanasi

Mataji reached Varanasi on the 11th January midnight to be present for the annual celebration of Sankrant on the 14th. This is the anniversary of the day on which the great Vedic Yajña that took place in our Ashram at Varanasi which was begun in 1947 and successfully completed after full three years in 1950.

During Her short stay in Varanasi Dr. Miss Luce Sannangelantonio, a famous Endocrinologist and Psychologist who was connected with the UNESCO and was then on an official tour of India, came to meet Mataji and had private interviews on two consecutive days—She seemed to have been deeply impressed by Mataji and by the talks she had with Her.

During that period two other foreign ladies arrived in India, who had come all the way only to have Ma's darshan and stay a few days with Her. They were Madame Jean Trocme from Paris and Mrs Markell Brooks from Minnesota, U.S.A.

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Inauspicious Planets, Vrindaban

Into the last part of Mataji's stay fell the period that was considered a very inauspicious planetary constellation (*asta graha*) feared all over the world—whenever Mataji had been questioned as to Her opinion about the prophecies of world-wide disaster, She either kept quiet or She replied that rather than worrying

about such things we should devote our energies to reaching beyond fear. After the bad constellation had passed over, Mataji remarked with Her most radiant smile that it had been a singularly auspicious occasion, since it had induced people of every town and village in the country to pray from their hearts and to give in charity. Even those who proudly declared to be far above such superstitions prayed in secret. For this reason this much dreaded occasion had actually proved most beneficial. No special function had been arranged in our Ashram to ward off the bad planetary influence, but perpetual japa and meditation was sustained day and night from January 25th until Mataji left Vrindaban. When a German visitor, who wished to take her turn in the meditation, wanted to know whether she would be permitted to do japa of Christ's name, Mataji replied :

"Certainly, there is only One."

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Christian songs at Kirtan time, Vrindaban :

For the last two weeks four German guests, Mr. Robert Bosch with his wife and sister and a friend were staying with us at Vrindaban—they were well trained in music. When Mataji asked them to sing, they surprised everyone present by singing beautiful old German religious music in 3-4 voices. Throughout their stay a few Christian hymns formed part of our regular daily evening Kirtan. This was a new feature in our Ashram. It is an example of how minutely Mataji responded to the needs of whoever came to Her. One day Mataji was asked how She liked those German songs.

She said, "Very much".

(From the diary of Atmananda)



VEDANTA AND TANTRA

—Prof. Bireswar Ganguly

(Four)

With a little introspection a *yogi* of any school can understand that any yogic method of *sadhana* is essentially the worship of śakti, which leads to the arousal of the inherent divine energy in the individual, who has to control the vital forces of lower nature, in order that the¹ impediments to the divine journey for self-realization may be removed. Whatever power resides in the infinite *Brahmānda* (universe) also resides in the finite body of man in a latent form. This is the whole secret of *Kundalini Yoga* of *Tantra sadhana*. The worship of *Siva, Visnu, Krishna, Ganeśa, Surya, Durgā, Kāli, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Brahmā, Rudra* and all other deities is essentially the scientific technique of invoking the powers of the deities for arousing the latent powers of the *sādhaka* and hence is basically the worship of śakti. For a smooth success in this *śakti sādhana*, a knowledge of the physical, subtle and causal bodies and understanding of the implications of the fifty *mātrikās* or seed letters (*varnamalas*) and a global view of the *samsāra mandala* (universe) from *Parama Siva* to *prithvi tattva* (matter) are necessary. *Devi Bhāgavatam, Nirvāna Tantra, Śiva Samhitā, Hathayoga Pradipikā* and Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraja's "*Tantra O Agam Sasther Digdarsan* (Bengali), "*Tāntrik Vāṅmay me Śākta Dristi* (Hindi), Mircea Eliades *Yoga* and Arthur Avalon's *The Principles of Tantra* are good source materials, which are easily available.

M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj has rendered a brief but wonderful summary of the description of the *samsāramandala* from physical nature (*bhu tattva*) to God (*Isvara-Sadasiva tattva*) within the absolute Monistic Reality of *Parama-Śiva*, as found in some of the 64 Tantrik texts and 18 Puranas and the following is the gist of that analysis.

"We get a glimpse of the *brahmānda*, containing fourteen *bhuvanas*. From *Bhurlok* to *Satyalok* above the earth and the *Pātāl-lok* etc. below the earth—all the planes of life are within this *brahmānda*. When Patanjali mentions the knowledge of *bhuvanas* in the '*vibhuti-pada*' of his *Yoga sutram*, the intention is to refer to these *bhuvanas*. However, it can be gathered from *Agama* texts that there are many more *bhuvanas* than these in the universe. In reality the number of *bhuvanas* is infinite.

1. *Ibid.*, p.132.

Even the number of major *bhuvanas* cannot be counted. The fact is that in the *Purānas*, only those *bhuvanas* have been mentioned which have physical planetary systems and the conglomeration of those *bhuvanas* only has been termed as *brahmānda*. But from the huge Tantric literature it is learnt that above the physical universe with earthly planetary systems, there is the existence of a vast expanse of the subtle universe.It is of undisputed knowledge that the number of *brahmāndas* (universe) is limit-less. Above the *brahmāndas* there is the subtle world of *prakṛityānda*. As *brahmāndas* are infinite in number, so also are *prakṛityāndas*. Within each *prakṛityānda* there are innumerable *brahmāndas*. The *prakṛityānda* is composed of subtle elements from *jala tattva* to *prakṛiti tattva*. Above the plane of *Prakṛityānda* there exists *maya* or *māyānda*, which contains innumerable *prakṛityāndas*. As there are innumerable waves of water in the ocean, so also there are innumerable waves of *prakṛityānda* in the vast ocean of *māyānda*. Thus within *maya* or *māyānda* there are innumerable *prakṛityāndas* and within each *prakṛityānda* there are innumerable *brahmāndas*. *Māyānda* is composed of five *kanchukas* (elements) of *Purusha* (Godhead) and His *maya* (energy). Above the *māyānda* there is the existence of *satānda*, composed of luminous and pure *sattva* *guna*. In *saktānda* exist the three *tattvas* of *śuddha vidyā*, *Ishvara* and *Sadāśiva*. The presiding lord of *brahmānda* is *Brahmā*, that of *prakṛityānda* is *Visnu* and that of *māyānda* is *Rudra*. The realm of *māyā* extends upto this much only. Above this the lord of *śaktānda* is the dual aspect of *Ishvara* and *Sadāśiva*. The creative extrovert aspect of *Parameshwar Parama Śiva* is known as *Sadāśiva*. *Ishvara* and *Sadāśiva* are the two functional names of the centrifugal and centripetal powers of *Parama Śiva*. The five functional Lords from *Brahmā* to *Sadāśiva* are known as the *Pancakārana*, i.e. the five causal sources of the universe.²

Though consciousness, which is a qualitative concept, and *sakti* (energy) a quantitative, but non-cardinal concept, cannot be represented graphically, yet an attempt has been made in Tantric texts to represent the evolution of *brahmānda* from *Śiva-Sakti* in the *Sricakra*. I have made an attempt to portray the evolution of *samsāramandala* (infinite and innumerable subtle and physical universes) from *Paramaśiva*, which is the same as *Para-Brahma* of Vedānta and *Purushottama Paramātmā* of *Bhagavad Gītā* as discussed briefly by Gopinath Kaviraj in the above paragraph.

2. Vide Bireshwar Gangopadhyay - *Tāntrik Sāhitye-Shākta Dṛisti Prasange Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraj* (Beng), 1998, pp. 65-66, (Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Calcutta-6 & Mahesh Library, Calcutta - 73).

A lucid description of the evolution of the *brahmānda* is found in the first ten chapters of *Nirvāna Tantram*, but a comprehensive discussion of the *samsāra mandala* is found in Gopinath Kaviraja's *Tāntrik Vāṅmayme Shākta Drishti*..

The mysteries of creation are discussed precisely in *Aitariopanishad* of *Rigveda*, *Mundakopanishad* of *Atharva Veda*, *Prashnopanishad* of *Atharva Veda*, in Kapila's *Sāṅkhya Darshan*; in Kashmir Saivism, in *Devi Bhāgavatam* and also in *Bhagavad Gitā*. The first and second verses of the fifteenth chapter of *Gitā* refer to the pipal tree of creation, which is said to be imperishable with its roots above in the primeval being (God) and whose stem is represented by *Brahmā* (the creator) and whose leaves are the *Vedas*. *Brahma Sutra* in its second aphorism (जन्माद्यस्य यतः) refers to *Brahman*, which is the basis of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. *Tāntrik* literature, instead of contradicting the *Vedas*, simply elaborates the basic concepts.

The *Devi Sukta* or the hymn to Goddess *Durgā* (*Chandi*) of *Rigveda* is the meeting ground of the Vedic and Tantrik traditions of ancient India. It occurs as the 125th hymn of the 10th chapter of *Rik Veda*, the oldest among the four *Vedas*, codified about 5000 B.C. and it constitutes an essential part of the recitation of *Durgu saptasati Chandi* (*Devi Māhātmya* of *Mārkaṇdeya Purana*, compiled later by Maharshi Veda Vyasa).

Surath, the King and Samadhi, the merchant, worshipped the icon of goddess *Durga* (*Chandi*) for three consecutive years by muttering this *Devi Sukta*, according to the instruction of Medha Rishi and got their kingdom and liberation respectively. This hymn was revealed to Vāk, the self-realized daughter of Ambarik Rishi, who identified herself as the Divine Mother as well as Brahman, Mā Ānandamayee also identified herself as *Purna Brahma Nārāyana* as well as *Mahādevi Durgā*, just as Sri Rama Krishna had identified himself with Rama & Krishna. Once in 1922, at the age of 26, when Nirmala Devi (later known as Mā Ānandamayee) rose from her *nirvikalpa samādhi*, Baba Bholanath (her husband and also the first initiated disciple) and Nishi Kaviraj asked her, "Who are you ?", slowly came the sweet reply, "*Purna Brahma Nārāyana*". Then Baba Bholanath asked her, "If you are *Purna Brahma Narayana*, then who am I ?" Mother replied emphatically, "*Mahādeva*". Baba Bholanath asked her again, "If I am *Mahādeva*, then who are you ?" Mother's mystic but unequivocal reply was, "The same. *Mahādeva* as well as *Mahadevi*."

(To be continued)



THE LITTLE COTTAGE

—'Shobha'

Sw. Atmananda. I pause. My fingers sit on the keyboard for a while. What can I write on her. She was an encyclopedia of devotion, discipline, patience, compassion and fortitude. Knower of multi-languages. From the diary leaves of Sw. Atmananda the western world was able to relate with Ma. Communicating their thoughts in the right perspective and conceiving the Words of Wisdom uttered by Ma without the distortion of the real meaning of Ma's utterances.

Sw. Atmananda is a beautiful soul about whose life style, devotion, discipline, knowledge and sacrifices I will not attempt to write as I am an ignorant person and lack in the perfection of these high qualities of life that Sw. Atmananda was possessed with and manifested them every moment. All I know of Sw. Atmananda is a profound wise petite sage dressed in simple ochre clothes who lived in the little cottage by the temple of Ram Mandir in Kalyan van.

I recall the day I first saw her in the Kishenpur Ashram (Dehradun). A crisp cool day in the month of October. The sun had moved to the west side of the clear sky. Ma's ashram still enjoyed the warm rays of the setting sun. The trees shaded the terrace that looked towards the Mussoorie hills. Ma often stood there watching the world pass by. Though the Rajpur road in those days was not so busy, it had a bewitching calmness and beauty, canopied by trees on both sides with beautiful cottages and stone houses built apart leaving the natural vegetation untouched. There at that hour Sw. Atmananda sat playing the harmonium sitting in the front row by Shree Shree Ma's huge photograph that was placed on a wooden platform covered with light mattress and white sheet. Garland and flowers were tastefully placed around Ma. Ma's satsang hall of Kishenpur Ashram.

We all gathered there for the evening satsang following Sw. Atmananda as she sang playing the harmonium, "Om Ma, Shree Ma, Jai Jai Ma..... " No sooner the satsang was over she picked up the harmonium and placed it where it is supposed to be kept. Hung her orange bag across her shoulders and after paying oblation of Ma she started walking towards the Kalyan van. The distance between these two ashrams is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile. I caught up with her hoping to steal some quiet moments with her. I found out that she was a Piano teacher in the same school from where I had graduated my high school. Immediately a bond was stricken between us. We conversed on some common features of the school that

still were prevalent when she was there. It was a delightful walk. As we neared the iron gates of Kalyanvan she remarked, "Ma used to say that this road from Kishenpur to Kalyanvan is a very holy path. Many saints and sages have walked on this path centuries ago. These trees that grow on either side were some great sages in their previous lives." We shut the gate and proceeded towards the little cottage by the gravel path near the Ram Mandir, Atmananda's cottage.

We sat on the steps for a few minutes and then it was time for her to do the chores that were assigned to her by Ma at a particular time of the dusk. I touched her feet and bade my farewell for the night. Promising her I will come again.

I did come again after a few days. A jar of water with 5 almonds was kept outside in the sun on the raised edge of the verandah. A long handled broom stood by the side of the door. A few pots and pans were there in the kitchen and an orange cloth was used for the shower curtain. She had heard my footsteps and came out of the meshed door of her room. "Jai Ma. Come in". I was amazed that she invited me to her room. I considered myself one of the lucky ones and was thrilled. Books and writing material were sitting on her bed and a little desk, which I presumed she might have used for her writing. On the other side by the head of her bed was her altar. Ma, Gopal, Christ and Buddha adorned the seat of the altar. "By religion I am a Buddhist". After standing in silence for a few minutes we came out. I handed her a small packet of dried fruits. "Why do you spend so much money on me?" I looked down. She asked me if I could translate a few paragraphs for her in English. My happiness knew no bounds. We sat on the steps. She talked and I listened in awe at times tears flowing from my eyes. It was time to go home. She knew I was teaching in one of the local High schools. Once again promising to come back again.

I left Dehra Dun as my husband now was posted in a family station. When I came back after a few years I went to Ma's ashram and then to her cottage. At that time she was sitting with a Swiss lady who was draped in a white saree. They both were conversing in French. She acknowledged my presence and after a few minutes said in English, "She has come all the way from Switzerland and is leaving to-night for Delhi to go back. So I would like to spend some time with her." I paid my salutation saying I will come back.

It was time for satsang in the Kishenpur Ashram. From the Kishenpur gates I could see Sw. Atmananda walking towards the Ashram with her umbrella and her orange sling bag. The skies were overshadowed with dark clouds. It poured just after the satsang was over. We all sat in the adjoining room of the satsang hall. My husband too was with me to-night. "I am planning to leave for States shortly..... I

am not sure if I should go or not ?' I broke into tears. "Go... Go . You should go. Do not listen to the ones who say not to go. You go." Such encouraging words having a healing sensation in my negative emotions. When the rain stopped it was time to part again. I wept saying my goodbye for that night. I will come again.....

The morning was bright. Once again one of those October mornings. The presence of Ma Durga is so evident in the environment. A new energy of divine love overflows the emotions and thoughts. Clad in a bright yellow and gold border sari I open the gates of Kalyan van. I came from School early to-day. There were devotees gathered for bhog in the Ram Mandir. I saw her sitting under the tree on a platform aloof, eating from her plate. The rest of the devotees were all sitting in a crowd. I had a strong urge to go sit by her. But the silence and aloofness that surrounded her was so powerful that some intense silence held me behind. I noticed from the corner of my eyes that she had finished the bhog and was walking towards her cottage. I quietly followed her. She became aware of my presence when she heard my footsteps following her on the gravel pathway. "When are you leaving and where are you going ?" "Minnesota". "I was there after I moved from Germany. It is a beautiful place". My heart missed a beat. Another bond. The more I was associating with Sw. Atmananda the harder it was getting to be away from her. We climbed the cottage steps. She gave me a stool to sit. She stood on the doorway of her room. She went in and came out after a few minutes bringing a couple of audio tape from inside and handed to me giving me an address where to mail.

"Will that be hard to do ? This is one of Ma's ardent devotees". I smiled and took it from her hand.

"When I come back what would you like me to get for you".

"In Minnesota they have thermals which are very warm for winter".

I knew this is what I will bring for her.

"Ma had told me to keep silence from 12.00pm to 3.00 pm. That is the only time I get for translating the books. Ma knew beforehand that there would be no time left for me if I did not observe my silence during these hours of the day."

It was 5 minutes before the hour. She gave me her photograph standing in front of her bedroom door. I clung it to my heart, bowed and left, promising to come and see her when I am back from states.

In my absence my father visited her off and on. Sometime bringing to her the fresh apples from their orchard. She enjoyed them. Enquired about me. To day my mother had written Sw. Atmananda was in a great hurry to get back to her room. She said, "I have lot to do. There is no time left. I am very busy, very busy".

After a fortnight I received a letter from my father giving me the news of Sw. Atmananda's passing away. I held the letter and stood by Shree Ma's wall hanging photograph. Tears rolling down. I had already bought the thermals for her as I was shortly leaving for India.

Silently I opened the gates of Kalyanvan. Her slight footsteps could be heard by me clearly walking a little ahead of me. I stop by the little cottage. Sit on those steps looking towards her door, hoping she will open it soon !

URGENT CIRCULAR

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1.1.2000

—MANAGING EDITOR

MA ANANDAMAYEE AND THE SPIRITUAL PROBLEM OF THE AGE

[Two]

—Prof : Madan Gopal

I have discussed this problem at length because these are the difficulties that arise in the minds of most enquirers who begin the search without a specialised knowledge of Oriental spiritual methods and tradition. Many people find it difficult to understand why they cannot be put at once into touch with a competent spiritual teacher, just as in the West they would expect to find a specialist along any recognised line much without difficulty. Even if they come to India, they find no one to whom they can with confidence apply for information. If they hear of some genuine teacher they find their access barred by much unfamiliar ceremonial and the difficulties created by a strange and incomprehensible environment. It is only after much persistence and patience that they will probably begin to sense the inner life. And even then they may take a long time to accustom themselves to the entirely new ways of living and of thought. There is need to face the situation if we are alive to the challenge of the present day and what it means to India. It may not be possible to organise 'spiritual teaching' like any other speciality (and I am convinced that this is so), but some effort could be made to interpret our spiritual heritage and to point out where it exists—as a living reality and not as a dead exhibit, and perhaps people who are so fortunate as to be in touch with a real teacher could make a greater effort to smoothen the path of such enquirers and bring them into an easier relationship with their group. Accommodation is needed on both sides; and just as the outsider has to learn to understand our ways of thought and feeling, so we shall widen our culture and even deepen our spiritual understanding by trying to understand his point of view. It is for promoting such mutual understanding that this article is written, and consequently I have pointed out frankly what seem to me to be the weak points of our 'system'

Supposing that we have discovered a personality that seems to us to possess *prima facie* the necessary attributes of a true teacher, how shall we approach him (or her)? It may be said once that there are no easy and definite standards by which we can recognise a spiritual teacher. Still certain attributes are to be looked for in any one to whom we can turn for inner enlightenment. The difficulty is not in stating these attributes, but in recognising them, for it is always difficult to judge a

life far above ours. However, it would still be an advantage to bear some of these characteristics in mind. A true spiritual teacher is a rare product of nature. But when such a manifestation is to be found a certain quality of life can be sensed about him (or her). These may be stated in the most general form in the following way :

(1) First of all there is *Inner Freedom*. This is often interpreted to mean asceticism but is in reality a much wider thing. It means such a complete reliance upon the Inner Self that the life is freed from entanglement with all outside support. Hence such a person will be found to be inwardly independent of all that others value in life, security, ease, comfort, friends or popularity. There will be no anxiety or greed in such a life, no desire for external possessions, but on the other hand a perfect *poise* which springs from the realization that all happiness is within himself. Whenever we can genuinely sense this attitude we can be sure that some 'spirituality' exists.

(2) *Universality* - Such a man may speak the language of a particular age or civilisation or may continue to follow a local or national tradition, but in his inner attitude he will be *universal*, holding no man as alien or stranger to himself. He will be able to sympathize with all human beings in their struggles and strivings and he will be able to reach the human heart in all of us *directly*. Whenever we find a limitation of sympathy, a desire to confine oneself to a limited group or tradition, we can suspect that such a man possesses only a limited spiritual vision.

(3) *Peace*. Every such personality radiates peace and tranquility—an emanation that at least temporarily frees us from our pre-occupation with our outer selves, with its attendant cares and anxieties. This is one of the surest marks of a true Sage and whenever this is strongly and unmistakably felt we have reason to rely upon his inner power.

(4) *Sympathy and compassion* — Such personalities, in their dealings with human beings often manifest a strong compassion, a reaching out to the lowliest and humblest. They do not manifest an attitude of condemnation even towards the sinner but display a willingness to help everyone to climb out of his failings. Generally they are found to possess a great understanding of human nature which goes right to the core of the personality and gives any one who approaches them the assurance that they are being understood and helped.

When such qualities are found we should neglect the other things, be ready to condone what appear to us as crudities or eccentricities. Great men of the spirit are not always intellectually gifted or consistent in the exposition of their philosophy or experience. They are not always handsome or impressive in their physical personalities. They may betray the limitations of their origin or environment and in

their physical personalities may remain subject to handicaps that seem to us so easily surmountable. They seldom possess the manners of what we regard as good society. However, if we are observant and use our inner eyes we shall find their personalities becoming almost transformed when we are able to touch their real selves, in other words, when by our sincerity and our desire for the Truth we are able to arouse their real interest. I have noticed this capacity for transformation in every spiritual teacher I have known to a greater or a lesser degree, and often marvelled at the difference that it makes in their personalities.

Once the great personality has been found and inwardly recognised, there should be a real effort to 'open up' and to learn. Remember that any 'spiritual teaching' can only be fruitful when we are prepared to change our minds and hearts, when we are willing to subject all our standards and judgments to a new light. No seed will sprout in a ground which has not been carefully prepared—and this preparation of the ground means a new intellectual and emotional orientation. It involves the capacity to rise above our normal selves and ultimately to see ourselves as we really are without shrinking and without inventing intellectual excuses for ourselves. This preparation is usually intensely painful, because it can only proceed by destroying our self-esteem and shaking us out of our comfortable habits. But this has to be achieved if we are to make ourselves fit for the reception of the new spiritual impulse.

Again, when the ground has been prepared some-one is needed *to cast the seed*—and this is a crucial stage. Very few indeed can reach the next stage without the help of a living human personality, a *Guru*; and his personality and influence determine much of the aspirant's future. Many people, hearing of this truth and misjudging the facts of inner life and their own present position, rush about and get entangled with inferior and unreliable *Gurus*, thus retarding their own advance for considerable periods. It must be remembered that the inner preparation is the main thing, and this can be carried out even without the help of a *Guru*: anyhow at this stage no commitments should be made. If the inner preparation has been achieved with some thoroughness, some *Guru* or other will always arise, and be easily recognised. On the other hand many remain in contact with true and genuine '*Gurus*' without receiving any inner illumination, due to their own incapacity and lack of receptivity.

Finally, the spiritual revelation when it comes does not come as a new philosophy, or a picturesque vision of the inner worlds, or as a new power in the outer world, but as the opening of an entirely new faculty. Its essential character is that, for the first time and in a real sense hardly conceivable by one who has not had

the experience, the consciousness rises above the level of the personality, and the aspirant sees with a clarity never to be forgotten that what he has so far considered his 'self' is a perishable and imperfect thing, product of the forces of nature, guided by feeble and superficial aims and incapable of reaching any true satisfaction. There arises the capacity to centre the consciousness (even though for a short time at first) in a higher and more impersonal region from which the personality itself can be surveyed calmly and in a spirit of detachment. This new faculty may be called the acquisition of *soul vision of psychic consciousness* and without this experience there is no possibility of rising above the earthly condition of mixed sorrow and joy, of fundamental uncertainty and insecurity, of life always threatened by death.

It is exceedingly difficult to describe this realisation in terms of our normal experience; and often when this faculty is opened up, the experience is accompanied with various kinds of visions and supra-sensual experiences, which being more picturesque and seizable have received more attention. However, these divert the attention from the central fact the attainment of a new type of consciousness which enables us to survey the facts of life from an altogether new angle. This is the germinating of the seed, and once this has clearly taken place, the aspirant can feel that he has been set on the path that will in time lead to full self-knowledge. Once the true vision of the soul has been gained it will create its own 'inner guidance' and forces will be aroused that will gradually purify and enlighten the personality. The paradox of human experience is that until the impersonal and spiritual level has been reached the problems of our personal life can never be adequately solved. It is only from the basis of this vision that the true object of life —the transmutation of our personal self into some likeness of its true 'form'— becomes possible. Hence knowingly or unknowingly we are all searching for this vision, and no other achievement, however high or glorious, can take its place. Those who have become aware of this are the true 'seekers' : those who have obtained the vision and are engaged in the task of transmuting their nature are the true 'yogis' and 'mystics'.

So, briefly it may be said that the kind of enquirer I have in mind has, first of all, to face various difficulties against which little provision exists at present. The task of comprehending the qualifications necessary for a true approach is not insuperable but the help afforded by living examples is lacking : not that such living examples do not exist, but they are often disguised by their origin and training and do not easily respond to an outsider. The 'sacred books' have been adequately translated and are widely available, but again their inner meaning is difficult to teach, as they are the product of ages and of mental conditions widely separated from ours. The personal help and guidance, so important at this stage, can seldom be obtained without the risk of entangling oneself with a 'group' that may not fully satisfy the fastidious enquirer, and later on this entanglement may prove to be a

severe handicap. Even if one finds a sympathetic group and an attractive central personality, it is always a difficult task to accustom oneself to unfamiliar ways of living and of thought, particularly when the difference is as great as it is likely to prove in such a case as we are considering. As the conditions are, only the very earnest and patient can stay the course... and so, inspite of widespread interest in Indian 'spirituality' not much actual exploration is really attempted.

The present writer, as one who sees the problem acutely, but finds himself unable to change the situation, can only hope to offer a few useful hints. I am convinced that a few real Teachers always exist in India, and I am also convinced that contact with them is not a matter of lucky chance but of adequate preparation and right aspiration. Unfortunately, as far as known to the writer, no 'schools' for this preliminary training exist... and when this preparation is first attempted little outside guidance is available. There are; of course, numerous sincere and well meaning 'guides', who having perhaps obtained a little glimpse of the inner light and being engaged in cultivating it, are found ready to offer help; but usually such people are taken themselves too seriously and claim all the honours and privileges of a true Guru to which they are by no means entitled. Moreover, they are apt to prove narrow and limited in their intellectual outlook. The more advanced Teachers have too many 'disciples' to be able to give individual attention to a beginner. The books and written teachings are undoubtedly open to every body, but a beginner feels the need of personal guidance and interpretation. The support and encouragement of a 'school', a group of earnest-minded and adequately equipped people pursuing a common aim is hardly available to a person with 'modern' ways of life and thought. Hence this preliminary search is so difficult and discouraging in most cases.

But if one has persistence and patience, and *relies* upon one's inner forces, one finds oneself being gradually led to the desired goal, often by ways largely incomprehensible to the *intellect*. As the search becomes intense and earnest, the inner forces of life begin to play and to guide the personal self from within. Somehow or other one finds oneself led in time to a personality who can satisfy the inner urge and crystallise the inner longing, A true Guru will also be found *when the aspirant is ripe*, and is inwardly recognised. This is a great experience—hardly to be comprehended by anyone who has not gone through it; for, from this contact arises the true mystic knowledge—(*Adhyātma vidyā*), which shows that the path has at last been found.

(To be continued)

PARABLES RELATED BY SRI MA

An earthen jar tells its story

An earthen jar that had been given *prāna pratiṣṭhā* by a mahātmā, related the story of its life. "At first", it said, "I was part of the earth. I was happy and at perfect peace. But one day a man came with a spade and dug me out. Oh dear, it hurt terribly. Then he carried me away and left me in a heap in a corner. Now, I thought, I shall have peace again. But how badly mistaken I was. Early next morning I found that he had brought a hammer to crush me into fine powder. What dreadful suffering I underwent. However, having become powder, my hopes rose high. Now, I shall surely be left in peace. But no, more pain was in store for me. The next day, I was mixed with water and stamped on. When this ordeal was over I expected to have found lasting peace. In vain—is there no end to misery ? I was put on a potter's wheel and turned round and round at a maddening speed till I was formed into a jar. Now I felt quite certain that thereafter I should be left alone. But again I was wrong, for a new kind of torture was to be my lot. Every day I was exposed to the scorching rays of the sun and every night stored away in the house. This went on for some time, only to end in worse luck. Oh Hari, one fine morning I was put into fire and baked. Feeling sore all over, I comforted myself : What more can they do to me ? This no doubt marks the end of my tribulations and henceforth I shall enjoy undisturbed peace. Far from it. Lo and behold, I was subjected to a new kind of trial. I was taken to the market and many people came and banged on me to see whether I was without a hole. Finally, someone bought me and took me home. He filled me with Ganges water, placed me on a pedestal and performed *Prāna pratiṣṭhā* and this is how I am able to speak now'.

When in this manner one has matured and been made perfect, one will be filled with the Ganges (of wisdom) and awakened to Divine Life. Then one will be able to speak.

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The clever merchant

A rich merchant was preparing to go on a business tour. A thief, eager to rob the rich man, came to him. Dressed in fine clothes and pretending to be a merchant himself, he said : "I also have to travel the same route. It is not safe to venture forth alone when one is carrying money. Let us make the journey together". It was agreed.

In the morning before starting from the inn, the merchant would take out all his money, count it carefully and put it back into his pocket. He did this quite openly

while the thief was watching him and planning to steal the money that very night. After a tiring day, they settled down to rest till sunrise and soon the merchant was fast asleep, the thief had kept awake. He got up from bed and searched his companion's luggage, his bedding and his person. The merchant never opened his eyes, but went on snoring peacefully. Try as he might, the thief failed to discover a single farthing. This went on day after day. Every morning the merchant counted his money, making the thief's mouth water, but at night no money was to be found. Finally, in his despair the thief decided to question the merchant. "Friend", he said, "I must make a confession. I was deceiving you. I really sought your company to get hold of your money. Every night I tried my hardest, but all my efforts to lay my hands on your treasure proved futile, although I searched very thoroughly. Do please tell me, by what magic you kept your money hidden from me." It is quite simple, "replied the merchant, laughing heartily. "From the beginning I suspected your evil intentions, yet I was quite free from anxiety, because I knew that you could never guess my hiding place. Every night the money was lying safely under your own pillow. I was sure that this was the one place you would never search and so I was able to sleep most peacefully."

"God is within everyone," commented Mataji, "but man goes out in search of Him. This is what constitutes God's play and God's creation."

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The precious necklace

A precious necklace could be seen flashing from the bottom of a lake. Many dived, greedy for the beautiful ornament, but the strange thing was that when they reached the bottom, no necklace was to be found. Yet it was clearly visible for everyone from the edge of the lake, there was no mistaking. Finally, a mahātma passed by. He was consulted in the matter. "The necklace cannot be at the bottom of the lake. It must be somewhere else," he said. "What you see is its reflection in the water." He looked up and soon discovered the precious ornament hanging from a tree. A bird had picked it up from somewhere and deposited it there.

"The eternal," concluded Mataji, "is the treasure-house of real happiness. In the objects of the senses, this happiness is merely reflected. The individual, misled birth after birth by experiencing glimpses of this reflection, thinks that the real thing is to be found in the objects of the senses. So long as one believes that true happiness can be had in this world without searching within, one will remain in bondage."*

*. Extracts from the book *"As the flower sheds its fragrance."*

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

—P.C. Mehta

[THREE]

1. The significance of the four parts of the Vedas :

Vedas consist of —

- 1) 'Mantras' or hymns or prayers to various deities.
- 2) 'Brahmanas' consist of rituals in which these hymns are employed.
- 3) 'Aranyakas' in which rituals are replaced by meditations .
- 4) 'Upanisads' in which religious practices are transcended through abnegation.

In early '*brahmacharya*' years, that is when a neophyte approaches the teacher for learning, he is taught the 'mantra' portion and how to pray. In the second stage of his life called '*grihasthāsrama*' when he marries and sets up his household, he is taught the 'Brahmanas', that is how to perform daily ritual sacrifices while employing the very same hymns learnt earlier. In the third stage of his life called '*Vānaprastha*', when his sons have taken over worldly responsibilities, he is taught the wisdom of the 'Aranyakas', which consist of replacing rituals by meditation. In the fourth stage, when weary of worldly ways, he renounces worldly attachments and adopts the life of an anchorite called '*Sanyasa*', he is taught the final 'Upanisadic' truth of coming to self-knowledge through inner abnegation and thereby being free from the round of birth, death and rebirth.

This is how the Vedic wisdom is spread out in four stages to suit the development and needs of individuals. A person who has not developed enough at any stage, lingers on there. Thus the teachings of the Vedas do not constitute a slow unfoldment of philosophical wisdom but a unified whole arranged to suit individual development.

2. The antiquity of the Vedas:

The antiquity of the 'Vedas' is not in doubt. They are earlier even than the Papyrus rolls of Egypt. But no one can say with certainty when they were composed.

On linguistic considerations, while Prof. Max Muller arrives at 1200 B.C. as the latest date when Vedic hymns may have been composed, on the same considerations Dr. Haug fixes the date between 2400-2000. Dr. Winternitz, in his

History of Indian Literature, fixes the beginning of the Vedic period somewhere between 2000 & 2500 B.C. Its end would be around the time of Gautama Buddha i.e. 480 B.C

Tilak, the great Vedic scholar, fixes about 6000 B.C. as the probable date for the beginning of the Vedic period. He does so on astronomical considerations, since the Vedas contain numerous references to astronomical facts.

Between 6000 B.C. to 4000 B.C. the vernal equinox coincided with the asterism 'Punar-Vasu'. He calls this period 'Aditi' or Pre-Orion period. This is the traditional 'Satya Yuga',

During 4000 B.C. to 2500 B.C. the vernal equinox receded from 'Adra' to 'Krittika'. This he calls the Orion period, which is the traditional 'Treta Yuga'.

2500 B.C. to 1400 B.C. is the period when the vernal equinox coincided with the 'Krittika'. This is claimed as the traditional 'Dwapar Yuga'.

1400 B.C. onward is the period when the vernal equinox shifted to asterism 'Aswini'. This is the traditional 'Kali-Yuga'.

Dr. R. D. Ranade, an eminent authority on Vedic studies, in his book 'The Antiquity of the Vedas' suggests 3500 B.C. as the probable date for the beginning of the Vedic period.

3. The wisdom of the Vedas:

Probing deep into their own consciousness, the Rsis surpassed subtler existences and in search for the beginning of all creation found that the eternal principle behind the universe, which they called 'Brahman', and the essence of man called 'Atman' was the same. From this identity they probed into the journey of this divine principle away from its source and then back to it.

'Purusha Sukta' or 'The hymn of the Supreme Being' (R.V.X.90), represents the whole creation as being brought forth by 'Purusa', by self-limiting only a quarter of Himself. This is the great sacrifice, undertaken in the effulgence of the joy of creation. Thus, that part of Him which appears as the universe is but a very limited aspect, while what remains unmanifest is unlimited. The implication of this is that the unlimited and unmanifest aspect of Him is beyond all objective thought experience or awareness. At that level concept of time and space does not exist and hence the 'Brihadaranyaka Upanisad declares that the spaceless Being cannot possibly be divided, the division of him as manifest and unmanifest is only apparent and that 'Purusa' in the aspect that becomes the universe is as full and complete as the aspect that transcends the universe and remains as ever undimmed and unchanged, without undergoing in any way any diminution whatever'.

The spiritual power created by this act of self surrender is the all-pervading 'Brahman'. 'Brahman' in its dynamic role envelopes itself with its 'Maya' or 'Sakti', which is conscious energy and then is called 'God' or 'Isa' or 'Isvara'. When He withdraws this 'Maya' in Himself, He is 'Brahman'. Both these coexist.

'Brahman' means the 'Word' as well as 'He who grows great'. He is the 'Isa', who is the eternal principle behind the universe and the essence of man. As the essence of man, he is called 'Atman'. That Brahman is the essence of man is the crucial teaching of the Upanisads and epitomized in the well-known Vedic sayings *Aham Brahmasmi*, 'I am Brahman' and *Tat Tvam asi*, 'That thou art'.

In 'Nasadiya Sukta' or 'The Hymn of Creation' (R.V.X. 129), 'Brahman' is referred to as the 'One' or 'One Being'. This fundamental Reality is—

- i) the unchanging essence of both the man and the objective universe, as well as
- ii) the aspect of their ever changing movement: in other words, it is both spirit and the substance in which the spirit resides or which hides the spirit. It is thus both the material and efficient cause of creation. This is the causal aspect of manifestation, the effect aspect where of is the '*Hiranyagarbha*' or the 'Golden egg'.

'Hiranyagarbha' or the 'Golden egg' (R.V.X. 121), is in effect God as distinguished from *Isvara*, the causal God. Before the universe became manifest, there was '*Hiranyagarbha*'. He, being manifest, became the one Lord of the manifested universe. The image of the golden egg is the image of a ball of fire, which the Vedic sages recommended for meditation. This is the first image of a personal God. He is the cosmic or universal mind. Our individual minds are part of it.

The idea of the World-Soul related to the universe, as the soul of man is related to his body, is found in this concept of '*Hiranyagarbha*'. In the very first stanza of this Sukta, we find Him as the first born who created this Earth and Heaven and the Lord of all existence. This Being is twice referred to in the Svetasvatara Upanisad. (3.4 and 4.12).

In their meditation, the Vedic sages came to the level of '*Hiranyagarbha*', who is the effect God as distinguished from *Isvara*, the causal God. This is the cosmic or universal mind, our individual minds being a part of it.

When they probed further, they came to a stage when there was neither existence nor non-existence. This is accounted for in the 'Nasadiya Sukta'. Here the universe remained undistinguished from its cause, and in this cause there lurked the seed of creation, a remnant from the cycle of previous creation. Here the sages found the manifested existence hidden in the unmanifest. It was the power of

'Tapas' or austerity which brought unmanifested existence into manifestation. This power of 'Tapas', was His Will to create another universe. It is this Will which is the source of life and existence.

Sayanacarya (1400 A.D.) states that in this hymn is brought out the truth that God is the efficient as well as the material cause of the universe. Here also is the hypothesis that the universe, which is without a beginning or an end, alternates between the phases of dissolution and manifestation.

Here the God is described as 'Tad Ekam', or 'That One', the source from which the universe has arisen. Does this source deplete on being transformed into creation?

A further probe brings them to the '*Purusa Sukta*'. The source does not expend. It is as if only one fourth of the 'Purusa' on limiting Himself is transformed into creation. Three fourths of Him is unmanifest. As this source is both immanent and transcendent, there is no pantheism.

4. Brahman is 'Saccidananda'; Creation is the upwelling joy of Brahman:

The character of Brahman, this Absolute Reality is expressed by the classical phrase 'Saccidananda', meaning Being or Existing, Sentient in a spiritual sense and ever in a state of upwelling Joy.

Brahman along with the characteristics mentioned is beyond any logical formulations of thought but experienced by the Yogins and 'Rsis' or the enlightened ones because man in his true self is the spark of the divine.

In 'Brihadaranyaka Upanisad', in a famous dialogue between Yajnyavalka and his wife Maitreyi, it is remarked that 'From Ananda or joy springs this universe: in joy it has its being, and unto joy it returns'. Therefore, all manifestation is but an upwelling joy of 'Brahman'.

5. Srsti & Pralaya alternate each other:

Thus '*Brahman*' has the twofold aspect of manifestation (Srsti) and absorption (Pralaya). During dissolution or 'the great sleep', the universe exists only in a potential form. These two phases of 'Brahman' go on alternating eternally. The present universe is only one in a beginningless series, in which each succeeding universe is, as it were, a reincarnation of a previous one.

To the Hindu mind, creation is without beginning and end. One of the lines in the Vedic prayer that a Brahmin boy daily recites is: 'The sun and moon, the Lord created like suns and moons of previous cycles'.

(To be continued)

FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—'Kirpal'

Dehradun, Kishenpur Ashram, Sree Ma's Birthday Celebrations,
8-5-1959

Q. If someone's *Kundalini* (innate Divine Power) is aroused and one is asked what should one say ?

Sree Ma Baba (father), first arouse the *Kundalini*. To only say that my *Kundalini* has been aroused and I have attained *nirvikalpa samadhi* is not enough.

Q. Does one say something or not ?

Sree Ma It is not a question of whether you should reply or not . As there are mangoes (fruit) on a tree and when they ripen does the tree itself proclaim; the mangoes are ripe. When they ripen the colour of the mangoes undergoes a change. Those desirous of eating mangoes and having knowledge, seen that the mangoes are ripe and at that time pluck the fruit. Because otherwise the fruit will fall to the ground from where it has emerged. From the earth it has arisen and after appearing to the earth it returns. For these reasons after practising austerities, from which you have emerged, that will be revealed and then you will return to your original source. This is the only fact and no other.

Q. If sometimes the fruit ripens and is not noticed ?

Sree Ma By its qualities which appear by its outward appearance. To be able to recognise that state one has to have that knowledge and capability.

Q. Some great saints (*mahatmas*) remain unrevealed.

Sree Ma That is a stage on the path. The raising of the *kundalini* is but a stage on the path. Just as a child you need primary books, then pass the Matriculation, I. A and B.A. and your capabilities are changed. This body never has the *Kheyal* to insult anyone. You said some saints remain un-revealed. That is but a stage on the path. One has to go beyond all stages and beyond all actions. Only then can understand to whom He reveals Himself. There are innumerable paths. God is hidden within every one. There is only the One Lord and no other, the dearest of the dear. You alone are the repository of all knowledge and

goodness, the help of the helpless. You yourself calling to yourself, O Lord, where art thou.

Q. Why is it so?

Sree Ma It is God's privilege.

Q. Is God hidden within us?

Sree Ma God is hidden within you and God is ever revealed. There is God alone and nothing else and you say we have not seen God and where is God hidden ? God Himself is hidden within Himself and it is God calling out to Himself. There is God alone and nothing else. Where inside and outside exist, there God is hidden. Where there is neither inside or outside, God Himself is ever-revealed and there is nothing save God and to strive for anything save God, that is the veil. The real truth is, there is nothing save God. It is God's play (*Lila*). God alone is.

●

AHETUKI KRPĀ

[EXCERPT FROM MATAJI'S TALK ON GRACE]

Grace is by its very nature beyond cause or reason. When working, one reaps the fruit of one's actions. If, for instance, you serve your father and he, being pleased with your service, gives you a present, this would be called the fruit of action. One does something and receives something in return. But the eternal relationship that by nature exists between father and son, does surely not depend on any action. The Supreme Father, Mother and Friend—verily, God is all of these. Consequently, how can there be a cause or reason for His Grace? You are His, and in whatever way He may draw you to Him, it is for the sake of revealing Himself to you. The desire to find Him that awakens in man—who has instilled it into you? Who is it that makes you work for its fulfilment?

Thus you should try to arrive at the understanding that everything originates from Him. Whatever power, whatever skill you possess, —why, even you yourself—from where does everything arise? And does it not all have for purpose the finding of Him, the destroying of the veil of ignorance? Whatever exists has its origin in Him alone. So then, you must try to realize yourself. Are you master even of a single breath? To whatever small degree He makes you feel that you have freedom of action, if you understand that this freedom has to be used to aspire after the realization of Him, it will be for your good. But if you regard yourself as the doer, and God as being far away, and if, owing to His apparent remoteness, you work for the gratification of your desires, it is wrong action. You should look upon all things as manifestations of Him. When you recognize the existence of God, He will reveal Himself to you as compassionate, or gracious, or merciful, in accordance with your attitude towards Him at the time. Just as, for example, to the humble He becomes the Lord of the Humble.

If you say, "He is immutable, yet He also acts", you call Him the doer, when in reality He is actionless. Since your ego sees itself as the doer, you think of Him as equally performing action.

Of course, He is whatever you take Him to be. On the other hand, where THAT is—Just think—who is to become the doer of what action, and upon what is He to act? He walks without feet, He sees without eyes, He hears without ears, and eats without a mouth—in whatever way you may describe Him, so He is.

When a *sādhaka* starts worshipping a *vigraha* of his Beloved, he will in the course of his practice attain to a condition in which the form of his Beloved is beheld, wherever his eyes may fall. Next he comes to realize: "All other deities are contained in my Beloved." He sees that everyone's Lord, in fact all things, are contained in his own *Iṣṭa*, and that his *Iṣṭa* also dwells in all deities, as indeed, in everything. The *sādhaka* comes to feel: "As my Lord resides within me, so He, who is present within everyone else, is truly the same Lord. In water and on land, in trees, shrubs and creepers—everywhere in the whole universe abides my Beloved. Further, all the various forms and modes of being that we behold, are they not expressions of my Beloved? For there is none save Him, he is smaller than the smallest, and greater than the greatest."

Actuated by your various inborn tendencies, you each worship a different deity. The true progress in one's spiritual experience depends on the sincerity and intensity of one's aspiration. The measure of a person's spiritual advance will be reflected in the manifestations that are vouchsafed to him of his *Iṣṭa*, who will by no means remain inaccessible or separate from His devotee, but let Himself be contacted in an infinite variety of ways. Conditioned though you be, you will find the All within you, and on the other hand, be able to grasp that your own innate tendencies are also part of this All. What has been said here, represents one point of view. You cannot dissociate yourself from the Whole.

The multifarious kinds of beasts, birds, men and so forth—what are they all? What are these varieties of shapes, of modes of being, what is the essence within them? What really are these everchanging forms? Gradually, slowly, because you are rapt in the contemplation of your Beloved, He becomes revealed to you in every one of them; not even a grain of sand is excluded. You realize that water, earth, plants, animals, birds, human beings, are nothing but forms of your Beloved. Some experience it in this manner—realization does not come to everyone in the same way. There are infinite possibilities. Consequently, the specific path along which—for any particular person—the Universal will reveal itself in its boundlessness, remains concealed from the average individual.

What you have just heard in the discourse on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* about the universal body of the Lord, which comprises all things—trees, flowers, leaves, hills, mountains, rivers, oceans, and so forth, —a time will come, must come, when one actually perceives this all-pervading Universal Form of the One. The variety of His shapes and guises is infinite, uncountable, without end. "He who is multishaped, who constantly creates and destroys, these are His forms, He is the One whom I adore." To the degree that you grow in the ever fuller and wider

recognition of this truth, you will realize your oneness with each of these numberless forms. In this immensity there are diverse shapes, diverse modes, manifested in diverse ways, without end, without number—and yet there is end and also number. When a *sādhaka* enters this state, he becomes conscious of the perpetual transformation of all forms and moods. He awakens to true understanding, that is to say, he comes to realize that the Supreme Himself manifests as the power of understanding. When the current of one's thinking that was directed towards worldly matters, is reversed and turned inwards, the One Himself becomes revealed as the 'secret skill': Look at the everchanging world: where what exists at one moment is non-existent the next, where being is continually entering into non-being—who then is this non-being? Even the non-existent exists.

In this connection it must be said that, if one wants to find Truth, everything will have to be realized as it is in its own place, without choosing one thing rather than another. It is a Kingdom without end, in which even, what is discerned as non-existence is equally an expression of the One. In *Cinmaya*, the purely spiritual world, all forms—whatever they be—are ever eternal. Therefore, simultaneously and in the same place, there is non-existence as well as existence, and also neither non-existence nor existence—and more of the kind if you can proceed further !

Very well, just as ice is nothing but water, so the Beloved is without form, without quality, and the question of manifestation does not arise. When this is realized, one has realized one's Self. For to find the Beloved is to find my Self, to discover that God is my very own, wholly identical with myself, my innermost Self, the Self of my Self. Then, according to the exigence of time and circumstance, various possibilities may take effect; as for example, the revelation of *mantras* and even of the entire *Vedas* by the ancient *Ṛṣis*, who were seers of *mantras*. All this will occur in consonance with the individual karma and inner disposition of the person concerned.

When a *sādhaka* realizes what form and formlessness essentially are, it is indeed a consummate Realization. He comes to know what *bhāva* is, the inner relation of form to the *Śabda Brahman*, numerous types of language—endless in variety—and he also realizes language as *Śabda Brahman*. Sounds, numberless in kind, manifest themselves before him, each in its own characteristic visual shape: this is so where all forms become visible. All the same, form is really void: one sees that freedom from form means the realization that form itself is the void. In this way the world reveals itself as void, before merging into the Great Void (*Mahāśūnya*). The void that is perceived within the world is a part of *prakṛtī*, and therefore still form. From this void one will have to proceed to the Great Void.

It is the perception of the world, based upon the identification of yourself with body and mind, that has all along been the source of your bondage. A time will come, when this kind of perception will give way before the awakening of universal consciousness, which will reveal itself as an aspect of Supreme Knowledge. When this Knowledge of the Essence of things has come what happens to the Essence Itself ? Ponder over this! When insight into form and the formless dawns in its boundlessness, everything will be uprooted. On transcending the level where form, diversity, manifestation exist, one enters into a state of formlessness. What can this be called ? Godhood, the *Paramātmā* Himself. As the individual self becomes gradually freed from all fetters, which are nothing but the veil of ignorance, it realizes its oneness with the Supreme Spirit (*Paramātmā*) and becomes established in its own Essential Being.

Now to another aspect of the matter. Everyone has his own path. Some, advancing along the line of Vedānta, find, as they progress, the path of a Ṛṣi opening out for them. To others also, whose spiritual practices, worship, or yoga, proceed with the help of images and other intermediary aids, the same path of a Ṛṣi may become disclosed. Yet others, guided by voices and locutions from the unseen, at first hear these voices as audible sounds, but gradually hear them in perfect language, conveying the full significance of what is expressed. By and by it becomes evident that these voices arise from one's own Self, and that they are He Himself, manifesting in that particular way. No matter what be anyone's line of approach, in due course the path of a Ṛṣi or a similar path may open out for him in one manner or another. But at what time this will occur and to whom, is beyond the ken of the ordinary person's understanding.

(To be continued)

DECEPTION

—Devyani Mehta

Particles of sand
And dew drops,
Dust in a snow storm,
Rusty reflections in a shining mirror,
Husk on polished grains,
Salt in sweet honey,
Weeds in the garden,
Blazing fire in ice,
Tears seeking laughter,
True lies
Wandering
Amongst
Deserts and oceans,
Are
In love
with
A mirage.
Why ?
Because
Hypocrisy always pretends,
Lust always desires,
Greed always envies,
Anger always deceives,
Pride is always false,
Desire is a devil.
Always
Wanting,
Wanting,
Wanting,
Pleasure brings misery,
Relationships are lies,
Truth is an eternal child.

The Past
And
The Future
Are
The timeless present
Forever
True beauty
Recognizes
itself,
Rejecting
all others,
loving,
merciful,
compassionate,
gentle,
unchanging
with
time,
place,
circumstance,
situation,
Thorns become roses,
Ashes turn to sandal wood,
Torrent of ungrateful tears,
form
Deep floods
when
True lies
rest
at
Beauty's feet.
At long last,
the rains
have
consumed
the
Forest fire.



MA—THE ALL-POWERFUL

—P.N. Nagu

The ways of the Almighty are unpredictable. Mankind, it appears, is only a medium through which messages of truth and falsehood are projected. One has only to understand them. *Dharma* and *Adharma* are two divine and ungodly parts of it.

I am, in all humility, narrating my dream, which I had on the night of 1st Oct. 99, that happened to be my wife, Madhu's birthday. She is one of the most ardent devotees of Ma.

In my dream I found myself running for my life from an evil spirit, in human form. I found myself in real danger and at that moment I thought of Madhu and in turn her *bhakti* of total surrender to Ma. And there and then I found myself in front of Ma. She was sitting on a takhat, in her usual white attire, in most serene attitude with a divine smile on her lips. She was giving discourse to a gathering of about hundred devotees. Ma looked at me for a moment and enquired as to why am I feeling so distressed. I said, "Ma, one evil man is troubling me and is after my blood". Ma said, "you do not worry now, sit down." I did so. And lo and behold, what do I see. Ma's cosmic form emerged from her body. The form of Ma that appeared was that of a young and vibrant Goddess with a shining aura, wearing a gorgeous and colourful saree. This cosmic form of Ma went on a high pedestal and stood there in posture of a Goddess. In the meantime this evil form of man appeared. He saw Ma and immediately stood like a stone. Ma looked at that man, and pointed a finger at him. All I could make out is that she warned him in her own divine words, not to bother me any more words or else he will suffer the consequences. The evil man said a few words which I could not make out and then meekly came and sat with the devotees. Ma's cosmic form then came back and merged in her body.

All this time Ma had continued with her discourse to devotees. None of the devotees realised the miracle that Ma performed. That's where the dream ended.

It is quite clear that Ma with her blessings has averted an impending danger to me and my family. I firmly believe that Ma's *kripa* and benevolence on me is greatly attributed to Madhu on account of her unflinching faith in Ma.

I have always been convinced of kindness and magnanimity of Ma. She took an insignificant devotee like me to such a high pedestal, by not only showering her blessing, but giving her darshan as well.

In the above context, I would like to quote extract from one of my articles — Ma the Omnipresent - which was published in a journal. The extract reads as follows :

I worship, thee, but little
I endeavour to serve thee through my actions
I feel thy form around me
But, I know thee, as one nearest to 'God'.

Ma - I am as much a sinner as others
For I am not thy true disciple.
But bless me- bless me- bless me.
As you are the one and only magnanimous Ma-Ma-Ma
True incarnation of Goddess Durga.

We pray that Ma continues her immense *Kripa* on all mankind. The message is that " have complete faith in Ma, that would lead you from darkness to light and take you to path of Truth." Her protective umbrella will always be on your head. We fall at Ma's feet for her blessing, in her full glory.