

# MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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Vol.-5

April, 2000

No. 2

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## MATRI VANI

How can this little girl (Ma herself) possibly leave her father ? Even if he pushes her far away, this obstinate little child will still be with him.

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By sorrow does the Lord dispel sorrow and by adversity does He destroy adversity. When this is done He sends no more suffering—this must be borne in mind at all times.

\* \* \*

In very truth, the Eternal's offspring must centre their thoughts on Him. Divorced from Him there cannot be even a prospect of peace—never, never, never.

\* \* \*

The Lord's is the body, the Lord's is the mind, the Lord's is all mankind.

\* \* \*

Verily, He is all-pervading and therefore can be found everywhere. With your whole being invoke the Lord of Life.

\* \* \*

No two days pass alike. Do not allow yourself to be overcome by despair. Have complete trust in Him in spite of everything—to Him you should call out in happiness and in pain.

\* \* \*

He should say to Himself : "In whatever condition it pleases. God to keep me, I resign myself, surrendering to Him this body, that is His." Just that.

\* \* \*

Travellers on the Supreme Path must strive to complete their journey; self-realization is its purpose and goal.

\* \* \*

Silent japa should be engaged in at all times, one must not waste uselessly. Whenever one has nothing special to do, one should silently practice japa in rhythm

with one's breathing—in fact this exercise should go on continually until doing japa has become as natural as breathing.

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Q—There are many creeds and many paths, but as a matter of fact, all roads lead to one and the same goal.

Mataji—Discussion and controversy belong to the path, but actually everyone is in his own home. The same path is not for everyone. Brothers of the same family will each have their different inclinations and likings. Vedānta may appeal to some, Vaishnavism to others, and the cult of Sakti to yet others. Therefore, it cannot be said that there is only one path. In fact seekers after Truth are moulded each in a unique way, different from others as well as from one another; but they all will have to pass through the gate of Truth.

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Why should one's gaze be fixed, while treading the Path ? The gaze is He and the 'way' is also He. Whatever is revealed or hidden anywhere, in any way, is 'Thou', is 'I'. Negation, just as affirmation, are equally "Thou"—the One. You will be able to grasp this fully only when you find everything within yourself, in other words, in the state where there is nothing but the Self.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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In accordance with your own particular line of approach, each one of you must seize the time, the moment that will reveal to you the eternal relationship by which you are united to the Infinite : this is the revelation of *Mahayoga*, SUPREME UNION.



## PAGES FROM THE DIARY OF DIDI GURUPRIYA

(Translated from Bengali)

Dhaka, February, 1926

It was the day of the Saraswati Puja. The students of the Medical School were going to feed beggars and have a kirtan performance. They wanted Ma to be present, but Bholanath refused. Ma had such *bhāvas* during kirtan. If it were to happen in the school, outsiders would not understand this condition and one could not know who would view it from which angle and how they would comment. Ma was then keeping herself veiled; considering all this, the invitation was refused.

Ma had once said, "I can see beggars being fed." I was influenced by this statement and on the occasion of the death anniversary of my mother I organised a meal for beggars. My joy was in taking Ma there.

The owners of Shahbag did not grant permission to have the feast for beggars in the garden, as they thought that plants and trees might be damaged. Perchance the poor feeding was arranged at the Medical School itself. Food for almost three thousand people was prepared. Devotees of Ma and the students of the school made all arrangements. We took Ma and Bholanath with us on the eve of the day of the feeding and decided to stay there over night. Ma ordered that no cooking was to be started before the morning, for stale food was not to be served to *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* (God in the form of the poor). Vegetables were being cut. Ma said, "We shall also cut some vegetables, we should also work for the food to be offered to *Daridra Nārāyaṇa*." So we all sat and peeled vegetables.

The next morning the people who had been fixed to come and cook did not turn up. A devotee named Mathur Babu (who worked in the Police Department) bowed before Ma and said, "The Brahmins who were to cook the meal have not yet come and it is already morning." Ma said, "Come on, we shall start the cooking." By Ma's grace Mathur Babu after a little while brought the Brahmins who were to cook, and there was no need for us to start the cooking. The whole night Ma did not let any of us sleep. She said, "If you want to serve *Daridra Nārāyaṇa*, keep awake tonight. Before every work, self-control has to be practised with perseverance." In the morning she said to me, "Pray to *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* so that he will be present at your function." Then she at once said, "Will all the *Nārāyaṇas*

come alright ?" Somehow I stammered while replying, "If you so desire they will come." Ma said, "See how she speaks—it seems as if there will be some confusion."

What has to happen will happen. From about eleven o'clock in the morning the boys started kirtan. The image of Goddess Saraswati was still there. Ma laughed and said, "These boys wanted this body to be present for Saraswati *pūjā*, I have come while the image is still here." The kirtan gathered in intensity. Ma became engrossed in *bhāva*. Various kinds of *kriyās* began manifesting in her body. That day also, for a few moments, she assumed a wrathful posture with upturned eyes as if she were holding a sword and battling with someone. With the onset of this mood, Ma's tongue protruded. Within a few seconds the tongue went in and there was a change in the mood. Ma now assumed a very serene aspect, full of *bhāva*. Sometimes it seemed as if she were seated on an *āsana* performing worship—she was worshipping herself. Sometimes touching her own feet with her forehead she prostrated and then became powerless. Sometimes she revolved with great speed and rolled on the ground and then became very still and lay on her back. Her breathing was such that it seemed as if waves were playing about from the navel to the throat. Then again she would lie inert. I sat and carried her in my lap. Her whole body was as cold as stone. As she became a little steady, *śaliva* started pouring from her mouth in an impossible profusion. All my clothes got wet. Tears came gushing out of her eyes and her dress was soaked in tears. Then again suddenly, her body became lifeless. Her fingers and nails turned black, and her face turned yellow like that of a corpse. One could not make out whether her pulse was beating or not, nor were there any signs of breathing. We became terrified, but Ma had told us earlier, "You should perform *nāma kīrtana*. If this body is to recover it will do so only because of this." Therefore if Ma went into such states we would only perform *nāma kīrtana*. Bholanath also sang a lot of *nāma kīrtana*..

The kirtan was going on on the second floor. At that time my father was standing in the kitchen downstairs. A man went to father and said, "Go upstairs and see how Ma is completely immersed in a wonderful *bhāva*." Father ran upstairs, but he saw that Ma was seated with her hair all scattered and her head bent down. Father very sorrowfully thought : "Today I was duped. I did not get a glimpse of that aspect of yours." Reflecting thus he sat down to do japa. After a while his eyes opened suddenly looking towards Ma, he saw that her face was jet black and the lips seemed red. He did not see her tongue protruding. Father said, "I fixed my gaze and stared two or three times, wondering whether it was an illusion of the

eyes. But it was no illusion, I saw that form clearly. A little later the colour changed and her natural fair complexion returned." Ma lay down after sometime. When she sat up again, invocations started pouring from her lips in a stream, just like before. A little later *prasāda* was distributed. Ma calmed down slightly and lay down.

At three o'clock she was roused after several attempts. Now the *Daridra Nārāyaṇas* were to be seated for their meal. Ma rose, having recovered slightly. She looked through the grill at the beggars who had assembled. She said, "I do not see a big crowd. Arrangements are ready for three thousand. I doubt if there are even half the number. I had said in the morning that they would bungle today." Ma was taken downstairs where the food was ready. That day no special offering was to be made. Ma was to see the preparations and then *prasāda* was to be distributed as per the schedule and so my father took Ma downstairs. Ma placed her hand on my shoulder and went all round and saw everything. I remember to this day, the way in which Ma gazed from within her veil, how she rotated her eyes and looked at everything at once. Ma said, "I shall also serve a little." Everyone started shouting, "Jai Ma". Ma tied the end of her sari round her waist and served. A leper arrived. Ma fed him with special affection. Later Ma wanted to pick up the left-overs of *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* (to clean the place), but Bholanath forbade it and so she refrained from doing so. Devotees and students of the school cleared up the left-overs. Several ladies had turned up to watch the feeding. Ma said, "Today we are all poor, we will all obtain this *prasāda*." And so it was. All sat together to receive *prasāda*. No distinction existed between rich and poor. *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* sat down to eat. It became terribly dark and began to rain. All were seated in the field for the meal. Suddenly Ma went out of the room towards the field and started sauntering about. After completing their meal they all got up and Ma went inside the room and sat down. Then the rain again started pouring. We reckoned that Ma had started walking about outside so that the meal would not be spoilt by the rain. I have seen a similar thing once or twice later on.

In the night, after entrusting the entire burden of organising to a gentleman, Ma went to the field where the poor had been fed and sat down to eat in the darkness, saying, "Today we are also beggars. Give us alms." The gentleman who had been put in charge, quickly brought food and began serving Ma. All the people sat around Ma. Ma did not allow a light to be brought. She said, "Why, do beggars light a lamp and eat?" After eating everyone slowly took leave.





## CONVERSATION WITH WESTERN DEVOTEES

[Eleven]

—Vijayananda

### *Bhakti*

Q : Isn't there a danger in thinking that we are a divine channel as it is understood in the devotional path ?

A : For an ordinary person it is best to content oneself with doing one's duty the best way possible. One must be a very advanced sadhaka to be able to discern between what comes from God and what comes from himself. When we say 'I am an instrument of the divine', it is already not true, because the 'I' is there and it blocks the current. Those who are truly instruments of the divine are so naturally. In *bhakti*, it is good to see the action of God in everything that happens to us, as long as we have good discrimination. In this sense the famous story of Ramakrishna has great value : a guru recommended for his disciple to see God everywhere. So when the disciple saw a mad elephant running towards him, and heard the elephant's master shouting at him to move out of the way, the disciple thought : 'Why should I move, since God is everywhere?' And the elephant ran over him. The next day he went to complain to his guru. The guru answered him: "Haven't you yet understood that if God is everywhere, he is also in the elephant's master, who told you to move?" God is always used as an excuse, he has been used as a pretext for murderous wars.

Q : Is seeing everything as coming from God essential in all spiritual practice, or is it a method practiced only on the path of devotion?

A : In all religions there is this practice which consists of bringing everything back to divine actions. But after a while, we realise nothing happens by chance. The best example of this in Hinduism are Swami Ramda's books 'In Quest of God' and 'The Vision of God'.

Q : How do we understand grace?

A : We have already seen that aside from the normal result of our efforts, there is an uncommon type of grace, grace without cause, without reason. When we take

one step, God takes ten steps. The difference between *bhakta* and *purushatta*, the one who realises as the supreme by himself, is more a question of words. The latter receives grace from the inside, the former from the outside. What we must do is to prepare ourselves to be a receptacle to receive the water which pours down.

Q : Sometimes I feel that my heart is open as it would be during a surgical operation. What to do?

A : See the joy of the experience. To stabilise the opening of the *chakras* it is better to avoid deep breathing, which moves the energy to the sides, and it is better to keep superficial breathing, because it helps to gather the energy in the middle line. As far as the ventilation of the lungs is concerned, that resembles a respiratory arrest. It is a breathing which comes spontaneously in *samadhi*. Ma once told me in English regarding this subject : 'Lungs don't breathe'.

Q : What is the usefulness of deep breathing ?

A : To push the *prana* to a different part of the body; for example it is advised after a meal to open the right nostril, which has a heating effect, which favours digestion. We can see easily if one nostril is open or closed by breathing rapidly and comparing with the other side. To open a blocked nostril, e.g. the right one, we can lie on the left side. People who have practiced can open a nostril by direct concentration.

Q : I practiced by *mantra* during an extensive period of time, but I felt that this was superimposed upon my personality.

A : When one recites a *mantra*, one must do it with love.

Q : Where does the power of a *mantra* come from?

A : There are three sources. First, there is the faith of the disciple, then there is the energy, the guru put into the *mantra*, if he is capable, and finally with a Vedic *mantra*. There is power which is inherent in the *mantra*, as a result of generations of recitations by *Rishis*.....

Q : Is there a relationship between *mantra* and *nāda*, the inner sound?

A : While reciting the *mantra*, there are three stages. Words with their meaning, the sounds of the syllables themselves, and finally a continuous *Om*, as a kind of vibration. To hear the inner sound is easier when we meditate in solitude, especially when we meditate in a cave. The first noise is that of the ocean, then the other nine

are, as described in tradition, for instance, in Nadabindu Uanishad. We can integrate the *mantra* to this sound if we repeat it indefinitely, like a tape recorder. It sounds easy to transform these sounds which are discontinuous in one continuous sound, but it is in fact very difficult. When we have reached the continuous sound, we have reached the silence of the mind.

Q : What is *bhakti*? Is it simply to merge in emotion, or is it more than that?

A : Several times Ma did something to make me merge completely in emotion, dissolve in the emotion. But I didn't want to. In fact, I don't know what would have happened if I had let myself be dissolved completely. But that was precisely the question, I didn't want to let myself be carried away in a direction where I had no power to control my mind. Perhaps if I had let myself go, I would have been a great sage. However, be it for a *bhakta* or *jnani*, it is not good to let oneself go completely. In sadhana one has much more intense emotions than in ordinary life. But that is only the beginning. Real experiences in yoga go well beyond the emotions.

### *Jnāna*

Q : Isn't Vedanta, which doesn't include belief in a personal God, a form of atheism?

A : In reality, true atheists are unusual, because each one usually believes in his own existence, or in the existence of the outside world. So finally, everyone believes in the Self, because God is existence.

Q : How do we get rid of the ego?

A : It is only through complete realization that we can get rid of the ego. As far as the best path to follow, that depends. If we have a very strong ego, it is better to say, I am That, because everything is part of the divine, even the ego. If instead one has a weak ego, it is better to follow the path of devotion, and say, I am nothing, there is only God.

Q : Isn't Vedanta a bit too simple?

A : Some say, the theory of Vedanta is simple, but its practice is difficult, while the theory of *bhakti*, especially Vaishnavism, is complicated, but its practice is simple. In Vaishnavism, they have a number of theories on the different *lokas*, etc.....but their practice is simple, it is japa. On the other hand, the theory of Vedanta is very simple, and can be expressed in a single sentence : 'Brahman is

real, the world is illusion, the individual soul (*jivātmā*) is one with the Self (*Ātmā*), but his practice is difficult, because it is not easy to observe one's own mind without any support.

Q : How can one know if one has reached realization?

A : When the ego has completely disappeared, when there is no one left to say, 'I am realized : in the Upanishads, however, certain Rishis say : "*Vedam aham Purusham āditya varnam*" : "I know that Supreme Person (shining) with the colour of the sun". In Taittiriya Upanishad, Trishanku summarizes the knowledge in this way :

"I am there Supreme of the trees!

My fame is like a mountain peak!

Exaltedly pure, like the excellent nectar in the sun,

I am a shining treasure,

Wise, immortal, indestructible!" (Transl. D.Hume)

There are two possibilities: either the *rishis* who were saying 'I' in this manner were not completely realized, or they were giving these sayings to their disciples as a sort of *mantra* to meditate. Swami Rama Tirtha (a vedantic sage of the XXth century) used to say : 'It is a sin to believe that we are not God'.

Q : How to break the ego?

A : Why tackling this question in a negative way? Consider this matter in a positive way : why is the ego so strong? Because it has its roots something universal, in an ultimate basis of bliss.

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A lady visitor reminds us of Swami Ramdas' answer to the question :

'What is the sex of God? 'God is neither he, nor she, nor it : it is a mystery.'

Vijayananda is asked : 'What about your experience regarding this?'

A : The Absolute is like a stone which occupies all space; there is a crystal of this stone in our heart; it is indestructible, imperishable, immortal; it is *ananda* (bliss); we should become attached to this *ananda*. Nevertheless, this Absolute may take any form and play the game of being female or male or both together.

Q : How to develop self-confidence?

A : By being disentangled from the body and mind which are changing and by becoming identified to the immortal basis which does not change. What gives its

aspect of permanence to the impermanent body is the Self. People believe that this consciousness, this Self is so subtle that it is almost non-existent, but it is harder than diamond. This diamond is made of *chidananda*, consciousness-bliss, but all that should better be experienced by oneself.

Q : In samadhi, does breathing stop ?

A : Breathing stops completely or becomes very superficial, leading to the *prāna* stopping as well. The opening of the *nādis* (channels) is a sign of progress whatever path you follow. It allows the true meditation (*dhyana*), which is spontaneous. When I say 'spontaneous', I do not mean to say that there is not some sort of control of consciousness, which is there and watches. Likewise, if we are on a straight road driving at 100km/p.h everything goes on its own, but one is still holding the wheel...

Q : It is said that by going into the most *sāttvic sattva*, the three *gunas* will be eventually diluted. What do you think about it ?

A : This is true. The *sāttvic sattva* is a very fine, almost transparent veil through which the Self can be seen.

Q : Some people say that ecstasies itself can be an obstacle, because there is still the feeling of 'I'.

A : Not an obstacle, but a stage; this is *savikalpa samadhi*. In *nirvikalpa samadhi*, there is only the bottom of the sea, which is absolutely peaceful and blissful. We do not have the thought : 'I am happy, we are happiness itself, we are identified to it. The *sahaja samādhi* means seeing the peaceful bottom of the sea and the waves at the same time. From outside, it is difficult to judge the samadhi which some people may or may not have attained; better to leave them the benefit of doubt. Padmasambhava, for instance, had been criticized by someone who knew him because he started to live with a woman. He said of the one who was rejecting him : 'I forgive him because he does not know the functioning of the *nādis*.'

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To a young Parisian intellectual, who introduced himself as a nihilist :

V: - In India, it has been said for thousands of years that the Absolute can be reached. Saying that reaching it is impossible is a desperate attitude. Despair comes from objectivation, from the attraction towards outer objects. Once you have well understood this intellectually, you just have to start working. At this juncture, time

does not matter anymore. You may succeed in this life or in another, you have entered the good current.

Q : Isn't seeing everything as a witness somewhat dulling ?

A : There is movement and immobility, what is observed and the observer, both do exist. The first work-which is in itself an enormous task-is to become identified to the immobility, to the bottom. Afterwards, one considers that everything is water, that bottom and wave are one.

Q: - And what do you do with this realization ?

A: - A sage has such a joy that he feels like giving and giving and giving. He sees that *māyā* is so powerful in others : they have this full bliss at hand but are not conscious of it.

Q: - Does Realization mean agreeing with oneself ?

A: - With one's deepest Self.

Q : Can we really say that a *jnāni* is sleeping ?

A : The sage is *tureyātita*, beyond even the state of witness. He is identified with the basic consciousness and knows it, even when the mind is asleep. Ramana Maharshi says that *nirvikalpa samadhi* and deep sleep are very close. One can certainly say that the sage does not sleep but enters into *nirvikalpa samadhi*. As for me, however, I don't mind saying that a sage sleeps; in fact, his mind is sleeping.

Q : What more can we say on *Jnāna* or Knowledge ?

A : The more you advance, the simpler the spiritual truths. A time comes when 'That' is and that is all. We cannot put a name on 'That'; we only say 'Ah!'



[I]

## FIRST DARSHAN

—Shraddha Davenport

In January or February of 1960, soon after my thirtieth birthday, I had a dream which would lead me on a wondrous journey beyond the shores of the small world in which I slept.

It was the most perfect spring days. A soft breeze moved through the trees as the sun revealed the many colours hiding in the green leaves. Flowers of every hue were scattered across the verdant hill top. Gently the birds sang to the earth.

I was among people who were standing upon the grass in small groups and speaking quietly as we waited in anticipation. I could feel the joy of the day celebrating in all of my being.

To my right, I could see an open car approaching. It slowly moved past me and stopped when it was on my left with the front facing away from me, I could see a lady in the left rear seat whose back was toward me. She had long dark hair and was dressed all in white.

As I gazed at Her, She slowly turned to Her left; and as She turned, everything began to still.

The people quiet talking; the birds stopped chirping; even the breeze was still. There was no movement except Hers. She was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. She turned until She was facing me. And from the infinite depths of Her exquisite eyes She looked into my eyes and entered my soul. Nothing else existed but She who is my love. In ecstasy She revealed all things to me and I saw that everything is perfect. In complete awe I could only murmur in prayer and adoration, "Oh my God".

Upon awakening, I told my husband of this dream, which was like no dream I had ever known in its clarity and reality. Even the colors were more vivid than any in waking life. I had no idea Who the beautiful lady was, but I would never forget Her or those eyes. The experience which She had given to me was far beyond the grasp of my mind. I was unable to recall the things that had been revealed to me; only that the experience had happened and that everything is already perfect.

I knew that it was a mystical experience. But did the beautiful lady really exist somewhere ?

Several months later we were introduced to a young woman who was preparing to leave town. She had a small but nice library which she did not wish to take with her, and She asked if we would like to have it. We were pleased to receive it as there were many unusual volumes that interested us. We had become attracted to Indian philosophy as we searched for truth, and found in it a way of thinking that was very natural to us.

As I looked through two particular books from India, I was startled to see pictures of a lady saint who resembled the beautiful lady of my dream. I showed the pictures to my husband, but said I could not be sure that it was She, as my lady was older than the one pictured in the books. The books were *Mother As Seen By Her Devotees* and *Matri Vani*. The saint was Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma, the "Joy-Permeated Mother."

The stories about Her were thrilling, and Her words were uniquely consistent, drawing us to the one-pointed nature of all that She said.

By 1961 we had met several people who were students of Self-Realization Fellowship, and we were very surprised to learn from them that Sri Anandamayi Ma was the same "Joy-Permeated Mother" that Master Paramhansa Yogananda (the founder of SRF) had written about in his book *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

One girl, whom Ma was later to give the name Haripriya, especially seemed to know about Sri Ma, and we were amazed to learn that Sri Ma was living. (It had been our past misfortune that any saint who attracted us was no longer alive.)

I saw more recent photos of Sri Ma and felt more certain that She was the lady of my dream. But always there was a little doubt. How could I be sure ?

In the summer of 1962 Haripriya had the great good fortune of going to India with the express purpose of seeing Sri Anandamayi Ma. I will never forget the thrill of knowing that my friend would soon see that Great Mother with her own eyes. She was kind enough to carry my first note to Mother. I had asked for a flower from Her hand, for my altar.

That beautiful flower, given by Ma, is preserved in a frame along with the first picture I had of Ma. But it was no small miracle that I received it all. While Haripriya was in India we had moved to a town in Northern California about five hundred miles away, but she did not know this. Wishing to get Mother's blessing to me before she returned to the States, Haripriya mailed the flower and a little note to me at our old address. For a return address, she had put her name and the address of Ma's ashram in India. It was returned to India safely. But when someone at the ashram remembered Haripriya (who by this time had left for the States), looked up her California address, and re-sent the letter to her, we all agreed



that this was truly miraculous ! Haripriya then forwarded this much travelled blessing to me.

At the end of 1962 another dear friend went to see Sri Ma. Mother gave him many blessings and later when he took sannyas his name became Swami Nirmalananda Giri after Mother's birth name of 'Nirmala'. We had moved back to Los Angeles just before he returned and will never forget the joy of being with him so fresh from India.

He had with him a photo of Mother which he had asked Her to "autograph" for us. Sri Ma "autographed" photos by making some personal mark for the recipient. Ours had a small eye, drawn as the spiritual eye is usually depicted.

Soon after this we were given a copy of the book *Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma*. This book was like food for our starving souls. It was wholly Mother's words in reply to people from all walks of life who had come to Her with questions. Her answers always cut right through the surface where the problem only seemed to be and went down to the underlying source where all difference dissolves and truth alone survives.

The first real letter that I wrote to Mother was in November, 1963, and I did not write again until Haripriya returned to India in 1967. Then my husband and I both sent letters.

We had spoken many times about our desire to meet Sri Ma but it seemed that we never had enough money for the trip. So when Haripriya went for the third time in 1969 I thought I must at least write to Mother asking for a mantram and also requesting Her to give me an Indian name. I had no idea of how she could give me a mantram, as it should be spoken directly to me, but that was not *my* problem and so I asked.

Haripriya was to be in India for several months and there was no way to know when the opportunity would arise for her to read my letter to Mother and get Her reply.

One day as I went about my chores in our little house, the thought of Mother, Haripriya, and a certain Name of God kept coming to my mind. This happened all through the day.

When I received a letter from Haripriya with Mother's reply to me we found that my letter had been read to Mother on the same day I had this experience.

"Ma will give you a mantram and name—you will know from within what mantram or Name of God to take. When it comes spontaneously to you from within take that as coming from Mother." Haripriya, without knowing of my experience,

wrote that as Mother replied to my letter she felt that I was receiving the mantram then.

One month later I was again blessed as a dreadful habit was taken from me. While a young girl, I had taken up the practice of smoking in an attempt to be like other young people I knew. As I became aware of my spiritual nature, it was obvious that smoking was not in harmony with my aspirations and I had made many attempts to break the habit. On one occasion I had forced myself to quit for five months. But I never lost the craving and had to battle with it everyday until I finally gave in-as at least I did not think about smoking all the time when I was doing it.

Now just one month after receiving my mantram I awoke one morning and it was as though I had never smoked in my life. There was no "quitting," as the habit no longer existed. I have never again had any thought of smoking since that day.

One day after that I received my name from within: 'Shraddha'. It is the Sanskrit word meaning, "Faith."

Ever after so much grace had been showered on me, I still felt the need to look into those eyes for myself, as I knew there were none like those I had seen in my dream. After one more year of still being unable to go to Her, I wrote to Mother to confirm what I had received. My heart filled with joy when I read Her affirmation.

A few months later we heard the news that Mother's mother, "Didima", had left her body on August 8, 1970. Suddenly the reality hit us that one day Mother would also physically leave this earth and we would be left with the knowledge that we had made no real effort to go and see Her.

There was still no money for travelling, but we found that we had excellent credit. So a whole new world opened up for us as we applied for and received several credit cards. We would always pay our debts, so it would be easier to pay after the trip than to save for it, and besides we were no longer in the mood to wait.

Suddenly the rush was on. We had to write to Mother for permission to come, obtain passports and visas, get all the needed shots, purchase gifts to take to India, and do an endless number of things that were all new to us.

A lady from whom we had just purchased a juicer asked if we were going to take movies while in India. We said 'no', we could not afford a camera. "Then you must take my camera," she said. Little did we know what a wonderful thing she was doing for us. Those films are among this life's greatest treasures.

[ To be continued ]

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## [II]

### FIRST DARSHAN

— Antonio Eduardo Dagrino

With the money I earned in the first show of my paintings, I went to India to find a guru. I was 24, and had been living literally on the razor's edge.

It was the Sufi mystic, Rehana Tyabji, who had adopted me in Delhi, who sent me to Sri Anandamayi Ma. I still remember it as if it were only yesterday, the exhaltation I felt waiting amongst a small crowd for her to appear. We were in a large room of an ashram in Haridwar, and after two or three hours, she came in through a side door and sat on a wooden bed covered in cushions. Never had I seen someone like this, so electric, so attractive, so beautiful; with the crystalline voice of a very young girl, the deep magnetic eyes of a timeless sage and the long black hair of a gopi or a devi.

After pranam, I remembered that Rehana had given me a note for the Mother and I passed it to a Swami, who read it out loud to her. Since it was in Hindi, I did not understand a thing— but she winked at me and made a sign with her hand that I should approach her. I felt that with each step I took towards her a huge weight fell off my shoulders. I sat on the floor to her right, and she asked me through an interpreter, where I came from and where I was going. I found myself to answer that I came to India to find myself and that I was going to the Himalayas.

Then she focussed her timeless gaze into my eyes and saw a ray of light coming from her which pierced my soul, and in the next moment, I was filled with rapture and incredible peace, with not a thought in my mind. If I closed my eyes, I would only contemplate the fullness of light gushing forward from a centerless center, and if I opened them, I would feel I was part of all that surrounded me.

It was already night time when a Brahmachari very delicately disturbed my ecstasy, because they were about to close the temple. Hours had flown by and I had not recorded them. And yet, as I ate in the street, or rode a horse carriage to the ashram where I was staying, I was still in a state empty of all thoughts. This state continued all through the night, and the beauty of it was its independence from any trace of personal history, attachments, fears or critical evaluations. It was pure being, pure awareness and fathomless joy.

When dawn came and the glow of the self met the coarse sun light, my first thought in twelve hours started to insinuate and eventually corrupt that boundless purity. Suddenly, I felt that I didn't deserve all this, I who had hated my parents, who had abused my lovers, and so on.....

I should not receive this grace, this thought grew. I was unfit for this transmission of light. These sentiments intensified and the precious glow gave way to guilt and self deprecation..... and so the miracle of Mataji's grace floundered in the well known reefs of the ego.

### **Initiation**

In 1971, after again being in India for over a year, I started longing for to receive a mantra from Mataji. One night in Dehradun I dreamed of two *Bija mantras*. I had heard that mantras received in a dream amounted to an initiation, so I asked for a private interview to discuss it with Mataji.

Ma explained the meaning of the two seed syllables, the deities to which they referred, and she told me I should say them with my eyes open, and unblinking gaze, which I thought a most difficult task. My mind was so fickle and unconcentrated, that my eyes were prone to tics. When the interview came to an end, I walked out of the room stopped to gather my breath and to recount everything said. I was just outside the door. I felt a ray of Ma's energy piercing me once again and I could hear the *bija mantras* turning around my heart, through no volition of my own. They have continued to this day. It would be absolutely fair to say that it took me many years to steady my eyes.

### **Mother is Durgā**

For a few days I prayed for permission to take acid during the Durga Puja in Mataji's presence. I knew that this type of undertaking was completely prohibited to her devotees, did not want to bridge convention, nor disobey rules. Nevertheless, I had a deep inner yearning to know who Mata Anandamayi really was. I felt that with my own powers, unaided by the psychedelic pill, I could only arrive at a certain depth, and not be able to scan her infinite wholeness.

One morning, sitting cross-legged in front of the little altar at my room in Benares Hindu University, Ma's photograph seemed to be lit from within and her face moved, her eyes bored into mine and she smiled. On the last night of Nava Ratri (Durga Puja) I took it. For many hours I sat unblinkingly in front of the life size Durga Devi statue that was to be plunged into the Ganga the next day. I had only one wish to see the Mother, to see the real Mother of the universe in the beautiful 8-armed idol that seemed somehow to look back at me.

Then, around midnight, Sri Sri Ma came from her room to the courtyard that overlooks the Ganga. She was all smiles and all love and I rushed to get as near to her as I could. I realized then that her normal countenance was only a veil that hid the

prodigious scope of the *maha shakti's* compassion. I could see how from her heart, and from her consciousness, rays of conscious light were beaming towards each of her devotees; linking them up with Godhood, or granting to them their worldly or religious desires. The scope of that activity was too holy and too deep for my acid-enhanced consciousness and I could only bow in silent prayer.

When she turned towards the stairway to go back to her rooms, she slid a glance towards me and said, "Satisfied?"

### **Shiva ratri**

The last Shiva ratri with Mataji was in the Kankhal Ashram, near Haridwar. The ceremony began after dusk and the people were crowded, almost pressed against each other in the courtyard by a small Shiva temple. Mother would come down from her room, sit on her dais in silence, while devotees sang the mantras of Shiva uninterruptedly. The atmosphere was of great devotion, and the crowd seemed to breathe as one multi-faced, multi-limbed person. The name of God was on every tongue. I didn't know where I began and where I ended. I knew that Mataji's eloquent silence was the substratum on which our lives were articulated and from which the resonance of the one Self revealed Itself to Itself.

When the first rays of the still hidden sun started to tincture the eastern sky with rose and orange buds, I got up from my place and walked towards the Ganga, wanting to salute the rising sun on this holy bank. Then, lo and behold, as I walked towards the river; I saw on top of the row of samadhis (tombs) that lined the way, the living spirits of the yogis, who were buried in them sitting in *padmasana*, awakened for the holiest night of the year as flames in the infinite Flame.

Little did I know then that magic encounter with the living souls of the dead awoke in me the unasked for capacity to see and converse with the dead. Well, I didn't have it before that experience; and after that it just began.

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### **A Strange Vision**

I was meditating on the roof of my Dharmasala in Haridwar during the suffocatingly hot pre-monsoon days of 1973, when I saw clearly Ma's subtle body come through the air to where I was. She carried a baby in her arms. Smiling, she gave it to me. She then went to a wing of the Shiva temple outside, it contains the paintings of the ten Mahavidyas, she took something from there, and came back, giving me another baby; she returned once more to the temple and to me with a third.

When I returned to Venezuela, the first thing I seemed to do was to marry and in the next seven years we had three lovely daughters.



# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

—P. C. Mehta

[Continued from before]

## Chapter—9

1. The two-fold discipline in the Upanisads to reach *Moksa*:

### (1) *Vairāgya* :

Removal of '*ahamkāra*' through '*vairāgya*' by cultivation of detachment is the first step. It presupposes training through the three ashrams of '*brahma-Carya*', '*gārhasthya*' and '*vānaprastha*'. These stages lead to '*sanyasa*'. In the Upanisads *sanyasa* was regarded as a consequence of *Brahma-Jnāna*, rather than a means of attaining it. The concept of *sanyasa* as a means of attaining *Brahma-Jnana*, developed later on.

Detachment from selfish interests alone leads to tranquility and thence to meditation. Says one Upanisad- 'Give it (i.e. this learning) to none that is not tranquil'.

Therefore the Upanisadic teachings were kept a secret and imparted only to true and tried pupils, so as not to bring this arcane wisdom to disrepute.

The ethical training and living, which detachment signifies as well as brings about, is generally taken for granted in the Upanisads and therefore not much dwelt upon. Nevertheless where it is referred to, its importance is brought out. For example, in the beginning of the 'Katha Upanisad', where a youth named Nachiketa seeks to know from the God of Death whether the soul survives the body or not is tempted in several ways by the offer of wealth and power before the truth is made known to him. This is an example of the need for self abnegation.

Equal emphasis is laid on what is described as social morality. Thus, in Brihadaranyaka Upanisad Prajapati, who is an ethical authority, enjoins the practice not only of self-denial but also of generosity and compassion.

The preliminary training implicit in the Upanisads indicates the necessity for grades in moral discipline according to the capacity and temperament of the persons.

### (2) *Jnana* :

Evil being due to a misconception of Reality, its removal can be through right knowledge. The training for it is threefold i.e. by i) *sravana*, ii) *manana* and iii) *nididhyasana*.

i) *Sravana* stands for listening to and the study of the Upanisads under a proper guru.

ii) *Manana* is continued reflection to get an intellectual conviction. The truths as taught have to be reflected upon intellectually as well as intuitively, so that they transcend mere theory and enable the pupil to open the doors of perception.

iii) *Nididhyasana* is the highest form of meditation which assists in the realization of the unity underlying multiplicity, in other words lifting the 'sadhaka' from mediate knowledge to immediate realization. We have an immediate conviction in the ultimacy of diversity. This can only be dispelled by an equally immediate flash of unity. Therefore, one has constantly to dwell upon the truth so that in its unfolding, one gets direct insight into it.

Theoretical knowledge with logical conviction is superficial or mediate knowledge and has little room in Indian philosophy. Mediate knowledge of truth cannot overcome an immediate illusion. What is therefore aimed at is immediate or direct at-one-ment of Atman with Brahman. This will be further discussed when we come to 'Yoga'.

To come to *nididhyasana*, preliminary meditative practices called *upasanas* are recommended. *Upasana* mode of exercises enable the disciple to draw away his mind from disturbing thoughts and fix it on one object only, the ultimate aim being to grasp the unity of existence directly. The objects of contemplation may be real or only symbols. Two modes of *upasanas* are as follows —

- 1) In the one, thought is directed outwards selected external objects which are mentally identified e.g. the universe as the horse. This greatly helps in developing the ability to concentrate.
- 2) The other form consists in the selection of only one external object and identifying it with the meditative's own self. This method, besides helping in developing concentration, gives rise to the cultivation of sympathetic imagination meaning the power to place oneself in the position of another. Since Brahman which is contemplated upon is to be identified with the meditative's self, this affords a more direct aid to Brahma-realization.

The Upanisads describe Brahman itself as without evil— a description the implication of which is that, he who desires to attain Brahma-hood should strive to free himself from all forms of evil Thus moral life is the very bedrock from which all disciplines spring.

As Max Muller says, goodness and virtue are 'a sine qua non for the attainment of the highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home and restores it to its true nature'.

## 2. *Sanyasa, Nivrtti & Pravrtti :*

The culmination of this ethical training is symbolized in formal renunciation or *sanyasa*. In the Upanisads, though *sanyasa* appeared as a consequence of *Brahma-Jnana*, it later received a prominent place as a means of attaining it. It is i) *Nivrtti* i.e. ascetic way as distinguished from ii) *pravrtti* i.e. activist way of life taught in the Brahmanas.

## 3. What is the liberated state ?

In accordance with the double view of the ultimate reality found in the Upanisads, and mentioned above, this is conceived in two ways.

## 4. Bhratrprapanca's view:

According to people like Bhratrprapanca, it is a condition in which only the sense of diversity as ultimate disappears and an all-comprehensive reality is experienced as identical with oneself.

## 5. Sankara's view :

It is a condition, according to some like Sankara, in which the self remains by itself artless and peaceful.

## 6. *Jivan-mukti & Videha-mukti :*

In either case, the state of release is a moral and intellectual perfection, transcending the distinctions we make between, i) self and not-self and ii) good and evil.

According to the earlier Vedic belief, this state of liberation which is the final ideal of man can be attained only hereafter.

The Upanisads on the other hand declare that 'liberation in the final sense while still alive', was possible. This is what they called *Jivan-mukti* (Contrast this view with the pre-Upanisadic meaning of *Jivan-mukti* as in Chapter 4 (item 20).

Brihadaranyaka Upanisad says: 'When all the desires of the heart are destroyed at the dawn of knowledge of Brahman, the mortal becomes immortal, then man attains Brahman even in this life. And as the slough of a snake lies cast away on an ant-hill, so lies the body. The spirit, disembodied and immortal, becomes united with Brahman'.

According to earlier Vedic belief, in the condition of *Jivan-mukti* i.e. liberation while still alive, the diversity of the world, does not cease to appear, but the belief in its ultimacy is once for all destroyed. When in the end a person who has reached this stage is disassociated from his physical accompaniments, he



becomes Brahman itself. That is *Videha-Mukti* or final release, which is release without the body.

Accordingly, the Upanisadic concept of release while in the body, makes a great advance on the earlier Vedic belief, but does not supersede it. Both possibilities are valid and available according to the *adhikara* i.e. level of growth and aptitude of the person.

## Chapter—10

### 1. States of consciousness:

Besides the waking state, the Upanisads study the self under dream, dreamless sleep and *turia*. In dreaming, the mind functions. But since dreamless sleep and *turia* are supra-mental, they are studied to discover the real nature of the soul.

The dream state is intermediate between waking and deep sleep. Its physical condition is that the organs of sense become quiescent and the senses then unite with the *manasa*.

The difference between waking and dreams is that in waking the *manasa* receives impressions from outside, which it builds up into ideas, while in dream it fashions a world of forms by itself from the visual and auditory material of waking hours. Thus dreams are made of revived impressions.

In dreamless sleep called *susupti*, the *manasa* as well as the senses being dormant and there is a cessation for empirical awareness. As there is no subject-object consciousness, the lower self attains a temporary union with the Absolute. However, though the individuality is absent, this is not a state of liberation, This is a state of bliss being above all desires.

*Turia* state lies outside practical investigation. The *turia* or the fourth state of consciousness is the transcendental state which is the innate nature of consciousness. Man awakens to it only when he is free from ignorance and comes to Self-Knowledge. It is brought about by elimination of discursive thought and resembles dreamless sleep in all respects but one. In the *turia* state while the Self stands revealed, in dreamless sleep the experience if any is very dim. The attainment of this state is the consummation of spiritual training.

About the *turia* state of consciousness, Mandukya Upanisad says: "That which is not conscious of internal objects, nor of external objects, nor of objects in the intermediary state and is not a negative consciousness, which is neither conscious nor unconscious, which is unrelated, unperceivable, beyond all connotations, beyond all thought, indefinable, whose nature is pure self

consciousness, beyond relative existence, which is peaceful, of blissful nature and is the One without a second—that the wise call *turīya*, the fourth. That is the self, He is to be realized'.

## 2. What happens to those who do not come to enlightenment during life ?

Let us now consider what the Upanisads say about persons who do not come to enlightenment in this life and transmigration. The Upanisads make two broad divisions of them.

i). Those who pursue the right path of life. These are the people who, during life, have given up desire for rebirth, through *tapas* or asceticism etc. When they die their soul goes to higher existences through *Devayana*, i.e. the way of the Gods.

ii) Those who yield to natural impulses, because they lack self-control. As they have not given up desire for rebirth, even if they have done good *karmas*, they go to higher life through *Pitriyana*.

The first, progress from one state of existence to a higher state without returning to the world of mortals, until at last they find release from the cycle of births and deaths and rebirths. This is known as *Krama-Mukti* i.e. progressive realization of the ideal of life.

Deussen says that 'the meaning of the whole is that the soul on the way of the gods reaches regions of ever-increasing light, in which is concentrated all that is bright and radiant as stations on the way to *Brahman* the 'Light of Lights' (*Jyotisam Jyotihi*).

Some Vedantists believe that this is the sole form of release taught in the Upanisads. This view corresponds to the view of the goal of man, as it was understood in the earlier stages of the Vedic period.

The latter class of people, i.e. the self-indulgent, who fail to bridle their desires, are born again and again, their condition in any particular life being determined by 'the nature of their deeds and the nature of their thoughts', in the past.

The belief in the *Karma* doctrine implied here forms a characteristic feature of Upanisadic teaching. The Prasna Upanisad says, *Punyena punyam lokam nayati, papena papam* i.e. 'Meritorious deeds lead to commendable realms, wicked deeds to wicked realms'.

## 3. Theism in the Upanisads

Up to the close of the *Brahmana* period, we have noted the worship of objective gods. On account of over emphasis on ritual punctilio by the priests, the

theism of the *mantras* declined and gave place, as we have seen, to the monotheistic conception of Prajapati.

While dealing with 'monotheism', we shall mention the place which monotheism, strictly so termed, finds in the Upanisads.

But here we refer to another form of monotheism found in the Upanisads. As the main thesis of the Upanisads is the philosophic Absolute, which is the essence of both creation and man, a completely objective concept of God is iconoclastic. The Upanisads explicitly repudiates such an objective conception of God. 'Whoever worships a deity thinking that to be one and himself another, he does not know'. (Brihadaranyaka Upanisad I.iv.10 Cf. Kena Upanisad I. 4-8.)

In the Upanisads, God is taken to be immanent in all that constitutes the universe, including gods and men. This fact is indicated by the name *Isa* or *Isvara* i.e. 'Lord' who lives as the *Antaryamin* or 'inner guide' in all objects in the universe. (see *Isa Upanisad* and the word *Avasya* therein) A theistic rendering of the doctrine is sometimes found where that absolute itself is personified and spoken of as God. The Upanisadic God is described as the *Antaryamyamrtah* or 'inner ruler immortal'.

*Isvara* in this sense is only the personified form of *Brahman*. The term does not accordingly signify creator other than the created, as God is conceived in monotheism, but a principle which is eventually one with it. In the terminology of later *Vedanta*, it means that God as conceived here is the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe. This personified conception of *Brahman*, as may be expected, often passes into that of the Absolute in the teachings of the Upanisads.

Of the two forms of *Brahman*, cosmic and acosmic, it is the cosmic which lends itself to such transformation. But a God identical with *atman*, cannot ultimately be differentiated from the *Jiva*. He can stand only for an inner principle and not for an object of adoration distinct from him that adores.

#### 4. Upanisads as reaction against Brahmanas:

It is often stated that the teachings of the Upanisads mark a reaction against *Brahmanas*, which have introduced an elaborate system of rituals. Here it is assumed that Upanisadic teaching supersedes the ritualistic teaching of the *Brahmanas*. As already stated, the teachings of the Vedas constitute a unified whole, where it proceeds from prayers to rituals, to meditation and finally to *Jnana*. Men are at different levels of spiritual growth and the discipline of *Sadyo-Mukti* cannot be recommended for all. As such it is appropriate to say that Vedic teachings developed in two directions, one towards elaboration of rituals and another towards deep insight into philosophical truth.

### 5. Ceremonial life recognized by the Upanisads:

It is clear that within the Vedic period itself, along with the development of Upanisadic philosophy, the ceremonial life was recognized as necessary for the attainment of the final goal of life. It is, therefore, not so much a matter of conflict with the way of rituals, but rising to a level at which rituals become unnecessary. This was possible only for a few.

Thus, when we consider the teaching of the Vedas in their entirety, the Upanisads represent the Ultimate Truth discovered by the sages, but does not limit access thereto to one specific mode.

The way of the rituals was a very accepted practice.

### 6. The roots of subsequent philosophies

Thus we may summarize the three thought patterns found in the Upanisads. Their importance lies in the fact that they are the source from which have sprung subsequent philosophies. They are as follows:

- 1) The strongest is that *Atman/Brahman* is the only reality. This view gets interpreted in two ways, that i) though the world is real it is not apart from *Brahman* and ii) that the world is but an appearance and that it has no actual place in *Brahman* or the Ultimate Reality.
- 2) *Atman/Brahman* is identified with the universe. It is the immanent principle. This is the pantheistic current.
- 3) *Brahman* is the creator and the controlling Lord of the world. This is Theism.

[ To be continued ]




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#### Note :

Indian Philosophy is very ably and lucidly explained by Prof. M. Hiriyanna in his many works. His exposition forms the ground work of these articles on which many other thought patterns are superimposed.

—P.C. Mehta

## GLEANINGS FROM "IN ASSOCIATION WITH SRI MA"

—Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

### THE BENEFIT OF SRI MA'S COMPANY

Dhaka, August 19, 1939

Sri Ma to Rajkumar : "Your way is now clear. With single-minded determination continue to tread this path".

Rajkumar : I wanted to take the spiritual path from the very beginning. It is you who induced me to get involved into family life with all its complications.

Mataji : Good - to get a taste of life in the world has cleared the atmosphere. This is the peculiarity of having approached this body. Had you gone elsewhere many things would have remained hidden within you; but having come to this body everything has become revealed. This is for your good. Is it safe to keep snakes in your caverns ? Who knows when they may raise their hoods ? It is far better to extract these reptiles once for all and clear the road for further progress.

On listening to these words of Ma I recalled something that. Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj had told me. One day he was explaining to me the difference between keeping company with someone beyond the range of the three *gunas* (*gunātita*) and a mahatma endowed with all the nobler qualities (*sattwa*). He pointed out that in associating with such mahatmas one could get considerable help in one's sadhana, because by their sattvic influence, one's evil tendencies are temporarily subdued, so much so that they don't seem to exist anymore. At that time it looks as if close proximity to these mahatmas has brought much success in one's *sadhana*. But these undesirable qualities have not been completely uprooted, though temporarily subdued, and in due course, given the opportunity, they will awaken once more. Whereas association with Sri Ma, who is beyond the three *gunas*, has not at all this effect. The company of such an exalted Being does not stimulate the nobler or baser tendencies at all, because such a being is completely beyond the attributes (*gunas*) of matter and so does not influence anyone by the qualities of *sattva* (luminosity, harmony) or *rajas* (ceaseless activity and movement). Quite often it even appears as if there were not only no progress but rather retrogression. This is due to the fact that association with a being beyond the qualities and inclinations are awakened and

established for good. But at the early stage a dreadful experience has to be gone through by the *sadhaka*.

The above mentioned words of Sri Ma seemed to vindicate the substantive truth of Sri Gopi Babu's philosophy.

**Dhaka, August 20th, 1939.**

This morning Ma was sitting on the veranda of the Smriti Mandir surrounded by devotees. Everyone was anxious to hear Ma talk, but nobody had any questions ready. At last Pramatha Babu requested: "Ma, please say something".

Ma: What shall I say?

Pramatha Babu: Whatever you have in mind.

Ma: That is the trouble, there is no mind here. (Turning to me) Baba, what should I say ?

I: Whatever you feel inclined to.

Ma: Here, there is no inclination or disinclination.

I: Speak of something that will be of benefit to all of us. (Everybody laughs)

Abhaya: At Azimgunge you spoke for three or four hours about *diksha*, *samadhi*, etc. Please repeat some of that.

Ma: The reason for so much conversation was that several people had asked various questions about their personal *sadhana*. This was their own individual affairs. Hence it cannot be given as general advice.

I: Please, tell us something concerning *diksha* (initiation). What exactly is *diksha*?

Ma : Why do you study ?

I: To acquire knowledge.

Ma: So I say that just as after completing your studies you do professional work and thus reap the benefits of pension, so also there is a kind of pension to be enjoyed on this path.

I: When Sri Ram Thakur's disciples complained to him in their disappointment : "Baba, we are unable to repeat the Name properly, so what is to be done?" Thakur would reply: "Can the Name be repeated deliberately? The Name comes about spontaneously. Even though you may not be doing anything, the Name is there automatically. If this were not so, what did I bestow on you?" What is the purport of these words of Ram Thakur? What precisely does the Guru give the *diksha*?

Even though we have no experience of it, yet a certain action is taking place within us. How is this possible ?

Ma: What do you understand by *diksha*?

I: I know nothing myself. I can only repeat what I have heard from revered Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj on this subject: He has said that *Sastras* connote making a connection between the power of God and the individual power of the disciple. If the disciple can be linked to the current of the Lord's might, then the force of this current will one day or another lead the disciple to the Supreme Goal. Even if the aspirant makes no effort, the force of the current will gradually draw him towards God... there is no doubt about this. And if he regularly engages in spiritual exercises or worship, he will be able to progress very much faster...it is just like swimming with the current.

Ma: All this is very true, completely true.

I: Very well. So there is no need for us to repeat God's name or do anything in this direction, for in any case we are bound to reach the Goal one day:

Ma: (laughing) But you want to get there quickly, you feel the urgency of it, don't you? So for this reason you will have to set to work.

Didi: While being carried along by the current, you may be held up by some obstacle and come to a standstill.

I: No, Didi, there is no fear of that. Ma has declared that once the mercy of a sadguru has been won, there can be no more fall from Grace.

Ma: Yes, if a sadguru has bestowed his Grace, how can there be danger of a fall ? Some devotees are of the opinion, "since I have been blessed by the Grace of the sadguru why should I take the trouble to practise sadhana? The Guru will accomplish everything. So I can continue to enjoy my life". Again, someone else feels the intense urge to make quick progress, so he performs *japa* and meditation. There are so many different types. It is of course a fact that once the timber catches fire, it will in due course be reduced to ashes, *That seed* (of initiation) cannot be destroyed. When a seed is buried in the ground, in some cases the plant grows quickly and in other cases there may be delay. If the soil is well prepared beforehand the plant grows fast, but if not, it may be a slow process.

A devotee: Could not some of the seeds rot in the ground?

Ma: Yes, a few seeds may possibly become rotten in the ground. But even this does not render them useless. After rotting they remain in the soil as fertilizers. Nothing is wasted.

It may happen that some people receive the sadguru's grace at an early age but for many years are not interested in the spiritual path. Eventually, in old age devotion for God awakens in them. For others nothing may be achieved during the present birth, but in a subsequent birth there may be fulfilment. Is it not said that after leaving the body one has to return and live in another body. This world is a continuous coming and going. Here there is only birth, death and rebirth. But it may also happen that after leaving the body one may never have to return again. For once the fire of the Knowledge of Reality is kindled it can reduce everything to ashes within a split second. Thereafter there is no more coming and going.

I: Ma, it is believed that in order to exhaust one's *karma* (results of former actions) one has to take on a body. Can *karma* not be exhausted without assuming another body?

Ma: Even when the physical body dies, there are other subtle bodies.

I: Then is it possible to work out one's *karma* in an etherial body?

Ma: There are quite a lot of *karmas* for which a physical body is needed, so one has to be reborn in a new body. But there are other *karmas* that can be worked out in a subtle body. The ONE is constantly leading human beings towards Himself. Everyone will at sometime or other reach the Supreme Goal because this is man's destiny. To become established in his own true Being is man's inherent tendency (*samskāra*).

I: Ma, by *samskāra* we usually understand the results that will ensue due to one's previous actions. Has a human being the capacity to perform actions that will enable him to attain to the Supreme Brahman or the Supreme Goal ?

Ma: This is why it is said that it is the Guru who out of His Grace leads to that Goal. It is impossible to achieve merely by performing action.

I: When you speak of becoming established in one's true Being, this seems to be the ultimate state reached by *sadhana*. But one also hears of states of existence such a *Sivaloka* or *Visnuloka*, etc. which the power instilled by the Guru into the disciple may subsequently enable him to attain, but beyond which the disciple cannot proceed. So, how can it be that everybody is able to reach the Supreme Goal, which is to be established in one's own Self?

Ma: What you say is also true. Frequently it is seen that human beings become arrested on particular levels. But if a person has the inborn tendency, he may after temporary confinement at one level, proceed higher up. Others may spend age after age in the same state. There are so many possibilities. Is there an end to this subject ?



Pramatha babu : I don't understand all these bickerings over knowledge and worlds after death. I just want to make sure that since you are here as our Mother, do we have to acquire all this knowledge to know you?

Ma: You are a practising lawyer, do you do your work without having studied law?

Pramatha babu : By what kind of studies have you yourself acquired all this wisdom?

Ma: Leave aside the question of this body;

Abhaya: You are so great that one cannot compare anyone with you.

Ma: I do not ask you to leave aside the question of this body because it is so great. You can ask this body "to go to hell". (Everybody bursts into loud laughter). Do you not frequently call some one an 'idiot'? You can ignore this body as an idiot. (Again loud laughter).

Pramatha babu : This is not what I mean. I must repeat that I want to realize Ma. Now, do I have to acquire all this knowledge in order to realize Ma or will I automatically obtain all this knowledge by realizing who Ma is?

Ma: By realizing Ma you will have gained everything. Did I not say only the other day that the mother wishes to give everything to her children ? It is the mother's sole desire that whatever she possesses should belong to her children.

Pramatha babu : Indeed, this is very heartening news. I understand this quite well. But Ma, do you know what happens to me when I listen to all these people discussing abstruse knowledge? I start suspecting my own feelings. I imagine these people have stolen away everything and I have been cheated. (laughter)

Ma: (laughing) Listen, even though the Goal is the same, the paths taken by different people are of great variety. Some choose the path of knowledge, discriminating: 'Not this, not this; (*neti, neti*); others of dedicated action. But the objective is the same.

Pramatha babu : I do not relish all these questions.

Ma: When one starts studying and gains a little knowledge, questions are bound to arise. Questions multiply in proportion to the increase of one's knowledge. On the other hand he who has never touched a book does not gain any knowledge nor do any question occur to him. There is yet another category of individuals who have no problems and therefore no questions.

Pramatha babu : So it seems that I belong to this category. (Everybody laughs)

Ma: (laughing) This is quite obvious. (Laughter again) But they do not harbour any suspicion that they have been cheated.

Pramatha babu : So, in order to realize Ma, we cannot evade all this knowledge?

Ma: See here, have I not pointed out a moment ago that it is the natural disposition of the human being to become aware of the treasure hidden within himself? The true nature of man is to move in this direction. In this natural process he cannot avoid anything. You may have observed the natural flow of water: If water is poured out it starts flowing. Should there be a hole on the way, so long as the hole is not filled entirely, the water cannot flow any further; but as soon as the hole is full, the water resumes its course. Similarly, the individual quite naturally moves towards peace and tranquillity. Along the way he cannot avoid anything that happens to be there, so nothing remains unknown to him. That is why I repeat: SET TO WORK. Effort is a necessity. Nevertheless attainment does not ensue due to one's own exertion. By His mercy alone everything becomes possible.

[ To be continued ]



**"Try to observe *samyam* once a week, or once in fifteen days or even once in a month."**

**—Sri Ma**

## FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—'Kirpal'

Allahabad, Kumbh Mela, 24th January, 1960

Swami Kriyananda from U.S.A. was talking to Ma.

Sree Ma - God. All are His children. From Him they have emanated. Where, where does one have to proceed ? Within God Himself you reside, God's own, God Himself is present. Where one's Divine Lord is present, no misfortune, no mishap can occur. Right. The Divine Mother, the Divine Father, the gathering of devotees of the Divine Lord.

*Ishta-Goshti*, i.e. the Divine Family-*Ishta* means the Divine Lord Himself, *Goshti* the gathering of devotees, the family, All in God's creation are brothers and sisters. All are one's own brethren. The Divine children are all brothers and sisters. The entire universe—from there (the one source) all have emanated. All those living in the various countries have come from the same source. That is the ultimate Truth. All have emerged from There and within Him all are contained. In order to remove the notion that one is separate from others and distant from the Divine, one has to practice the religious discipline (*sadhana*), to overcome the mind-set of antagonism and differentiation.

Dr. Panna Lal- Ma, if you command, I will speak.

Sree Ma - You call this body your child and talk of commanding ?

Sree Ma to Dr. Panna Lal— Avadhootji (a saint of very ascetic discipline and deeply devoted to Ma) has been giving lectures for the last five days, but this body sees a listlessness in his manner.

Sree Ma- Fire appeared at about 9 p.m., before the daily period of silence. I was watching fire, right in front, and these words were uttered—"It will be well if it is confined". "Stop-Stop" was said. "Disappear completely" was not said. In the morning it was confirmed that the fire had not spread. "It will be well if it (fire) is confined"—this was the kheyal.

A Hatha Yogi came to Ma. he told Sree Ma that he goes underground for 2 days, eats mercury, no salt, no sugar.

- Sree Ma- Why don't you leave off these practices ? Why do you remain in them ?
- The Yogi- One's tongue has to be cut. (He offers to give an exhibition).
- Sree Ma- If it is the Guru's order, then do so.
- The Yogi- No no such order has been given.
- Sree Ma- As there is a tree, even when the tree dies, the seed remains. From that which is originated it gives forth the seed which will become a tree and in endless succession. The end and endless co-exist. There it a manago and a tree. No two fruits are identical. No two leaves are exactly similar. Similarly there are endless forms of spiritual disciplines. Where is the end? It is to realise your true self. To transcend the mind the seed (*mantra*) is given. What is contained in the seed is to realize one's own self. When one realizes oneself, one realizes God. Who am I ? He, God alone exists. There is none else. To realize one's true self are the endless religious practices. Until one does tread the path to realize oneself one is on the road to death. The longings and desires are the return tickets. Then the suffering.
- If you wish to be born in a big town you will be born there. If you desire to be born in a village you will be born there. God is not far from you. God is not separate from you. "This is mine, that is mine" that you are doing. If you do not strive to realize your true self, you are committing suicide, destroying yourself if you retain your longings and desires.
- "I am the scion of immortality, Atma Ram, I am the eternal servant of the Lord".**
- Turn about father. Turn around to your own dwelling. In this coming and going is entailed great suffering. On meeting one's own, one is fulfilled.
- A Gentleman : "I am in the woods, jungle.
- Sree Ma : While sitting in the jungle, clear the land and make it a plain ground. Light a fire, burn it or melt it, Burn it with the fire of Divine knowledge or melt it with devotion of the Lord. If you are hesitant and shy of doing it in public, do it in the quiet. Start, begin. He is one's own. One does not feel shy in talking to one's own. Whether anyone understands or not, this body understands. When you are immersed in your spiritual pursuits, you will attain that stage.



## THE UNFORGETTABLE MAHAKUMBH

The new millennium's first *Mahakumbh* has left an indelible imprint on the minds of all those who had the privilege to be present in Allahabad on this rare occasion. Every one was simply awestruck by the sea of humanity flowing into and merging at the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the unseen Saraswati rivers.

It is necessary to mention in the very beginning that Sri Ma's association with the *Kumbh melas* both at Haridwar and Prayag (Allahabad) was very very old. We learn that for the first time Ma had participated in the Kumbh function at Haridwar in the year 1927 and our Ashram camp was set up at the Prayag Kumbh for the first time in 1948 through the efforts of one of the foremost devotees of Ma from Allahabad, Dr. Panna Lall, I.C.S. (Retd.). Since then our Ashram camp in Sri Ma's name is being regularly organised in each and every Kumbh held either at Prayag or at Haridwar without any break.

It is also significant to note that since the sixties, although far from being connected with any particular *akhara* or not being a *Mahamandaleshwar* herself, through the earnest desire of the heads of some of the principal *Akharas* (orders of sannyasis), like the Niranjani Akhara and the Mahanirvani Akhara, Ma was accorded the greatest dignity and respect of a duly-anointed lady *Mahamandaleshwar* particularly during the Kumbh melas. It is indeed something really unique in the annals of the Kumbh mela. A lady all in white, not in ochre cloths at all, elegantly sitting on a decorated silver throne along with other principal *Mahamandaleshwars* and *Acharyas* of the *Akharas* during various *Kumbh* processions and being adored by thousands. It was undoubtedly a sight never to be forgotten. The entire surroundings reverberated with the shouts of "Jai Ma - Jai Ma" from the throats of thousands who had gathered on the occasion. Far from being a *sannyasin* herself, she was acclaimed as the "Mother" of all by practically most of the *Acharyas*, *Mahamandaleshwars* & *Mahants* of almost all the orders of sadhus in the country.

Consequently, Sri Ma also on her part used to invite all of them to our Ashram camps on various occasions particularly during the *Kumbh melas* at Haridwar and Allahabad. This practice continued without any break till the *Ardh Kumbh* function at Allahabad in 1982, during Ma's physical presence on this earth, and the same thing is being particularly followed even till this day.

The recent *Kumbh* function at Allahabad which has been concluded on a gigantic scale only in February, 2001, assumed extraordinary significance not only for being the *Maha Kumbh* held after long twelve years, but also because of the reason of being the first such occasion of the new millennium.

Naturally, therefore, preparations on behalf of Sri Ma's organisation also started in right earnest from months before for setting up the Ashram camp on a big scale on the bank of the holy Ganga. It was nodoubt a stupendous task to set up the large Ashram camp right on the sand bank, complete with all the facilities, to accommodate atleast 200 ashramites & devotees and also to make all necessary arrangements for their daily meals. Particularly important was to set up Sri Ma's cottage, pandal for regular *satsang* and bhajan, very big dining pandal for sadhu *bhandaras* and so on.

This time the task became unexpectedly much complicated due to the sudden change in the course of the Ganga from the east to western side, almost very near to the city side.

So, much confusion continued in the *Mela* administration also, because all the normally earmaked plots for various *akharas* and also for Sri Ma's institution had to be completely changed this time and new plots to be allotted to most of the institutions.

It is worth mentioning that for the last about 32 years the Govt. had been regularly allotting a very spacious and prominent area for the purpose of Sri Ma's camp in the mela ground at Allahabad free of any charge, apart from extending various other facilities, like, water & light etc. Thanks to the Mela administration we were allotted even this year a fairly large plot measuring about 120' × 280' ft. on the eastern bank of the Ganga.

Necessary work for setting up the Ashram camp started in right earnest from December 8,2000 and continued for full four weeks under the over-all supervision of Sri Panu Brahmachari, ex-General Secretary of Ma's organisation. Hectic work was in progress, because the first bathing day was fixed for January 9,2001 as per astronomical calculations.

The really dedicated service rendered under the most strenuous conditions by Br. Jyotirmayanandaji, assisted by Br. Subodh and Br. Jogendra from Pune can never be forgotten. Later on they were joined by Swami Nirgunananda of the Almora ashram. A very well-planned camp consisting of all possible facilities sprang up almost out of nothing within a few weeks and was fully ready for formal inauguration on January 7,2001.

On the 7th early morning in the presence of Swami Bhaskaranandaji, a senior ascetic member of the organisation, Swami Nirgunananda and *brahmacharinis* of the Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, Varanasi, formal *pravesh* (inaugural entry) to our camp was performed with entry into Sri Ma's cottage along with Sri Padmanabhaji and Ma's large photographs. Proper puja was also performed in Ma's room and from that day regular puja, *arati*, *satsang*, bhajan, kirtan etc. started in the Ashram camp and continued till 30th January.

On 9th January, which was the first bathing festival of the *Mahakumbh* as well as the full lunar eclipse day, practically whole night Kirtan continued in Ma's room and almost all the ashramites had their first ceremonial bath at the Sangam, confluence of Ganga & Yamuna very early in the morning. More than a million devoted persons had their first dip. The entire mela ground spreading into several thousand square meters in area was already full.

On 14th January, the day of the *Makar-Sankrant*, first *sāhi snān* (bathing in royal procession) of the various sadhu *akharas* was held. Devotees and ashramites from Sri Ma's camp joined the Mahanirvani Akhara procession in accordance with our age-old convention. On this very auspicious day Br. Jyotirmayananda took sannyas and performed special puja in the camp.

Next day in connection with the sannyas ceremony of Sri Jyotirmayananda three principal mahatmas, M. M. Swami Mangalananda Giri, *Acharya* of the Atal Akhara as well as head of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, M.M. Swami Devananda Saraswati, *Acharya* of the Anand Akhara and Swami Girdhar Narain Puri, Senior Mahant of the Mahanirvani Akhara, came to Sri Ma's camp, gave short discourses and were properly honoured by the new sannyasi Jyotirmayanandaji and had their meals along with their accompanying sadhus.

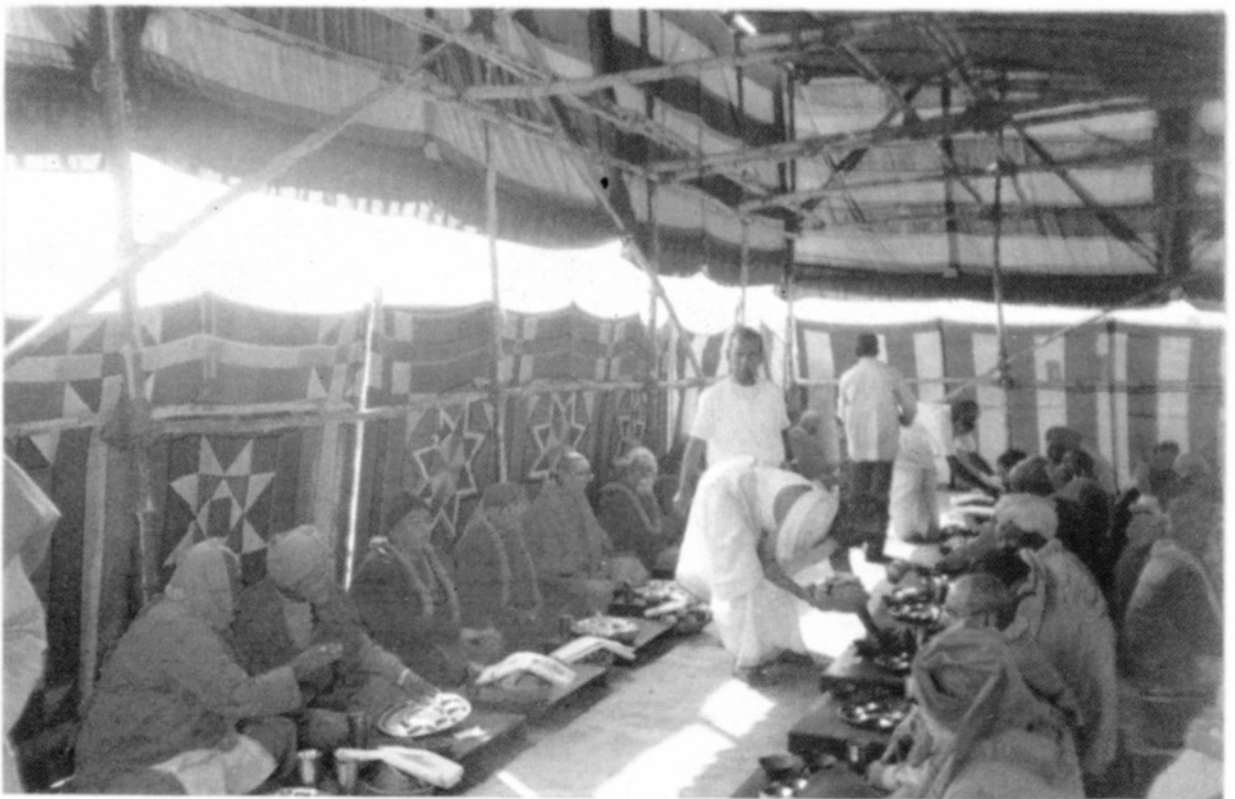
On the 16th morning about 150 sadhus of the Mahanirvani Akhara including most of the *Mahamandaleshwars* and *Mahants* were properly honoured with garlands, fruits, blankets, cloths and cash offerings and also had their meals in Sri Ma's camp.

On 20th morning M.M. Swami Vidyanandaji Maharaj of the Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh, along with several other *Mahamandaleshwars* from Haridwar and Rishikesh along with other sadhus were specially invited to our camp. They were also duly honoured after their discourses and sumptuously fed as per ashram tradition.

As per dates already fixed for special bhandaras for *akharas*, more than 150 sadhus of the Niranjani Akhara along with two *Acharyas* and a number of *Mahamandaleshwars* & *Mahants* came to have their meals on 21st morning at



Mahamandaleshwars of the Niranjani Akhara sitting in the pandal in front of Sri Ma's cottage.



Distinguished mahatmas of the Akharas having their meals in the dining pandal.





A view of the Saraswati Puja inside Sri Ma's cottage—29th January, 2001



Entrance gate of the Ashram camp in Kumbh Mela ground.

10-30 A.M. All of them were properly fed and honoured with different types of offerings.

As the day of the principal bathing date, *Mauni Amāvasyā* on the new moon day. i.e., 24th January, was nearing very fast, the whole Ashram camp became almost over-full and most reluctantly the management was compelled to deny any place in the ashram camp even for a single night. The rush in the Ashram camp this time was really most unexpected. It was indeed something unusual that all the 37 tents, 11 cottages and 6 small tents in our camp were completely full on the eve of the principal bathing day.

Outside one could always see thousands of pilgrims of all ages & of all categories rushing towards the Sangam with the sole object of having a dip soon after the midnight of 23rd January.

In accordance with the past tradition almost all the inmates of the Ashram camp joined the procession of the Niranjani Akhara on 24th very early in the morning. Through Sri Ma's grace every one came back safe after having the long-awaited dip at the Sangam in the midst of the sea of humanity.

The last and the final day for *sāhi-snān* fixed for the Vasant Panchami, 29th January, was also approaching near. Rush of devotees had decreased considerably. Principal *sadhu bhandaras* were also almost over.

Special puja of Goddess Saraswati was performed in a dignified manner in Ma's cottage on the 29th morning. Everything was very decently arranged by the *brahmacharinis* of the Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, Varanasi. On this day the inmates of our camp again joined the Niranjani Akhara in their bathing procession to the Sangam.

Some old monks of the Rama Krishna Mission were specially invited to have their meals in Sri Ma's camp. About twelve of them came at 11 A.M., had *darsan* of the "Puja" going on in Ma's cottage and afterwards they were very much pleased to have the puja prasad in an elaborate manner.

This was practically the last function in the Mata Anandamayee Camp and gradually the vast establishment was being winded up.

It is needless to say that the *Maha Kumbh* of 2001, which was undoubtedly the biggest congregation in this country ever to be held, will remain quite fresh in the memories of millions of people for ages to come.

*Jai Purna Kumbh.*



## ASHRAM NEWS

### Varanasi Ashram

Inspite of the fact that during the month of January, 2001 the centre of all important festivities of the Ashram was at the site of the *Mahakumbh* in Allahabad, where a large number of ashramites and devotees as well had assembled, the annual celebrations of the Makar Sankarant on 14th January and the Saraswati puja on 29th January were performed as usual in the Ashram with due solemnity.

Varanasi being the permanent abode of Lord Siva, there was unprecedented rush of people this year from different parts of the country on the occasion of the Shiva Ratri festival here on 21st February. Before returning to their homes thousands of people turned up from the *Kumbh mela* at Allahabad to have the *darshan* of Lord Vishwanath.

This year the assemblage of devotees in the Ashram for the Siva ratri was also on the higher side. They had come from Allahabad, Delhi, Patna and other places.

### Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth annual function.

On 23rd February Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President of the All-India Divine Life Society, arrived from distant South. The occasion was the annual function of the Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, which was scheduled to be held on 25th February. On account of indifferent health Pujya Swamiji did not attend any programme outside the Ashram premises.

The annual function of the Kanyapeeth gained special publicity this year because the new Governor of Uttar Pradesh, H.E. Dr. Vishnu Kant Sastri, had already agreed to attend the Kanyapeeth function as a mark of respect to Sri Ma.

On 25th afternoon exactly at 2-45 P.M. Pujya Swamiji entered the Anand Jyoti Mandir hall, offered *pranam* to Ma and quietly took his seat on the dais amidst vedic chants sung by the girls of the Kanyapeeth. H.E. the Governor also arrived absolutely on time at 3 P.M. accompanied by the Mayor of Varanasi, Sri Amar Nath Yadav and Hon'ble Sri Birendra Kumar Maitra, Minister, West Bengal, a close friend of the Governor. Other high officials of Varanasi also followed him.

After entering the hall the Governor first of all went near the Matri Mandir and paid obeisance to the flower-decked *vigrahas* (Gold plated eight-metal statues) of Ma, offered respectful *pranam* to Pujya Swamiji and then took his seat as the Guest-in-Chief. On his right was seated the venerable Swamiji, who presided over

the function, on his left sat the present Maharaja of Varanasi, Sri Anant Narain Singh. Thereafter, the Mayor, Sri Yadav and the reputed scholar, Padmabhusan Dr. Vidya Niwas Mishra, ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Sampurnananda Sanskrit University as well as of the Kashi Vidyapeeth took their respective seats.

After the welcome address by the Principal, Km. Jaya Bhattacharya, all the dignitaries were garlanded by very young girls. Thereafter, the main function began, which was ably conducted by Dr. Geeta Banerjee, the Vice-Princial. First of all the girls paid a glorious tribute to late Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singhji, who used to preside over the annual function almost every year. Then the young *brahmacharinis* of the Kanyapeeth presented a decent but short programme in Sanskrit, which was highly applauded by all the dignitaries present. The girls also offered to the Governor a Bank Draft for Rs. 11,001/- drawn in favour of the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund as a token contribution to alleviate the sufferings of the Gujarati people. The amount was collected by the young girls out of the merit scholarship amounts received by them.

As the Governor was to leave for Lucknow soon the programme of the girls was slightly altered. Before departing he addressed the girls and others present and expressed his great appreciation in the following words—"It is a great pleasure to listen to the girl's perfect pronunciation of Sanskrit, their melodious songs and the manner of beautiful presentation. I was really much worried that perhaps there is no place where our girls could learn and get acquainted with Sanskrit. Now I am fully satisfied that Varanasi has the distinction of having such an institution, where Sanskrit scholarship and Indian culture are well preserved. This has been possible only through Sri Ma's blessings".

After the Governor left prize distribution on the basis of exam, results and other distinguished performances by girls in different spheres was done through Pujya Swamiji's hands. The programme came to a close after a short Presidential address by Swamiji and concluding songs and distribution of prasad to everyone present on the occasion.

During his visit to Varanasi Ashram this year Pujya Swamiji, while offering prayers to Ma, blessed the girls of the Kanyapeeth from the innermost core of his heart by uttering these words—"I pray to Lord Vishwanath that all of you may be adorned with ideal character and *jnāna*, may you have intense desire for learning and may you be *sattvika* in your nature."

Before bidding good-bye to the girls on the after-noon of 1st March Swamiji again uttered—"O Ma, fill all the girls of the Kanyapeeth with knowledge, devotion & bliss".

### **Ma Anandamayee Karuna programme**

On 28th February in the morning at about 11 A.M. the half-yearly distribution of garments to 51 children of the poor was organised in the Ashram this year. Garments along with fruits & sweets were distributed through the hands of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and they had the privilege to be blessed by the venerable Swamiji.

### **Bhimpura Ashram**

The Ashram at Bhimpura situated in ideal surroundings on the bank of the holy river Narmada was further adorned this year through the establishment of a new temple for Siva, named "Anandeshwar Sivalaya" constructed through donations from the family of late Ramesh bhai Patel of Nadiad. The newly-built temple was formally inaugurated by Pujya Sri Narain Dasji Maharaj of the renowned Santram Mandir, Nadiad on the day of Vasant Panchami on 29th January.

Another new unit named "Ma Anandamayee Chikitsalaya", a charitable clinic, was also inaugurated in the Ashram premises on the sacred Siva ratri day, on 21st February.

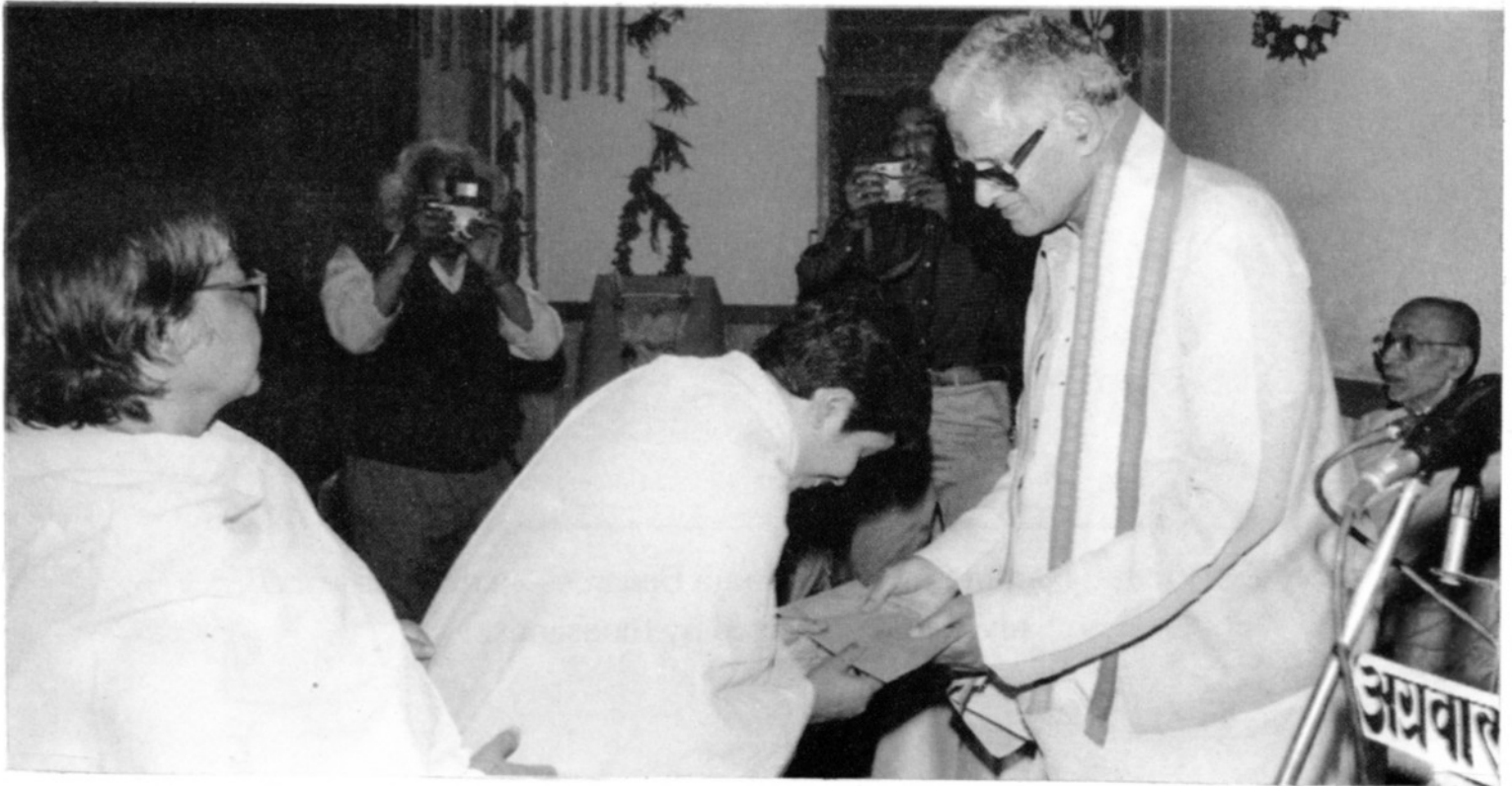
A further significant step was taken on behalf of the Bhimpura Ashram. This was the decision to raise funds for the purpose of ameliorating the sufferings of the brothers & sisters of the State, which has experienced a disastrous earthquake in the last week of January taking away the lives of thousands of people.

All donations for this purpose, which will be exempt from Income-tax, may be conveniently drawn in favour of "Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Bhimpura" and sent to the Secretary, clearly specifying that the amount is meant for "Gujarat Relief Fund."

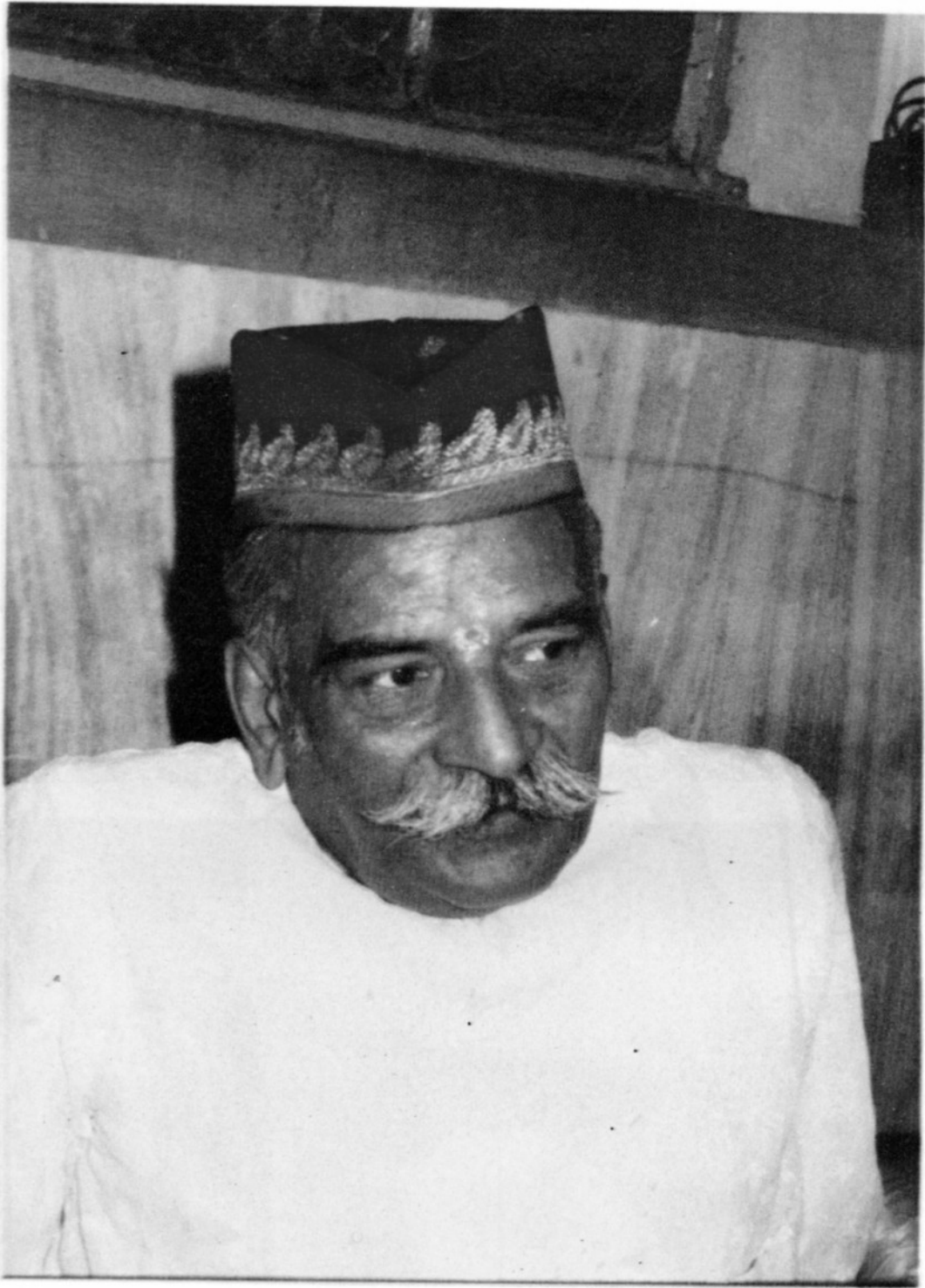




A scene from the annual function of the Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth. Pujya Swami Chidanandaji sitting on the left, H.E. Dr. Vishnu Kant Sastri, Governor, U.P. in the middle and Maharaja Anant Narain Singh on the extreme right — all keenly observing the girl's programme. —February, 25, 2001



Km. Santoshi Suvedi, an Acharya student of the Kanyapeeth, offering a Bank draft for Rs. 11,001/- to the Governor out of their merit scholarship amounts for the Gujarat Relief Fund. Km. Jaya Bhattacharya, Principal, also on the scene.



Late Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh, Maharaja Benares —a man *par excellence*,  
loved and respected by thousands.

## IN MEMORIAM

### **Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh**

On the fateful night of 26th December, 2000 as soon as the news spread from mouth to mouth that the most respected and beloved person of Varanasi, a living emblem of Lord Vishwanath, who was hailed with the shouts of "Hara Hara Mahadeva" wherever he went, the erst-while ruler of the Benares State, Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singhji was no more and his mortal body was taken from Ramnagar Fort to the Nadesar Palace in the city, thousands of people rushed towards the city palace to have the last *darsan* and pay thier last homage to the great man, whom they loved and respected from the innermost depths of their hearts.

It will be the least exaggeration to state that probably no *raja* or *maharaja* of the pre-Independence days held such a unique place in the hearts of millions of people as the "*Kashi-Naresh*" (the ruler of Kashi), as he was most endearingly called by all.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Maharaja Vibhuti Narainji had carved out such an unparalleled place for himself, not because he happened to be the ex-ruler of Kashi (Varanasi) but by virtue of the excellent qualities of his head & heart, through his ideal character and genuine love and affection for the people of Varanasi.

The late Maharaja had a very close & intimate connection also with Sri Ma's institutions. He had the opportunity to come in close touch with Sri Ma since the days of the *Akhand Savitri Mahayagna* held in Varanasi Ashram continuously for a period of three years from 1947-1950. Out of great devotion for Ma Maharaja gifted during the year 1954-55 a very big landed property measuring about 28 bighas situated at Vindhyachal for the purpose of Sri Ma's ancient ashram at Vindhya-chal. Particularly two of Ma's institutions in Varanasi were very close to his heart and he made regular enquiries about the proper functioning of these two institutions.

Maharaja remained the President of the Managing Committee of the Mata Anandamayee Hospital in Varanasi till the last day. He took extraordinary interest in the wellbeing of the hospital in Ma's name and presided over almost all meetings of the Hospital Managing Committee. The most dignified and graceful way in which he conducted the meetings and guided all important matters concerning the hospital would be remembered by all concerned for ages to come.



Maharaja had a very special interest also in the welfare of the girls of the Kanyapeeth and had made it a point to participate almost every year in the annual functions of the institution.

Once, while presiding over the annual function of the Kanyapeeth, Maharaja observed with great admiration for the young *brahmacharinis* of the institution- "I do hope that each and every girl of this Kanyapeeth will be illuminated with the Divine Light of Ma, and like a little lamp lighted with the flame of a bigger lamp will illuminate the entire society." Those words went deep into the hearts of each and every person present on the occasion.

His devotion towards Sri Ma was really exemplary. During the period of his illness he used to remember Ma always and frequently ask the Kanyapeeth girls to go to Ramnagar Fort, where he lived, to sing before him his favourite *nama*- "*Om Ma, Sri Ma, Jai Jai Ma.*" Being enraptured with joy Maharaja would also join with them in chanting the prayer.

As soon as he was slightly better he agreed to visit the Ashram and offer personal prayers to Ma in her room. The young *brahmacharinis* of the Kanyapeeth welcomed heartily Maharaja into Ma's room with the chorus, "*Om Ma, Sri Ma, Jai Jai Ma*". The ailing Maharaja was simply overwhelmed with emotion, Tears were trickling down his eyes. For a few moment he quietly sat on the floor before Ma's bed and then bade goodbye to all the girls and proceeded to Ma's hospital to preside over the hospital meeting. Alas! no one could then surmise that the said visit would be the last one to Ma's Ashram as well as to the hospital.

We all offer our most respectful homage to the great personality, who has endeavoured to keep the lamp of knowledge burning in this holy city and had also always highlighted the immortal traditions of Kashi.

### **Dr. (Mrs) Sushila Nayyar**

A veteran follower of Mahatma Gandhi and a renowned social worker, Dr. Sushila Nayyar breathed her last at the age of 86 on 3rd January, 2001 at Sewagram, Wardha. Dr. Nayyar had the privilege of coming into close touch with Sri Ma also more than four decades ago. When she happened to be the Health Minister, Govt. of India, she took maximum possible interest in the setting up in Varanasi of the Mata Anandamayee Hospital. It was she who arranged for the planning and designing of the hospital through one of the most experienced hospital architects of the country. It was she who issued orders to get the hospital blocks duly constructed under the supervision of one of the best firm of architects-cum-engineers of India and it was again she who also got adequate grants sanctioned by the Govt. of India for hospital construction and also for purchase of essential hospital equipments for various deptts. The invaluable contribution of Dr. Sushila

Nayyar towards the setting up of the hospital in Varanasi in Ma's name can never be forgotten.

### ***Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia***

The name of the late Rajmata of Gwalior, Sm. Vijaya Raje is not only quite familiar to even the general public of this country because of her political stature, but she also endeared herself very closely to Sri Ma and to Ma's ashram family through her great devotion for Ma.

The beautiful statue of Sri Krishna Chheliya installed in the ashram temple at Vrindaban and the strange history of its arrival at Vrindaban ashram and its subsequent installation through Ma's *kheyal* (divine will) will always remind us all about the noble devout lady, Rajmata of Gwalior.

Sm. Vijaya Raje Scindia, the then Maharani of Gwalior, was very closely drawn to Ma after the sudden passing away of late Maharaja Jiyaji Rao, father of the present Maharaja Madhav Rao Scindia. Even when Maharaja Jiyaji Rao was alive Ma was once specially invited to visit Gwalior. The right royal reception given to Ma during her first visit to the Gwalior Palace is very vividly narrated in the diary of Sm. Gurupriya Deviji.

After the demise of Maharaja Jiyaji Rao she sought consolation from Ma and practically took refuge at her feet. Ma was again specially invited to visit Gwalior at the time of the consecration of a new Siva mandir, built in the memory of late Maharaja. Subsequently, Ma also attended the week-long Bhagavata programme held in the memory of Maharaja at the Gwalior Palace in Bombay.

Since then she used to regularly come to Ma, whenever she found time, particularly at Vrindavan & Delhi. It is remembered very vividly even now Rajmata's quite frequent visits to our Vrindavan ashram for the *darsan* of Sri Ma and also of Sri Krishna Chheliya, installed in the main ashram temple, and she used to pass almost the whole day near Ma. She endeared herself to all the ashramites through her unassuming nature and implicit devotion for Ma. Those were the days when the present Prime Minister, Sri Atal Behari Bajpayi also used to accompany Rajmata quite off and on for Sri Ma's *darsan*.

Subsequently, however, due to hectic political activities Rajmata could not come to Ma regularly, but she always kept herself in touch with Ma.

Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia had been ailing for sometime past and she left her body in Delhi on 24th January.

This noble devout lady, full of zeal and compassion, ever-ready to serve the country, will be remembered by all for ages to come. We also join in paying a glorious tribute to her pious memory.

