

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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Ma in a highly ecstatic mood during the Durga Puja in Bombay in October, 1966, with Didima sitting on her right.

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URGENT CIRCULAR

All devotees are desired to make a special note that the next *Purna Kumbh Mela* is going to be held in Allahabad in January, 2001.

The principal bathing days are as under :

1. *Paus Sankrānt* - 14.1.2001
2. *Mauni Amāvashyā* - 24.1.2001
3. *Vasant Panchami* - 29.1.2001

Those who are desirous of attending and also staying in our Ashram camp in the Mela ground are requested to intimate in details the exact period of their stay alongwith actual number of persons accompanying them to enable us to hire tents etc. in advance and make other arrangements. All this information should reach the undersigned latest by 15th November, 2000.

—Panu Brahmachari
Mata Anandamayee Ashram
Bhadaini, Varanasi-221001

MATRI-VANI

Where no question of birth and rebirth exists, no question of being bound, this surely, is called eternal.

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It is movement as that of the ocean (*Samudra*), He *expressing* Himself (*sva-mudrā*). The waves are but the rising and the falling, the undulation of the water and it is water that forms into waves (*taranga*), limbs of His own-body (*Tār anga*), water is the essence.

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You call transient, that which never stays fixed anywhere, do you not ? But what does not stay? Who does not stay? Who comes ? Who goes? Change, transformation - what are they ? WHO? grasp the root of all this ! Everything passes away, that is to say, death passes away - death dies .

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He himself as action; He Himself as form, for this reason He is called *Sākāra* (with form). He Himself as Qualities (*guna*) . Therefore, He is called *Saguṇa* (with qualities) where the Lord (*Isvara*) or anything pertaining to this Divine Splendour is manifested, He Himself (*Svayam*) appears in action, yet ever remaining the non-doer. He as such is the Essence of Absolute Truth.

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The beauty of it is that man's very nature is to long for Reality, Supreme Wisdom, Divine joy; as it is his nature to return home when the play is over. The stage of the play is His, the play is His as well, and so are those who take part in it, friends and fellow beings, everything is He alone.

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It is your nature to crave for the revelation of that which Is, for the eternal, for Truth, for limitless knowledge. This is why you do not feel satisfied with the evanescent, the untrue, with ignorance and limitation. Your true nature is to yearn for the revelation of what you ARE.

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At a certain level one sees glimpses, sparks as it were of Reality, this also is one of the states, One cannot understand what one perceives and therefore is bewildered. There are indeed states and stages without number, The power of fire to burn is one and undivided, but how can there possibly be wholeness and completeness in the so-called glimpses or sparks that one gets ? Only where that wholeness is, there, the question of division does not arise.

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You should understand that if a veil of ignorance has been burnt or dissolved, as it were, the seeker will, for a certain period of time, have unobstructed vision. Afterwards it becomes blurred again. All the same what will be the result of such a glimpse? Ignorance will have become less dense, and true knowledge gained greater prominence; in other words, by the momentary removal of the veil, the individual's bonds will have been loosened.

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In the Kingdom of forgetting one forgets. So long as you are identified with the body, it is your very nature to call out : give, give, You say 'give' ! because you are in want. Where want exists, there must needs be error and ignorance; and where error and ignorance abide, there will most certainly be forgetting. When in the midst of all this you practise *sadhana* in order to realize yourself, or rather, when by God's Grace *sadhana* comes about, - for to be able to engage in *sadhana* is itself the grace of God — There after having worked through layers and layers of ignorance, you discover: "I am in fact the whole". I am — this is why there are trees and plants, and everything that exists, however manifold. Every single form is in fact I.

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CONVERSATION WITH WESTERN DEVOTEES

—Vijayananda

[Nine]

SADHANA

Question - (A Spanish young lady, whose mother's family is from Avila) I am back here after a year, as if not a single day has gone by. Why is it so ?

Answer : This is the place where God alone is enough, like in the famous poetry of St. Teresa of Avila.

Question - (In tears) I am not sincere enough in my sadhana.

Answer - Sincerity is a question of discernment and understanding, not of effort. If you feel that sadhana is the most central thing, then you will find it. For me it is not an effort. If you have a taste of the experience of true meditation, that will help you a lot. But while you wait for that experience, try to practice regularly. Sometimes, flashes can come, even outside of meditation. I had one when I was a student. I felt that it was that, and that was the only interesting thing.

Question - What are the signs of progress in sadhana ?

Answer- The experience of a great inner bliss.

Question - Isn't it selfish to spend my time doing sadhana with the intention of gaining bliss for myself > Shouldn't we be trying to become selfless and spend time trying to serve others to made them happy?

Answer - In the end, realisation destroys the ego. Even if at the beginning the motivation for starting sadhana was selfish, the practice purifies. Regarding serving others: it is like a student in medicine. He has to spend all his time for several years studying so he can become a doctor. During that time, he does not have time to spare for helping others. But after that time, he comes back and is able to treat people, which he wouldn't have been able to do if he hadn't studied.

Question - Why is the mind and people, so difficult to change ?

Answer- *Tāmas* is the strongest force in this world. That is because there is this reversed quality, which is the symmetry of the Self, that change is so difficult. The Self is also a base which doesn't move.

Question - (A member of a French group in the ashram for a short visit): Can we combine worldly pleasures with the spiritual path ?

Answer- (Vehemently) No! God is jealous, as it says in the Bible. We must consider that it is only the spiritual path which is really important. That's why I'm here. However, when we are in this world, the spiritual path consists of acting with as little ego as possible and in offering the results of one's work to God.

Question - There is a spiritual teacher who says, there are seasons for sadhana. A season to gather, for instance, and a winter season, to rest. What do you think?

Answer- There is no season to rest in sadhana. We must always be ready to work for spiritual progress.

Question - Are there some paths in sadhana which are shorter than others ?

Answer- The paths in sadhana are like those in the mountains. The one that seems the shortest can in fact be the longest and the most dangerous, because we could be facing cliffs and unsurmountable obstacles. It is better to follow the beaten track. When we see that the grass has been walked on so much in one place, that means that many people have come this way, and that the path leads somewhere.

Question - How to realise our short comings ?

Answer- Spiritual seekers usually have trouble realising their shortcomings. If we help them by telling them, they can get angry with us, sometimes for life. The guru puts them in situations where their hidden defects come to the surface. The very fact that you are conscious that you have shortcomings is itself a rare quality. But let go of your inferiority complex. In the end, it is only you who can change your inner self and dissolve your defects.

Question - What is the relationship between ritual and devotion?

Answer- The more ritual there is, the less devotion there is. Rituals are not ends in themselves. They are only there to awaken devotion, but people forget that and they act automatically. The true prayer is done from within, in a completely unified state, just as Moses did when he asked for his sister to be cured from leprosy. He said only five words, of one syllable, "El nah refa nah la", My God, make her be healed', and his prayer was granted.

BASIC QUALITIES

Question - Is it really useful to follow completely the *yamas*, *niyamas* and the monastic rules?

Answer- If we follow the rules, we must follow them completely, otherwise it is like a leaking dam, it will end up breaking down. In this case many as well do left-handed tantrism, *vāmāchāra*. All the rules are inverted. But we are talking about a very dangerous path that must be followed under the direction of an authentic guru. But just by following the *yamas niyamas* we can obtain a purification of the mind which is such that it can lead us to liberation.

In response to a sadhu who was criticising some members of the ashram.

A. Do not criticise others, because in the end, you don't have a bond with them, you are not their guru. You can at the most criticise children or brahmacharis who are under your responsibility. As long as we are not realised, we should not criticise anyone. And when we are, we act from within, and therefore we don't have the need to criticise either. We should not criticise others, because we cannot really put ourselves in their place. They usually have motivations which we don't see. There was a jewish sage who lived not long ago and who wrote a whole book against criticising others. His work is based on the beginning of a psalm which we could translate with this : 'Where is the one who desires life? Prevent your tongue from saying evil and your lips from calumniating people. Once, when the author was going to speak at a conference in a neighbouring town, he was travelling with a man who did not know him and who was actually going to listen to the author's talk. Out of humility, the author started to criticise himself without saying who he was. As a result, the traveller became furious and spat in his face. When they reached the conference, the traveller realised who he was, and apologised. The author concluded that we must never criticise anyone, not even ourselves. There is another story of the same sage. A student, who was a friend of the Rabbi had been arrested by the Tsarist police. The sage went to the police station with so much fervour that the police suspected him of being an accomplice of the student and arrested him as well. At the time of judgement, the barrister told the judge that he had heard the following story about him. A thief was running away from his house with his belongings. The sage ran after him saying: 'I'll give you everything you have taken, please don't have a bad conscience.'" The judge asked the barrister: "Do you believe this story?" "Certainly not! And you? Do you believe it?" "I don't know. But what I do know with certainty is that such stories are not told about you and I liberate the suspect."

When asked to give his blessing to a lawyer—

A. The best blessing is to follow dharma completely. Don't lie. There are different levels in the observation of *yamas niyamas*. There is the story about Buddha in one

of his previous incarnations, when he was a sadhu. One day, he was meditating under a tree, facing a beautiful pond with lotus flowers. He got up to smell one of the lotuses, but the spirit of the tree rebuked him, saying: "If you do this, you are stealing something from the lotuses". So the sadhu sat back down. A little while later, a peasant came and going into the pond took all the lotuses, tearing them all out of the pond. The sadhu was astonished and said to the tree spirit: "Why don't you say anything to him?" The tree spirit replied, "What at your level would have been a very big fault, at his level is not a fault at all".

Question - (A beginner in meditation who had started meditating 6 hours a day and was experiencing anger)

Answer- We shouldn't meditate too intensely if we haven't previously purified the mind. Meditation intensifies everything. We must look at the root of the emotions. Ultimately, what is anger but a swelling of the ego?

Question - The Greek Fathers advised tears to fight anger.

Answer- Yes, this is the behaviour of the helpless child, one who depends completely on the mother.

Question - How do we know if we are progressing in meditation?

Answer- By seeing how we have mastered the main negative emotions. It is, for example, more important to master anger than to go through hours and hours of intensive meditation. Meditation is only a means to goal. The control of the mind. If you are interrupted in meditation, and you get angry, it is best to stop meditation. It is said that a samurai went to see the master Hakuin to ask him questions about heaven and hell. "Who are you ?" asked the master. "A samurai", he replied with some pride. "A samurai ? But nobody wants your services to fight". Furious, the samurai want to take his sword. "Your sword ?" said the master, "but it is made of wood." Further angered, the samurai brandished his sword threateningly in Hakuin's direction. Hakuin looked at him and said, "Here opens the door to Hell." Stupefied by the perfect quietness of the master, the samurai fell on his knees in front of him. "Here opens the door to Paradise", said Hakuin.

Question - You said we must face fear. But can we face all our fears ?

Answer- Yes, of course, we must face all of them.

Question - It is possible to do sadhana and still enjoy worldly pleasures ?

Answer- Its a question of intensity. It is like two children on the way home from school. One is not in such a hurry to see his mother, so he looks around him on the way, and stops to gather flowers. The other is eager to see her and runs straight home.

PRACTICE

Question - Are there citation in Hindu scriptures which seem fundamental to you for sadhana ?

Answer- Yes, for example in the Upanishads it is said that when the knots of the hearts are united, the mortal becomes immortal. And it also talks about the eye which turns within itself to look within. This is the very definition of meditation. In the Bhagavad Gita also we find some precious help. For example, it is written about the qualities of the sage: 'beyond praise and blame, in silence'. I interpret this juxtaposition as a key to really go beyond praise and blame, by silence. In another place it is said, beyond pleasure and pain, to be in the Self, is an indication of doing sadhana.

Question - How can I calm my mind ? It seems impossible.

Answer- Its not that difficult when you know how to take care of it. It is because you think it is impossible that it becomes difficult. Nisargadatta Maharaj says that the mind is like the hands or the feet. We must be able to let them rest when we don't need them. Another way is to recite the mantra very rapidly without any interruption, as Mother Krishnabai used to say. Also visualising dissolving in the light of the divinity. Silence is also a great help. Especially at the beginning of sadhana, when we must learn how to control the waves of emotions. Otherwise we panic, and we feel we are drowning. We try a lot of varied techniques, but when we have the beginning of an awakening, we realise that our own emotional attitude or bhava, is what provokes uncontrolled movements of energy. We try to master them by force, which creates a counter wave, which only contributes to agitating the mind more and more.

Question - What is more important, effort or grace ?

Answer- Ma used to say that we are rewarded to the extent of our effort. We must do all we can, and then whatever happens, happens. On the other hand, there is also grace without cause, which depends on nothing, but becomes only rarely.

Question - Can too intense a desire become an obstacle ?

Answer- Yes, that can happen. There is the story of a man who had invited a friend to his house for a feast. He waits for him at the door, and when the friend arrives, he is so happy to see him he stands there hugging him and talking to him and forgets to invite him into his house. In the end, the friend is not able to get into the house. However, there is no need to be afraid of the emotions. It is like a storm on a lake. If we try to calm the waves with our hands, instead of letting them become quiet by themselves, we will only create more waves, and it will become a vicious circle that never ends.

Question - I sometimes feel I am regressing in my sadhana. What can I do ?

Answer- Be like Saddam Hussein-celebrate the victories and forget the defeats.. Progression in sadhana is rather through a series of ups and downs than a continuous line upwards.

Question - (An adolescent) What should I do if I commit a fault ?

Answer- First, you must ask for forgiveness; second, you must try to repair it if it is possible; third, you must take a resolution never to do it again. Fourth, and this is probably the most important, you must forget all about it.

Question - How do we go beyond fear and depression ?

Answer- Since my childhood, I got into the habit of facing danger. During the period of my hermitage, there were dangers in the form of ferocious beasts and bandits, but I had developed the habit of not letting the vibrations of fear appear in my mind. During the war, soldiers know that a good way to fight fear is to attack. As far as depression is concerned, the best attitude, when it comes up, is just to observe it. What causes perturbation in this type of emotion is that we think it is going to last forever. We think, the depression will never leave up, and we will be displeased during our entire life and have to continue in this condition. But you must remember that this is all part of the play of the three *gunas*, and that *tāmas* will pass after a few days, so do not worry about it more than necessary.

Question - What is the best encouragement for sadhana ?

Answer- It is to come back to the fact that realizing the Self is an incredible fortune. When, through discrimination, we understand that it is the only thing that is worth anything, and that we have eternity in front of us, then even if success takes a thousand years, it doesn't matter.

(To be continued)

THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE MIRACULOUS

—Dr. Bithika Mukerji

Mataji's life was full of extraordinary incidents. Manifestations of yogic powers became the norm, rather than otherwise. It would be wrong, however, to draw lines of demarcation between stages of Mataji's life. She did not become different from what she had been, but there was, at that time, an accentuation and proliferation of what ordinarily is called the miraculous. Mataji has said, "I had the *kheyāla* to be like a *sādhaka*, so it was but natural that the characteristics attending intense *sādhanā* occur spontaneously. The earnest *sādhaka* does not attach any importance to these powers which develop in him. He may not make any deliberate use of them. But all the same people may derive great benefit from the abundance which overflows his conscious efforts at *sādhanā*."

People from far and near came to Shahbagh to beg her to cure physical ailments. Healing would be effected by a glance, a touch, the gift of a flower, or in a hundred other ways. Instances of such cures are too numerous to be recorded in this volume. In fact, every devotee will be able to relate from his own experience one or two or more of such examples. As in all other matters, Mataji's way of helping people was unspectacular but real.

One day a very sick child was brought to Shahbagh. The child had lost the use of her limbs and could not move by herself. Mataji was chopping betel-nuts. She tossed one of the pieces a little in front of the child saying, 'catch'. The little girl with great difficulty made an effort and picked up the piece of nut. After some days the mother came and reported gratefully that her daughter had recovered and was slowly regaining the use of her limbs.

Ordinarily, Mataji did not attempt to heal anybody. On the contrary, she would say, "Pray to God. He will do what is best for the patient. You cannot know if physical recovery is desirable for him. The only thing for you to do is to get the best medical advice available and look after the patient as well as you possibly can. For the rest you must put your trust in God." Mataji would sometimes be compelled to do or say something because of Bholanath, who was always greatly moved by the suffering of people.

On occasions someone insisted on her visiting the patient, in the belief that he would recover if she did so. In such cases Mataji had her own way of prophesying the future. She would look about her and ask her companions, "What do you say?"

He is asking me to go because he thinks the patient will pull through. Will it be so?" The companions would naturally answer in the affirmative emphatically. She would then continue, "Who knows, since all of you say so, perhaps he will recover." In such cases it was seen that the patient invariably got well. Didi says, "Although we had all come to know Mataji's peculiar way of foretelling the future, we would, at times, unaccountably hesitate, stammer and fail to give an emphatic reply in the affirmative. Mataji would observe, 'Why are you hesitating like this? Then perhaps the patient won't regain health'. And so it happened invariably."

One day a lady¹, who was a frequent visitor, came to request Mataji to pay a visit to her son who was seriously ill. Mataji continued with the usual pursuits, seemingly not paying any attention to what was being said to her. The lady, therefore, appealed to Bholanath, knowing that Mataji would not disoblige him. When Bholanath spoke to Mataji about it, she at once declared, "What is the use? The boy won't recover." On hearing this, another devotee, who was present, remarked, "In that case Mataji need not go. The family should be told what Mataji has said."² Nobody liked to tell the parents what Mataji had said. Bholanath had already promised the lady that he would bring Mataji; so they went to see her son. After a few days, the lady again came to Mataji to beseech her to save her child. Mataji replied, "Even if I tell you what to do, you will not be able to carry it out." The mother promised to follow instructions faithfully. The simple instructions were, not to allow the boy to get up from bed for a certain number of days, probably eighteen. Immediately after this, the boy started improving slowly, but all of a sudden his illness took a turn for the worse. On seeing the mother again, Mataji said, "What is to be done? He got up on Monday." The mother however insisted that the boy had not left his bed at all. He died a few days later and his mother lost all faith in Mataji. After quite some time she came to know that on the specific day the boy had actually got up from bed and had come out on the balcony to see a passing procesion. Full of remorse, the bereaved mother came to Mataji who now had to comfort her in her double sorrow.

On occasions, Mataji, of her own accord, would go out of her way to cure people. One day she was strolling about in the field outside Shahbagh. A cab drove by, Mataji asked her companion to signal to the driver. When he drew near, she climbed in. The cabman asked, "Where will you go?" Mataji answered, "To your

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1. The wife of Atul Datta,
 2. He was actuated by the thought that people would later say that the patient had died inspite of Mataji's visit. Needless to point out that neither Mataji nor Bholanath were concerned with this aspect of the matter.

house." The man was a Mohammedan. Without saying another word he drove to his home. On arrival, they found an old man lying on his death-bed. The relations were weeping. Mataji asked her companion to fetch some sweets. These were distributed amongst the family and neighbours. Mataji then came away. Mataji's companion took pains to find out that the old man had recovered from what appeared to be his last illness.

At times, Mataji would take upon herself the illness of others. The person who had asked for a cure would recover, but Mataji would suffer from the disease for a few days or a few hours.

Didi one day came to Shahbagh to find Mataji suffering from a sudden cold and cough. On enquiry, she discovered that Pramatha Nath's young son Pratul, who was due to appear for an examination, had felt a severe cold coming on and had prayed to Mataji to prevent it. On that occasion Pratul escaped from any inconvenience due to a cold.

Such incidents taught Bholanath and others not to ask Mataji to cure sick people. They found that to her, life and death were the same. She would say, "Don't ask me to cure anybody. Do you ever pray that somebody should fall ill? Everybody must work out his own destiny. If obstructions are deliberately placed in his path, the results may be anything but beneficial. I myself have no objection to paying a visit to anybody. Perhaps the dying one need this (that is, Mataji's Presence) just as much as those who may survive."

In this connection, an incident may be related illustrating Mataji's attitude towards physical pain. This happened much later, in 1954. "A lady from a distant country", writes Atmananda³, "came last summer to see Mataji in Almora. One of the questions she asked was, since ailments are the results of our actions in this or in former lives, was it advisable to consult doctors and take medicines? Rather was it not more appropriate to bear whatever came to us without interfering with its natural course? Mataji replied that it was right to do everything in our power to keep our bodies fit and healthy, for an ailing person could hardly expect to engage in *sādhana*. All the same, it was certainly necessary to learn to endure pain, since suffering cannot always be avoided. In such cases, we should accept it as one of the ways in which He manifests Himself.

"Several months later the same lady badly fractured her ankle. This happened in the mountains, miles away from a doctor. To make things worse, heavy rain set in and she had to wait for three days before she could be carried down in a *ḍāñḍi*.

3. Ananda-Varta, Vol. III, no. 2, p. 151.

The pain was acute. The lady kept awake all night but, remembering what Mataji had told her, she concentrated on Divine Love in the form of Christ and Mataji. To her own amazement she forgot all about her pain and felt well and refreshed the next morning. She remained in a state of bliss throughout those three days. Later she declared that She would not have missed this experience for anything in the world. Was this what Mataji had meant, when she said, we had to learn to endure sufferingj when it came?

"After that whenever she felt any pain, the lady tried to concentrate in a similar manner, but was never able to get again into that elevated state of mind, On meeting Mataji this year she wanted the cause of her failure explained. 'Your pain was not severe enough', said Mataji with a smile."

Devotees relate many instances of inadequate quantities of food, clothes and flowers just sufficing for the congregation amongst whom they had to be distributed. Many instances are heard about calamities having been averted and cherished desires fulfilled in spite of seemingly impossible conditions. Several volumes many be filled with the narration of such events. It is a favourite topic of conversation with devotees, not merely to harp on the yogic powers of Mataji, but also to strengthen each other's faith and share the joyful experience of receiving her *Kṛpā* (grace).

The atmosphere of the miraculous", writes Vijayananda (Dr. A. Weintrob), "around Mother has impressed me ever since the very first day that I met her. It is a daily experience in our relationship with the Mother.

"Mother can call down or stop rain at will. When she toured South India in 1952, Madras Province had been suffering from acute scarcity of rain for a prolonged period. I was present when a delegation came and prayed to Mother to bring about rainfall. Subsequently, abundant rainfall was reported in the newspapers as due to Mataji's *kṛpā*."

Many who come in contact with her have been impressed by the fact that Mataji is able to answer an unspoken thought or desire. a typical personal experience may be recorded here⁴. "It was in Solan, near Simla, where we had been invited to take part in a *Nāma-yajña*⁵ in the presence of Anandamayi Ma. We went in a batch from Simla on a Saturday and did our best till about 9 o'clock in the night. We felt tired and moved into a room situated at some distance from the temple of Śiva where the ceremony was being held. There we spread ourselves out to rest our aching limbs.

4. The narrator is late S. Sarkar, J.C.S., who at that time did not know Mataji well.

5. A function devoted to singing of *kirtana* according to the rules and directions laid down in *Chaitanya.Charitāmṛta*, a Vaisnava scripture.

It was a dark night and the sky was overcast with clouds. Soon a very heavy downpour followed. We were smoking and talking and our talk naturally centered round Anandamayi Ma. One of our party wanted to convince us that she had supernatural powers. A disbeliever in miracles, I jeered at him and blurted out, 'Better keep your cock and bull story to yourself. If your Anandamayi Ma is anywhere near about the position you ascribe to her, let her appear before us here and now, and I shall then believe your stories.' I had hardly finished when we heard a bang from outside. The door, which we had closed to prevent rain-water coming in, fell ajar and, believe it or not, there appeared before us a figure robed in white, thoroughly drenched from head to foot. We were startled by a loud laughter which we knew to be Anandamayi Ma's. Before we could collect our wits, the figure had vanished into the darkness. It was still raining cats and dogs, but we did not mind. We sprang to our feet and ran out in the torrential rain to the temple, to be told that Anandamayi Ma had gone out unnoticed and had just returned, thoroughly drenched."

This aspect of Mataji's life has been expressed very clearly by Vijayananda : "Something that has struck me from the very first day is the atmosphere of the miraculous in which one moves when one is with her. Let me explain : In Europe (and no doubt here also) by the word 'miracle' one conceives of a breaking away from the laws of nature, something that strikes one as impossible, as absurd. But this is only its crude objective side. Its subtle, subjective aspect is quite different. What does it matter to me if a certain yogi has walked across the waters or flown through the air ? The real miracle is, when that which one needs, which one desires keenly or feebly, comes at the very moment it is needed. And still better when it comes, not only as one desired it, but as one would have loved to see it in the innermost depth of one's heart. "Coincidence", I thought at first. But a coincidence that goes on repeating itself daily cannot be called so anymore. And all this happens without apparently violating the laws of nature— for the Lord has no need to break any laws : He is the Law. Should I give examples ? No, for those who do not know her, will not believe me and those who have lived near her have already understood."⁶

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6. Mother as Seen by Her Devotees, 2nd ed., p. 46.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

— P.C. Mehta

CHAPTER— VI

1. The Upanisads:

The 'Satapatha Brahmana' of one of the Sukla Yajur Veda schools reveals the symbolic key which is the identity between the macrocosmic 'Purusa' called 'Agni-Prajapati' and the microcosmic individual. As such this identity may be considered the bridge between Rg. Vedic and Upanisadic thought.

The Sanskrit word 'Upanisad' can be broken up as follows. '*Upa*' means 'near', '*ni*' means 'down' and '*shad*' means 'sit'. 'To sit down near someone' is the meaning. This implies a session with a teacher in which a pupil learnt the secret wisdom. This wisdom was jealously guarded from the unworthy.

The number of these treatises are very many; but only about 13 of them can be considered classical or genuine parts of Vedic literature. They are, I) Brihadāranyaka ii) Chhāndogya; iii) Isa iv) Kena; v) Aitareya, vi) Taittiriya vii) Kaushitaki; viii) Katha ix) Mundaka x) Svetasvatara; xi) Prasna xii) Maitri and xiii) Māndukya. They are the flowers of Vedic thought. The rest belong to a later period and are relatively of lesser value.

They are written in easy Sanskrit. Where they are not metrical, they are written in rhythmic prose. They possess a musical quality all their own. In them we come across short and pithy sentences which were elaborated by the teacher. Being of great depth, they have been understood at different levels. Their intelligent and sympathetic study does not fail to uplift the reader.

2. 'Vedanta' :

'*Vedanta*' means 'at the end of the Vedas'. Upanisads come at the end of Vedas. Therefore, its philosophy is known as '*Vedanta* philosophy'.

As the teachings in certain important areas, can be interpreted in different ways, in later times there have emerged diverse schools of *Vedanta* philosophy, which will be dealt with where appropriate. The most important teachings of the Upanisads are briefly summarized hereunder.

3. 'Brahman':

'Brahman' is the cosmic principle underlying the world as a whole. In the Brihadāranyaka Upanisad, sage Yāgnavalka describes 'Brahman' as 'a mass of knowledge'. It is without selfconsciousness and beyond all subject-object categories, the One-without-a-second, the only real Being. No qualities can be posited of it. The Brahman therefore can only be described negatively as 'neti-neti' or 'not this-not-this'. The word '*Brahman*' is derived from the root 'brh' to grow or evolve. It therefore stands for the power which of itself bursts into utterance as 'prayer'. According to some scholars, it is this power or primary principle which spontaneously manifests itself as the universe. '*Brahman*' is therefore the cosmic principle, which is the source of creation as a whole.

4. 'Atman'

There is a second current of thought in the earlier literature. It aims at discovering, not the cosmic principle which is the source of creation as a whole, but the psychic principle, the inner essence of man. This inquiry ends by representing the essence of man as '*Atman*' or 'the Self'.

It is also sometime described as the true subject, which knows but can never be known-'The unseen seer, the unheard hearer and the unthought thinker'. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad says, 'That by which one knows all this- whereby could one know That? By what means could the Knower be known?'

Kena Upanisad says: 'That which cannot be expressed by speech, but which illumines speech, know that to be *Brahman*. That which cannot be conceived by mind, but by which mind thinks, know that to be *Brahman*, that which is not visible to the eye, but by which the eye sees, know that to be *Brahman*. That which is not heard by the ear, but by which the ear hears, know that to be *Brahman*. That which is not breathed, but by which the breath functions, know that to be *Brahman*'.

Katha Upanisad says: Atman is subtler than the subtle, greater than the great and is dwelling in the hearts of all. As fire, being one, assumes different forms according to what it burns, so the *Atman* existing in all, though one, assumes different forms according to whatever it enters. It also exists without'.

The idea, in either case, is that it is unknowable in the ordinary sense of the term. *Atman* being the eternal witness, the unchangeable reality, it can only be self-evident.

'*Atman*' is a small being, a homunculus, '*Purusa*', which has its seat in the heart, where it is felt stirring and from which it directs the animal spirits. Here it

seats at its ease, for it is not larger than the thumb. It could even make itself still smaller, for it is felt making its way along the arteries and could be distinctly seen in the small image, the pupil, which is reflected in the center of the eye. A '*Purusa*', quite similar, appears with dazzling effect in the orb of the sun, the heart and eye of the world. That is the '*Atman*' of nature, or rather it is the same '*Atman*' which manifests itself in the heart of man and the sun; an invisible opening at the top of the skull affording a passage for it to go from one dwelling place to another".

One Upanisad brings out this uniqueness of the Self by stating paradoxically that it is known only to those that do not know it; meaning that though intuitively realizable, it cannot be made the object of thought. In other words, it is above the subject-object split, within which man normally operates.

4. Identification of Atman with Brahman: the doctrine of unity

The essential teaching of the Upanisads is the identification of '*Atman*' with '*Brahman*'. This is epitomized by the well known sayings '*Aham Brahmasmi*', i.e. 'I am the *Brahman*'; '*Tat Tvam Asi*' i.e. 'That thou art'. They mean that the principle underlying the world as a whole and that which forms the essence of man, are ultimately the same. Here ended the long Indian quest for the all-pervasive cause of things. As the Chhandogya Upanisad expresses it, 'the search for That, knowing which we know everything'.

The identification of '*Atman*' with '*Brahman*' delineates the spiritual character of the Ultimate Reality, as well as the infiniteness of '*Atman*' covering not only all the selves but also the whole of the physical universe. It is this Reality inclusive of both '*Atman*' and '*Brahman*', which is referred to as '*Satyam, Jnānam, Anantam Brahma*'. '*Satyam*' refers to the certainty of existence, '*Jnānam*' refers to its spiritual character and '*Anantam*' to its all-inclusive infiniteness. This Upanisadic absolute is what is meant by the monism or the doctrine of unity, as taught by the Upanisads.

If this identification was not available, '*Brahman*', as the ultimate cosmic principle, though all comprehensive, could be claimed to be non-spiritual or material; Further, it would only be an objective conception and hence little more than a mere hypothesis and therefore not compelling enough to be regarded as existing. There would be no logical absurdity in denying it.

The establishment of the spiritual character of this principle and the removal of the uncertainty about its existence are both accomplished by its identification with '*Atman*' or the self. For our own self is known to us to be spiritual and there is an intuitive obligation to recognize its existence.

On the other hand, if we start from the '*Atman*' without identification with '*Brahman*', we meet with another difficulty. While the self points to what is spiritual, it is limited in its nature, on the one hand by the world of nature and on the other hand by other selves. It is this deficiency of finiteness which is overcome by its identification with '*Brahman*'.

The character of this '*Atman-Brahman*' self is '*Satchidananda*' explained earlier.

5. Creation of worlds, man's subtle bodies & '*Māyā*'.

The journey of the Vedic Rsis in search of the inner essence of man is described thus in the Taittiriya Upanisad, which says: The Self is covered over by sheaths. The sheaths are i) the '*annamaya*' sheath of gross matter being the physical body composed of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether. ii) within this is the '*prānamaya*' sheath being the sheath of 'breath' or vital life. iii) within this is the '*manomaya*' sheath of 'lower-mind' along with its sense-functions. iv) within this is the '*vijnānamaya*' sheath of 'higher-mind' or intellect. Within this is '*Atman*' which is identical with Brahman and is bliss. In later Vedanta philosophy the last one is considered the fifth sheath of 'ananda' or bliss and the *Atman* identical with *Brahman* transcends that also. At death only the first sheath of gross matter is shed and the rest transmigrate till release.

These sheaths with their corresponding worlds is a part of creation and considered '*Māyā*', meaning, illusion. In the Upanisads, the word '*Māyā*' is first used in Brihadaranyaka Upanisad in a quotation from Rg. Veda which reads, 'Indra by his '*Māyā*' or magic powers goes about in many forms. The theory of '*Māyā*' as a cosmic illusion is found in the Svetasvatara Upanisad, 4.9-10 as under:

'This whole world the illusion-maker projects out of this Brahman.

And in it by illusion the other is confined.

Now, one should know that Nature is illusion,

And that the Mighty Lord is the illusion-maker'.

6. '*Karma*' doctrine

The Brihadaranyaka Upanisad presents the first clear exposition of the doctrine of '*karma*', which extends the principles of causation to ethics by proclaiming it as 'the law of the deed' and that one reaps as one sows; and '*sansara*' as transmigration of souls. The good or evil deeds are caused by a man's desires: 'where one's mind is attached, the inner self goes thereto with action, being attached to is alone'. Desires also cause rebirth and determines its nature. The round of birth, death and rebirth, with some good births and some bad ones depending on '*karma*' is called '*sansara*'. To obtain release from '*sansara*', one must eliminate

desire. According to the Upanisads, desire is eliminated by knowledge of the immortal Brahman and of the soul's identity with it. This knowledge is gained first with the help of a teacher and then by one's own intuitive self-knowledge one achieves direct experience of identity. When this self-realization is won, 'moksa' or release from 'sansara' is gained. The philosopher who has experienced this identity lives only till he completes his present life for his *karmas* to run out. at death this identity which he has established becomes constant.

7. The esoteric syllable 'Om' :

The Mandukya Upanisad is noted for its exposition of the esoteric syllable *Om*. It is the ultimate in religious meaning. In the early Chhandogya Upanisad, it stands for total Reality. In Sanskrit *Om* has three syllables, A-U-M. The letter 'A' is the waking state, common to all men. This is the gross state of enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses which includes mind. At the macrocosmic level this is the first fourth of manifested Brahman, the concrete world of matter. The letter 'U' is the dreaming state. Here the human subtle body interacts with the macrocosmic subtle world. This is the second fourth of the manifested Brahman. Letter 'M' is the state of deep-sleep in which there is no bodily activity. It is described as 'cognition-mass' consisting of 'Ananda' or bliss. Being a more unified state, it is higher than the sleep state. This is the third fourth of the manifested Brahman. The fourth and highest state which is called 'turya' in the Maitri Upanisad and 'chaturth' in the Mandukya Upanisad, is silence.

8. Ethics in the Upanisads:

Ethics in itself is not emphasized in the Upanisads. There are important passages that praise the virtues of truthfulness, reverence for parents, teachers and guests, generosity, modesty, pity and self-restraint. The apparent reason for the scarcity of discussions of ethical values is that mention of specific moral precepts and values is superfluous in the light of the ethical implications of the general metaphysical teaching of the Upanisads that the atman or self is Brahman. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad (2.4.2-5) the sage Yāgnavalka tells his wife that a husband, a wife, sons, the gods and the creatures are all dear, not for themselves as separate beings but because they are the self: 'Verily, everything is not dear that you may love everything; but that you may love the Self, therefore everything is dear.'

If all men and creatures are united in their ultimate essence which is Brahman, there is no room for hurting another, because thereby one hurts one's own self. The man who has realized his identity with Brahman does not act egoistically because he has overcome the illusion that he is a separate self. He acts in the pure knowledge

that all others are his own true self. This means that he acts with love and for the good of others.

The Upanisads do not teach a life of service to humanity as a way to salvation. This concept did not appear till the Bhagavad Gita.

9. The important teachings of the Upanisads:

- I) The concept of non-dual Brahman,
- ii) The identity of Atman with Brahman,
- iii) Creation of worlds and sheaths of 'Atman',
- iv) The meaning of Om,
- v) Doctrine of '*karma*' and meaning of '*sansara*'
- vi) '*Moksa*' as release from *karma* and *sansara*.
- vii) '*Jnāna*' or knowledge to attain '*moksa*'



[To be continued]

**Beauty is the flower,
but virtue is the fruit of life.
A pure heart is the end of Religion
and beginning of Divinity.**

FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SREE MA'S PRESENCE

—'Kirpal'

11-5-59, 9 p.m. Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun

Q : Ma, I have one question to ask..

Sree Ma : Only one ?

Q : What medicine should be taken to attain the Holy Feet of God.

Sree Ma : Whatever the Guru says, whatever the Guru advises, that alone is the Divine medicine. If one interprets it by one's own intelligence one will revolve round in circles. But if one does not depend on his own reasoning, then he will advance on the straight path.

Q : One's intelligence does not remain silent.

Sree Ma : Baba, you must force it to understand. There is no other way. Whatever guidance is given by the Guru that must be followed. Whether it is difficult or hard to bear. Before marriage, one looks around for a bride or groom, but after marriage one should not wander around. Do not stray from the path, but strive to follow the teachings of the Guru. If you get entangled in circles, it will be difficult to extricate yourself. The mind draws you towards worldly pursuits. Baba, advise them not to get entangled, but to follow the path that will lead them to liberation from all worldly sorrows. To accept and follow the path to Divine Realisation and to renounce mere worldly attractions. If the teachings of the Guru are followed, one will understand.

Sri Dattatreya : One should follow the Guru's teaching, but should one renounce one's own intelligence ?

Sree Ma : With a purified mind and with pure efforts you should follow the Guru's teachings. With your entire strength of mind you must try to understand the Guru's teaching and then you will advance. You should not sit down like a stupid person. Your intelligence must be used to follow whatever your Guru has revealed to you in order to realise your Divine form. You must strive with a pure mind and pure efforts to proceed on the path. Do not let your mind wander, for by doing so you will be in difficulties. An unclean mind will lead you to destruction.

Baba, do not follow the path to destruction. Become pure in mind and pure in action.

Sri Deogan : By listening to many aspects, the mind gets disturbed.

Sree Ma : You should use your intelligence; follow the teaching of the Guru. All 24 hours should be spent for the realisation of God. You have 24 hours, so why do you reserve only a short time for God ? In the Srimad Bhagawat it is written that God is revealed in all forms, in all names and God is above all names and forms. In the Srimad Bhagawat, Sree Krishna, Sree Ram, Ma Durga—God alone in all forms. In all forms is revealed your chosen deity, one's very own. There will be no overload.

Pt. Sundar Lalji : Until the mind is entirely concentrated on the one Supreme object one cannot attain that state.

Sree Ma : One should have only the one goal, i.e. the realisation of God.

Pt. Sundar Lalji : Some worship Sree Ram, others Ma Durga, Sree Krishna. Ma sees God in all forms. But we are not able to do so.

Sree Ma : As a son, a father, a husband is only the one same person.

Pt. Sundar Lalji : I see three forms.

Sree Ma : For those who perceive three different forms, let them do what is convenient to them. But there is another aspect. All names are names of God. All forms are forms of God.

There is but one Guru and the deity of worship. The Guru of everyone is my Guru and the Divine Lord of everyone is my Divine Lord. I am listening to my own God in this form and my God is their God in this form. One should try to understand in this way. You cannot concentrate on the one mantra, the one deity, the one name for 24 hours. You talk of so many matters, your mind is full of hundreds of topics. Some are worthwhile, some are objectionable. All forms, all names, forms and also the formless are all forms of God. Hence the God of the other is also your own God. Is this wrong ?

You talk on many subjects, you quarrel and fight. You are bound by your ego, by happiness and sorrow. In all forms is only the play of the Divine Lord, and hence your own deity. Otherwise, this is my God and none other exists.

Pt. Sundar Lalji : To realise the one God in all forms; to achieve that state is not possible for all.

Sree Ma : According to one's spiritual attainment, if one attains that state.



REDUCE YOURSELF TO ZERO

[Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy's instructions to Sri Hari Ram Joshi]

1. Every man's duty is to do what he can to make his fellow-men wiser, better and happier. This is the best form of charity and is sure to bear fruit in this world and the next, even though our progress be slow and produce no immediate visible result.

2. On this life's journey, keep attending to your own steps. As you come nearer and nearer to the destination, you will find yourself reconciled not only to the Ideal, but also, most difficult of all, to others.

3. To become a devotee for want of occupation or out of disgust is a sin against society and yourself. Examine yourself thoroughly with the help of a guide and find out if you have real honesty of purpose.

4. Take a vow to be true and sincere to the Ideal, chaste, obedient and full of humility. The rest will take care of itself.

5. If you are always busy watching the actions of others, you become a passive sight-seer to your own doings. First know yourself, your own errors and faults, only then you can become a useful C.I.D.

6. Be sweet and kind to all, high and low, in action, thought, and speech. You will then become conscious of the affirmative attitude of life and find the peace resident in the soul.

7. A pessimist is always miserable. Not only does he gain nothing, but he loses what he has already got. So be an optimist; even if you cannot gain, you will lose nothing.

8. The good of man does not depend on any possession, except the right inner quality.

9. If you go to have bath in the sea, you are always careful so that you may not be carried away by the waves. Thus in your love and devotion for the Ideal, you should be beyond impulses and emotions.

10. Without a really disciplined life, harmony and wholeness cannot be achieved.

11. To see God in everything is a better method than renouncing everything with the idea that it is all transitory.

12. A sincere and selfless idea and an aspiration to serve can set the whole being in activity.

13. No separate effort is needed to control the senses if you can make your heart the abode of God.

14. Always stick to the Ideal, the Reality. Innumerable influences which are pouring upon you from all quarters of the universe will disappear in no time.

15. There are three stages in Karma Yoga :

(1) To give up the idea of result in work.

(2) To give up I-ness.

(3) To dedicate every action to God.

The sense of duty or 'I ought' must be qualified by the above three conditions.

16. The mission of the guide is to inspire the quest; it is for the pupil to discover the treasure.

17. Peace, which is a resident of the soul, can receive its true culture only from within.

18. Mingle with the world only to the minimum extent needed, without being entangled in it.

19. When we have known the Mother, we shall know that all around Her are but our brothers and sisters.

10. Cultivate patience—a virtue which is never defeated.

21. Love never claims, it ever gives; Love ever suffers, never resents and never revenges itself.

22. The pursuit of Truth may entail suffering and difficulties, but in the long run it must contribute to the greatness of the spirit which is the source of real happiness.

23. You get nothing unless you feel more or less a need for it. You have got the present environment because you have wanted it; so, if you desire seriously to extricate yourself from this self-created misery, you must apply yourself earnestly to the purpose, like a lion in a net.

24. Measure your own mind by the shadow it casts.

25. The final purpose of life, according to all religions, is to realize the Ideal or to know that the Self is God. By toiling consciously on the side of the forces of God or the Ideal, this becomes possible.

26. How to fix up the Ideal, see the *Slokas* 7 and 8, Chapter VIII of the Gita.

27. Concentration and relaxation must go side by side. True relaxation will bring contentment and raise you up.

28. Religion is not a science which in its ordinary usage is the expression of a fragment of the Self; it is an art which is the expression of the whole Self.

29. Those who seek a reason for all things do utterly overthrow reason.

30. True faith does not look for or depend on any arguments. It comes from within.

31. Love is God. So all our desires must ultimately aim at Universal Love. Human life begins as a baby with intensely selfish love for the mother and ends with selfless love for children as a parent.

32. Saints love because they cannot help it. Realize this and get their love extended to mankind.

33. Withdrawal is not the whole of religious tradition, there is also participation. We renounce the part in order to return to it with the knowledge of the whole. Nothing is to be rejected, everything is to be raised.

34. To keep your balance in life's struggle, take recourse to the depths constantly and develop a disinterestedness of mind which no pleasure can entice, nor pain can overpower.

35. The Divine Call cannot be heard by anyone whose conflict between body, mind and soul is not over.

36. Try always to be an optimist with unlimited faith in the powers of the Ideal.

37. It hampers nourishment to vomit food before assimilation.

38. Mind is energy. Reinforce its strength by good association, noble thoughts and deeds.

39. Every great grief is small because of the brevity of time.

40. It is easy to walk miles and miles in the plains but it is difficult to go up hills.

41. A concentrated attack on mind and body is necessary in order that we may root ourselves deep in the spirit.

42. Prayer and meditation must not be forgotten any day. You can go without food, but in no case without prayer and meditation.

43. An honest, dutiful life is needed to raise one to a higher level.

44. As soon as we can make our thoughts pure we shall find ourselves free from all torments of the mind.

45. The soul remains dormant so long as we remain busy with the details of brain, senses, and the body.

46. Narrowness in any sphere means death. Broadness denotes life.

47. Make a persistent effort to keep the mind concentrated on the Ideal, then alone it can become as pure as the Ideal.

48. Attraction towards the Ideal may be easy, but it is only when all dispersed energies, emotions, desires and even the physical body itself are gathered up and concentrated that we come close to the Ideal.

49. By devotion, worship, and constant remembrance one can make himself free.

50. A silent conscious effort is more valuable than a mere formal pompous ceremony.

51. Every breath of our life must be associated with something good or noble.

52. Sever yourself completely from the unnecessary or unconnected conversation of the world.

53. A drop of practice is better than an ounce of theory.

54. Every stage of life is necessary; but examine constantly whether you are walking up or going down.

55. Consider yourself miserably unworthy during your prayers. This will shape your egoism into proper form.

56. Constant meditation on the presence of the Ideal in all helps the cultivation of Universal Love.

57. Don't speak unnecessarily or utter useless words. You will feel strong in your inner force.

58. The world catches us mostly by the futile externals of our lives. Always try to get rid of them.

59. Religion is 'is-ness' and not 'ought-ness'.

60. Keep the lamp of love ever burning in the heart, it will remove darkness and all its evils.

61. If you apply your egoism in separating the things of God from those of the world, it will ultimately work on the right lines.

62. Egoism is vitiated when it works alone, work will glorify your career.

63. An utter submission to the Ideal in all respects will give you direct vision of everything.

64. Transformation of our being is more necessary than the wearing of outward garments.

65. Turn your mind homeward (inward) and establish contact with the Creative Centre.

66. The mind which strives for Divine essence must be totally and thoroughly free from all commerce with corporal senses.

67. To know the truth we have to deepen ourselves and not merely to widen the surface.

68. Prayer, meditation, silence and quiescence are necessary for the replacement of self-will by impersonal Universal Will.

69. No determination is valuable which is not self-determination controlled by a resolute will.

70. See good in everything. Your eyes will then be closed to all ills and evils in the world.

71. If it is not possible for you to keep a check over your own mind, why do you feel angry when others fail. Remember that an idea of outside control is the outcome of vanity.

72. Don't lose yourself in anything except in meditation on the Ideal.

73. Praise others and observe your own faults and shortcomings. If you are true to yourself, none can harm you.

74. Care for the Ideal alone, others will take care of themselves.

75. Artificial madness is not at all helpful. Intoxication will come of itself when you are up to the mark.

76. Pleasant speech and manners can remove many misunderstandings in our every-day life,

77. Develop yourself, to begin with, in a limited area. If you want to be a race-horse before training you will surely lose the race.



**Of all the Words
Of all the Names
There never was another
God made as dear
So blessed
So loved
So wonderful
As MOTHER.**

BHAKTI AND BHUMIKĀ OF GOPIGEET

—Madhavi Badiani

Winter had set in. Under the shimmering moonlight *Jamuna* was dancing in ripples like a blushing maiden. The cool breeze wafting across the river bank permeated the atmosphere with the sweet scent of Jasmine. The entire cosmos seemed to carry a mysterious aura.....an aura of uncanny expectancy in the firmament under which Krishna was soon to unfold one more chapter of his manifold *lilās*.....

Just then, divinely mellifluous notes from Krishna's flute rent the air... each note so turned that it almost seemed to be calling out...Radha...Lalitā..Vishākhā.. through its melody.

Not so far away in the thatched cottages, the gopis were busy with their household chores. Spellbound on hearing the magical notes, they abandoned their work instantly and rushed towards the riverbank. There were thousands of them. Such was their attraction and anxiety to see Krishna that in all the hustle bustle, one gopi who was applying *kājal* in her eyes smeared it all over her cheek, another wore her *ghāghrā* inside out and yet another wore only one earring !.... Unmindful of their home and hearth, kith and kin, the gopis left their hamlets and flocked to the *Jamuna* where Krishna was waiting for them. He had kept his promise given earlier that a union would take place on the fullmoon night and the night had come....

With respectful welcome Krishna gave them a pride of place. He danced with them in the *Rāsa-lilā* and bowed to their every wish and command. But alas !... pride and vanity took over and the gopis now began to believe that Krishna was under their spell. "We are fortune's favoured ones, beautiful too, Krishna is ours alone, oh ! so enamoured is he by us !" they boasted.

Pride on the devotional path is considered a grave obstacle and Krishna seeing this in the gopis wanted to remedy it forever. **Ergo, He disappeared from their sight !** The gopis, not finding him suddenly, were shocked beyond measure. It was a jolt they had never expected. Restless and forlorn, shedding copious tears, running hither & thither, they roamed in the deep woods, asking

shrubs, creepers, trees and tulsi plants of Krishna's whereabouts. But to no avail. Beloved Krishna's sudden disappearance rendered them helpless and sublimated. Pining, yearning and hankering frenziedly, they burst into a song.— the **Gopigeet**.

A poignant ballad, a lyrical expression of pain and sorrow of separation, bliss and euphoria of union, beseeching Krishna to return with reflection and recall and finally... surrender and submission...*Gopigeet*, set in 19 stanzas is all this and much more...

Krishna, the compassionate one, overwhelmed by their sublime devotion and supplications, returned to fulfil their heart's desire. And now, the proverbial *Rāsa-Kriḍā* began with the divine lover and continued till the early hours of morning symbolising *dawn of knowledge through bhakti*.

Bhakti and Jnāna are one, but two sides of a coin. True devotion demands an all – absorbing, all – consuming love for one's *ishta*. The gopis attained spiritual *summum bonum* through their single - minded devotion, remembering Krishna to the exclusion of all others. Real knowledge is after all *dhruva smṛti* — a steady constant remembrance of God. Lord Krishna himself says in Bhagavatam XI-20-29 — "When a man continues to follow the disciplines of bhakti without a break, I begin to dwell in their hearts, and thereupon all the desires of the heart are destroyed owing to my presence, the state of mind in which a man is free from wants of every kind is declared to be the supreme blessedness' *NIHSREYAS*"

The divine mother Shree Anandamayi Ma when asked about the meaning of bhakti replied - "Profuse tears !"

Swami Akhandanandaji said that the gopis remembered Krishna so much that they ended up saying *Krishnoham* (I am Krishna). As you thinketh, so you becometh! Their *chittavritti* became *Krishnākar*, filled with nothing but Krishna.

Masterfully composed by Vedavyas, Gopigeet occurs in the 10th skanda of Bhagavatam and is considered peerless for its splendid illustration of *vipralumb (viyog) shringar* in Sanskrit literature. (a superlative example indeed !) Listening to Gopigeet, a *chitra kavya*, is truly a humbling, soothing and ennobling experience!

The esoteric nuances of Gopigeet might not be understood by plebian minds and the mystique of Krishna and his gopis may forever remain but a mystery. But, for those who choose to see Krishna in all His DIVINE PERFECTION, will no doubt be able to share the divine love of the gopis... and perhaps a union on the full moon night !....



SRI MA AND PD. GOPINATH KAVIRAJ

—Arun Kumar Sengupta

It is most interesting to find how the great savant Mahamahopadhyaya Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj was drawn to Sri Anandamayee Ma. He later on spent the rest of his life at the feet of Ma. He had indeed a great role to explain the sayings of the Mother.

It was the month of September, 1928. Ma Anandamayee came to Varanasi. She was staying at the home of Sri Kunja Mohan Mukherjee in Ramapura area. Acharya deva did not know this news. He came to know only when Mahamahopadhyaya Padmanath Vidyavinod informed him. Sri Vidyavinod praised highly of the Mother. He told Gopinathji that one mother has come to Kashi. She is staying at Ramapura. Most of the time she is in trance. She is a great lady of very high stage.

Sri Vidyavinod also told Gopinathji, "You must be fortunate if you see the mother in the state of trance." Hearing all these words Acharyadev became very eager to see Ma.

It was 6th September. Sri Gopinathji met Ma Anandamayee for the first time. She was also very much pleased to talk to Sri Gopinath Kaviraj.

Gopinath Kaviraj was then the Principal of the Govt. Sanskrit College of Varanasi. When Gopinathji came to Ma for the first time then she was chanting very nicely hymns after hymns. Gopinathji was highly impressed to hear the recitations from Ma's lips. He exclaimed, "It is divine, it is heavenly."

It was later on decided that Anandamayee Ma would visit the Ashram of Swami Vishuddhananda Paramahansa. Sri Vishuddhanandaji was the Guru of Gopinathji. Anandamayee Ma came to the Ashram of Sri Vishuddhanandaji, who was popularly known as '*Gandhababa*'.

Ma had a long discussion on spiritual and metaphysical matters with Swami Vishuddhanandaji. Vishuddhanandaji showed many miracles to impress the people. Sri Sri Ma laughed and indicated that Vishuddhanandaji showed the trick only to divert their attention. People must try to obtain the real thing from Babaji. Vishuddhanandaji was longing to hear the words of Ma. The whole ashram was filled with joy in the presence of Ma. Sri Vishuddhanandaji was also highly pleased to see the super-natural beauty of the Mother.

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Thus Sri Gopinath Kaviraj came into close contact with Ma. Afterwards he conveyed his deep regards to Ma with the remark—"Her existence is unflinching. Her body is seen in different forms at different times, but every form is true and real. She knows She has got no change. She silently witnesses everything, but She is always unperturbed. She is a mere seer. It is not possible for any ordinary being to realize the *svarupa* of Ma. As a whole, Ma's *svarupa* is a great mystery.

Gopinathji observed about Ma's *Kripa* : Mercy was undoubtedly ever-flowing and boundless. Without mercy of God how do we live ? God was the ocean of kindness. God was ever eager to fill our empty pots. But unfortunately we do not know how to contain the mercy of God and it was a matter of great regret that our receptacle was also small. It had little capacity to store the same. If the flow of mercy was suddenly very strong, man cannot endure. Moreover, as we have kept overturned the pot, whatever the amount of mercy we get, the pot remains empty.

Ma advised, "Patience is ultimately necessary. You pray to God and tell Him, Oh, God ! whatever you do is good for me. Please give me the strength to have patience. There is nothing but mercy of God. Everything is His mercy."

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Anandamayee Ma was singing some beautiful songs in her extremely sweet voice. Gopinathji was charmed to hear the songs. Ma was singing : Who am I, what is my name, what is my race, what is my caste, where is my house, no one is my own, I have none in this world. Renouncing everything I am in the burning ghat. I am alone.

In another song Ma was uttering in her exquisitely sweet voice—I want to become a child forever, I do not want to be away from the beauty of the childhood. I do not want to become an adult, I do not want to read *Sastras*, I do not want to be wise, I want to be a child, I may be aged, but my mind should be just like that of a child.

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It was 6th May, 1961. Ma has reached Bombay. Gopinathji was suffering from cancer. He was admitted in the Tata Memorial Institute. The date of operation was fixed for 16th May. Ma instructed to arrange for the best doctor for a successful operation. Gopinathji was operated on 16th May at 9.30 A.M. At the time of operation Ma arranged for special japa & kirtan.

At about 1.30 P.M. the operation was over very successfully. Gopinathji was lying on his bed without any problem. The information was promptly conveyed to Ma.

Everyday Ma was going to the hospital to see Gopinathji in the afternoon. One day Ma could not go. Gopinathji was thinking of Ma only and he wanted to meet Ma. All on a sudden he was ready to go. He was coming out of the room. The nurse ran after him and forced him to lie on the bed. The nurse asked him, 'Where do you want to go?' Gopinathji replied like a child, 'I have an urge to call on my mother.' The nurse asked the doctor who was the mother of this patient. The doctor told her everything. Ma was informed of this incident & she came to the hospital immediately.

Such deep was the attraction of one of the greatest scholars of India for Sri Anandamayee Ma*.

*. Published on the occasion of the 114th birthday celebration of Mahamahopadhyaya Padma vibhusana Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj, which fell on September 8th, 2000.

No love is as perfect as Mother's,
No love is as deep and sincere,
No love is as full of forgiveness,
and faith everyday of the year.
No love gives so much and asks for so little,
No love is as lasting and true,
No love is as perfect as Mother's,
No Mother as perfect as
Ma Anandamayee.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH SRI MA ANANDAMAYEE

—Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta

Satya yuga is on the way

We heard that while the puja was on, Ma seeing an infant in the arms of one woman, had named him 'Batak Bhairab'. I asked her if it was true.

Ma (smiling) : When the girls were on with their puja, I marked the infant in arms and said, 'Batak Bhairab' has arrived to accept the puja.

I : You are naming the new born children after gods and goddesses. Does not this imply that the deities have started being reborn ?

Ma : The deities are here all the time. Their being reborn does not make sense.

I : I have heard it said that we are at the Satya yuga once more. If that is true, what wonder that the deities would be reborn ?

Ma : The Satya yuga has not yet arrived, but it is on the way : It is just before us, and we can feel its proximity in our persons.

I : What are the marks that we feel it ?

Ma : You will find that a thirst for truth is in evidence every where. Now-a-days, even young men have begun to ask such questions as whether there is any thing in religion or of what good is the investiture with holy thread. They augur well.

Ma's statement reminded me of a contention of C.F. Andrews. In his book, 'What I owe to Christ' he has written that in course of his wide travels, he has observed a general curiosity about whether there is any abiding truth in Christianity. He said, "There are very many men and women in all countries, among the new generations who are seeking to find a sure foundation for their Christian faith amid conflicting currents of modern thought. They fully understand the impossibility of building up the future structure of society on a purely material basis, and they have a deep reverence for the great spiritual achievements of the past. But at the same time they are unable any longer to bow down to traditional authority either in practice or belief. Their own conscience commands them to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. They feel the need, almost desperately at times, of a personal guide to lead them on their ways, and they are ready to offer devoted

allegiance to one, who is truly their Lord and Master. yet they hesitate in honest intellectual bewilderment to surrender their heart to Christ.

If the Satya yuga comes, it must come everywhere. That accounts for this new curiosity for knowing the Truth.

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Initiation, *Beej* and *Name*.

On my arrival at Ma's place I also heard that she had recommended for Sati, my daughter, a name to be repeated as Japa, morning and evening. I asked her if it was true.

Ma: Yes, I have recommended a name, but it does not amount to initiation.

I: What is initiation ?

Ma: Initiation consists in transmission of a *Beej* by the guru.

I: Why do you link up *Beej* with initiation ? Is not name sufficient for it ?

Ma: If a disciple has an inborn inclination for *Beej*, the guru uses *Beej* during initiation.

I made no further enquiry about initiation. But I was curious to know what she had imparted to Sati. I believed that if it was a name. that would be as good as initiation. But so far as I knew, Ma had not up to that time recommended any particular name to any body.

So I said to her, "Well. if I direct her to repeat a name, and you bid her repeat another - - will it not make a difference between these two ? Your words are far more potent.

Ma: There will certainly be a difference. But don't think I have selected a name for her. After the puja was over, Sankarananda asked them to repeat names. Then I said, repeat these names both times every day.

I found that my guess was a correct one. Ma was not the one to give a name. I said to Ma. "You do not do any thing before you have your exit line secure."

Ma: Baba has a way of asking searching questions.

I: Can one do with a name, in the absence of a *Beej* ?

Ma: Yes, the name alone does it. You may have seen that very little children cannot say "Ma". When they cry the mother understands that they are calling her. But this does not hold good of a grown up son. In the same way, so long as we are ignorant, we can call God by any name and He will understand us.

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In what sense, does the guru stay along with the disciple.

I: Ma, our gurudev sometimes said in answer to his disciple's questions, 'I am always with you, Baba Visuddhananda also says the same thing to his disciples. You, too, are reported to say so. What does it mean ? In what sense is the gurudev keeping me company ?

Ma: Why did you not ask Babaji ?

I: At my initiation, I was a mere boy. Besides, Baba never told it to me; so I had no occasion to ask him the meaning.

Ma: It can be said in more senses than one. I am telling you. First, look at the matter in its all - comprehensive aspect. The guru pervades the atoms and molecules of the universe. In this sense, he is with you. Again, on discrimination, it is seen that there is only one real substance in the universe. The guru as well as the disciple must come under it. They are inseparable. In this sense also he is with you. Again, on discrimination, it is seen that there is only one real substance in the universe. The guru as well as the disciple must come under it. They are inseparable. In this sense he is with you. Besides, guru is with you in the form of mantra. Lastly, considering discreetly (*Khanda*) the yogis, by their yogic power, can be in many different places at the same time. For the benefit of his disciple the guru by his yogic power can separately stay with all his disciples at all times. In this sense also the statement is true.

[Extracts from the book, In Association with Sri Ma Anandamayee (I) by Shri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta:]

MA-PERFECTION INCARNATE

—Gurupriya Devi

[Translated from Bengali]

On reflecting over Ma's early life it appears that Ma has performed all her lilas with total perfection. When she acted the part of a little girl, she was extremely obedient to her parents and revered them as Gurus. Neighbours also loved her greatly. Whenever the need arose she would go to a neighbour's house and cook or do chores for them. In all work her skill was evident. Though she was the daughter of a poor man, because of her straightforward and natural behaviour and her beautiful countenance, everyone loved Ma right from when she was just a child.

There is an incident which exemplifies her total obedience to her mother. Once Ma took an earthen jar to wash in the pond. As she was leaving Didima told her, "Look, try to break it and bring it if you can." Didima meant it as a warning and said it light heartedly, but the next minute the jar fell and lay shattered on the ground. Ma then collected all the pieces carefully, washed them and brought them back to Didima, who exclaimed, "What is this?" Ma replied, "The jar fell out of my hands and broke. You had asked me to bring it back and so I have brought back all the pieces." Ma was then a little child and hearing her speak thus Didima could not scold her for having broken the jar and began laughing instead.

With her father Ma behaved just like a humble daughter. If her father was present whenever she was going away to or coming back from some place, she held his feet with both her hands and touching her head to his feet, she bowed to him. When she became a wife, she served her brother-in-law and his wife and looked after their children methodically and painstakingly. She appeared so involved in her worldly work that she did not bother about her self at all. Because of that she fell sick a few times but that did not bring about any shortcomings in her worldly duties.

When she took charge of her own household, she took the service of her husband as her foremost duty in life and devoted herself entirely at his feet. I have witnessed Ma's implicit obedience to Bholanath's orders to an extent which is impossible for any ordinary woman. The only one comparable to Ma is Ma herself. Ma often played with shells in her childhood. Bholanath once expressed his disapproval over this in her father's house. after that she stopped playing with

shells altogether and even when her friends forcibly tried to make her join them she refused. Ma was very young then and Bholanath was away. He would not have known had she played, yet it was against her nature to do such a thing.

When *kriyas* began manifesting in her body while she was at Bajitpur, there was no omission in her service to Bholanath. She did not rest even after serving him his meal and seeing him off to office. She got everything ready right down to the water and towel for his wash after his return from office and only then sat down for her meal. In the evening she finished all the traditional duties of a householder such as lighting the lamp and incense and readying the *asana* for Goddess Lakshmi and then started cooking dinner. After cooking she got ready the betel leaf and tobacco for Bholanath and only after he slept at night did she sit for her *sadhana*. Probably she ate dinner only after the *sadhana*, in the early hours of the morning, and so she had meals any time in the night or day.

Ma cooked extremely well. Bholanath often invited his neighbours for meals and they also felt delighted. I have observed that both Bholanath and Ma loved to feed people.

Impurity was against Ma's nature. Ma's whole work, home, doorway, bedding, clothes and body were always pure and clean and Ma cleaned everything with her own hands. Ma made pickles and preserves flawlessly and executed all domestic work beautifully. Towards her sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law she was an exemplary sister-in-law. Though all this *lila* was over within a short span of time, whatever was performed was completely perfect; to the extent that even her sisters and brothers-in-law who watched her behaviour called her a 'Devi' (Goddess).

Lace and carpets woven by Ma are beautiful and I still have them with me. Ma has even spun thread on the spinning wheel and woven cloth while in the role of a householder. And though this role was shortlived she managed to do everything within that short time.

When Ma completed her *lila* as a house wife and began her *lila* as the Universal Mother, her actions were again unique. When Bholanath was employed at Shahbagh and anyone from Rai Bahadur Jogesh Babu's house visited him, Ma would extend special hospitality towards them because Jogesh Babu was Bholanath's boss. Then again when the ladies from the household of the Mahant of Siddheshwari temple arrived, Ma would give them special respect because they were guests. Later when Ma was unable to do any work on her own she would make others do all that was necessary. Even when Rai Bahadur Jogesh Ghosh first began feeling devotion towards Ma, she continued to get up from the garden and go

indoors as soon as he arrived. it was only when Bholanath told her to come out because Jogesh Babu wanted to meet her, that she kept her head covered and emerged diffidently. Then as Jogesh Babu's attitude changed Ma's behaviour changed accordingly and later she met him without any reservation. He also regarded Ma as his Guru.

All *kriyas* were thus manifested correctly at the opportune moments in Ma's life. That is why Ma says, "In response to your attitudes changes occur in this body spontaneously. This does not involve my own desire or duty at all." Ma thus performed all her lila beautifully without a flaw anywhere. She is completely perfect and no job of hers remains incomplete.

Ma has often said, "Whenever I do anything I do it with all my heart and soul. Be the job small or big, that does not affect me at all." I have heard from Ma that she has never read any books, and her knowledge of reading and writing is very preliminary, whenever she listened to the reading of any religious book she became strangely influenced. In Ashtagram a gentleman (Ma regarded him as a brother and he called her Ranga Didi. This name was quite popular amongst people in Ashtagram, probably because of Ma's beauty) read out a religious book to Ma. as he read he found a marked change in Ma's condition and asked her what the matter was, but Ma did not seem to hear any thing and sat absolutely still. Then he got up with the book and never attempted again to read out to Ma.

Ma never forgot any person once she saw him, whether he was in the midst of a crowd or walking far away on the road. Even though he might not have been acquainted, when he came to Ma, Ma would at once say that she had seen him before.

GOPI'S LOVE

[Extracts from the writings of H. H. Swami Sivananda Saraswati Maharaj on Lord Krishna, His Lilas and Teachings]

Gopi's love for Krishna was not a physical passion. It was Supreme love. For them Lord Krishna was the living God. He was the moving image of the Supreme Lord. Their faith was intense. When they thought of Lord Krishna they forgot their worldly activities. They were merged in the love for Krishna.

Lord Krishna attracted their hearts from His very boyhood. He was a very beautiful child. He was beauty incarnate. So the Gopis began to love Krishna as they would do their own children. The gopa girls of Vrindavan loved Krishna as their own brother. Is there any sexual love between brother and sister? A sister loves her younger brother. She fondles him and plays with him. Such was the relationship between the Gopis and Krishna.

Gradually the love for Krishna assumed the shape of intense *Prema* (Divine Love). They thought of Krishna alone when they churned the curd, when they took water from the well. They sang His praises when they took bath. They remembered Him when they took food and at all times. Their minds became *Krishnamaya* by incessant practice of *smarana* (remembrance) of the Lord.

It is possible that when the Gopis grew of age they might have been moved by physical love also, as it is the case with every animated being. Sleep, food and sex are common to all living beings.

But Lord Krishna knew the hearts of the Gopis. He turned the hearts of the Gopis to the proper direction by completely eradicating lust from their minds. It is with this purpose in view that Lord Krishna played the *Rāsa Lilā* with the Gopis.

At the time of *Rāsa Lilā* He multiplied Himself into so many Krishnas. The Gopis were struck with wonder and amazement. All their idea of physical love entirely vanished due to this miracle. They witnessed the showers of flowers poured from the skies by the Devas. They saw the Vidyadharas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Charanas singing the praise of the Lord. They enjoyed the blissful company of the Lord at the time of *Rāsa Lilā*, a bliss millions of times greater than the bliss they would enjoy through sense objects. They enjoyed the bliss of *samadhi* or union with God.

'This is this, this is that'—this conception of difference is only delusion of a man whose mind is distracted and uncontrolled and is not united to the Lord. The man of uncontrolled mind falls into the error that there is plurality of objects. This error yields to merit and demerit, right and wrong, good and evil. The uncontrolled *Jiva*, who is bewildered and deluded by this diversity created by the natural outward tendency of the senses, fancies himself as a separate unit in the world and begins to entertain desires and enjoy sensual objects. Duty, non-performance of duty and the performance of forbidden acts (*Karma, Akarma* and *Vikarma*) result from this delusion of diversity caused by the mind, senses and intellect. The differences of action, inaction and evil action pertain only to the man who has notions of merit and demerit, right and wrong, good and bad. It is the delusion born of the conception of differences, that causes the experiencer of notions right and wrong, good and bad, merit and demerit. The Vedas speak of the performance of prescribed work, the non-performance of prescribed work, and the performance of prohibited work, for those only who have got the ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, merit and demerit. One should abandon the sense of egoism, control the mind and the senses and behold everything in the universe as Brahman. One should realise the essence of one's own nature, bliss and harmony with the universe and behold the wide-spread universe in the self and the self in the Supreme Lord.

He who has risen above good and bad, does not refrain from doing what is prohibited from a sense of fear of evil consequences, nor does he do the prescribed duty in the hope that it will conduce to merit, but he acts only like a child. The sense of right and wrong will be natural in him independently of scriptural teachings. He has destroyed all egoism. The laws of the world do not affect him. He has no more duties to perform. He is above Karma and Karma cannot touch him. He may, for the instruction of the world, perform works or refrain from forbidden acts. He will exceed the limits of both right and wrong.

This wonderful and unprecedented experience made the Gopis firmly believe that Krishna was not an ordinary mortal, they had firm conviction that Krishna was the Lord Himself, though sometimes they saw him as the son of Nanda and Yasoda only. The idea of Lord Krishna as god was not strong in them till the time of *Rāsa Lilā* due to the *yogamāyā* of the Lord.

The Song of the Gopis (*Gopika-gitam*) in Bhagavata (Skanda Xch 31) bears ample proof of the fact that they regarded Krishna as the Supreme Lord. They got rid of the least tinge of sex-passion in them and were attached to the Lord by the bonds of intense *Prema* (Divine Love).

The superhuman miracles of Krishna in his childhood made them believe in his omniscience and omnipotence. Would there be a worse fool in this world ? Who is the bestower of all desires of men ? The Lord is the Supreme cause for all happiness that men experience. Having seen him face to face, what greater fool is there who could crave for lower pleasures ? Would anybody crave for black sugar (*gur*) when sugar candy is available in plenty ?

From this it is clear that the love of the Gopis towards Krishna was of a divine nature. They had *ananya bhakti* and they were free from all lower and base desires for sexual enjoyment.

REMINDER

All our subscribers are requested to note that the current October issue is the last issue of the year 2000. Those who have not yet sent their subscriptions for the next year are requested to send the same latest by 15th December either by Money Order or Bank Draft to "Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha—Publications A/C."

It is sincerely hoped that by way of special consideration for this journal published in the divine name of Ma all will be pleased not only to renew their own subscriptions but shall also try to enrol new ones.

Managing Editor
Ma Anandamayee Amrit Varta