

# MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

---

Vol.-5

October, 2001

No. 4.

---

## BOARD OF EDITORS

- Km. Chitra Ghosh
- Dr. Bithika Mukerji
- Dr. Krishna Banerjee
- Km. Guneeta



MANAGING EDITOR  
Sri Panu Brahmachari



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (POSTAGE FREE)  
INLAND—RS. 60/-  
FOREIGN—US \$ 12/- OR RS. 450/-  
SINGLE COPY—RS. 20/-



## CONTENTS

1.	Matri Vani	...	1
2.	Conversation with Western Devotees — <i>Vijayananda</i>	...	3
3.	First Darshan — <i>Sri Hari Ram Joshi</i>	...	8
4.	Gleanings from " <b>In association with Ma</b> " — <i>Sri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta</i>	...	11
5.	Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy — <i>Sri P.C. Mehta</i>	....	15
6.	From the life of Sri Anandamayi Ma — <i>Dr. Bithika Mukerji</i>	....	23
7.	"Mukti" — <i>Sri Dhiraj Sapru</i>	...	26
8.	Second trip to India — <i>Shraddha Davenport</i>	...	27
9.	Soaring to Kailash — <i>Antonio Eduardo Dagnino</i>	...	34
10.	From notes taken in Sri Ma's presence — <i>'Kirpal'</i>	...	35
11.	Spring in Virginia — <i>Sri J.C. Chatterjee</i>	...	36

## MATRI VANI

You go on insisting that the mind must be dissolved. But do not forget, it is this very mind which is the *Mahayogi*, yes indeed, the sublime yogi.

\* \* \*

When you have surrendered yourself to the Guru, he may do anything, subject you to no matter what trials, yet you still regard yourself as a tool in His hands.

\* \* \*

This body tells of yet another aspect – Can you guess what it is ? Just as Beloved is the Self, so destruction is also He Himself, and like wise in that which is destroyed. This is so where the Self is and nothing but the Self.

\* \* \*

When the Ultimate Reality has been attained, there can be no question of either the super-normal or of deviating or not deviating from Reality, what is meant by "*Videha – Mukti*."

\* \* \*

The progress of the disciple continues up to where the position of a teacher is held. If the teacher is in the state of *ajnāna* and the question is asked by one who also is in ignorance how can there be even an expectation of the revelation of real Knowledge ? All the same a discussion that aims at elucidating Self-realization will naturally be helpful and beneficial.

\* \* \*

At that moment you come to understand the real nature of the inner guru, He dwells within and works from there.

\* \* \*

Again, who is it that guides me from out side ? It is also He, for verily there is no other.

\* \* \*

A knot means resistance, Hence, so long as the ego persists, there will be clashes at times.

\*

\*

\*

When impersonal work is being carried out and watched as by a spectator, a deep Joy surges up from within,

\*

\*

\*

If you can become so completely concentrated in any one direction that you cannot help acting along that line, wrong action becomes impossible.

\*

\*

\*

You should understand that one who loves God is but out to destroy identification with the body.

\*

\*

\*

Action dedicated to God is alone true action, all the rest is useless and therefore no action at all.

\*

\*

\*

To let the mind dwell on sense objects still further increases one's attachment to them. When intense interest in the Supreme Quest awakens, ever more time and attention will be given to religious thought.

\*

\*

\*

For him whose one and only goal is the ocean itself no one has remained for whose sake he looks back.

\*

\*

\*

By regarding all manifestations as the Supreme Being, one attains to communion that leads to liberation.



# CONVERSATION WITH WESTERN DEVOTEES

[Thirteen]

—Vijayananda

## 1) Ma and her disciples

*Q : Who is Guru?*

V : There is only one Guru, God. Ma often used to say that, but only now I completely realize what it does mean. Physical Guru may have defects, the body always has defects, but the Guru is an instrument, a canal of the Divine. There are bad conductors, good conductors and super-conductors. Ma was a super-conductor.

*Q : Does this view help the disciple not to see the guru in a personal way?*

V : Ma said that even if a disciple should fall in love with the guru, if the latter is a sadguru, he would be able to transform this love and to redirect it towards the Divine.

*Q : Was Ma imparting instructions through discourses ?*

V : No, Ma did not make speeches, but she used to give clear-cut advice individually during private interviews. By the way, they could also give practical suggestions to people; if they were able to catch them, they could escape the result of a bad karma of the past, an accident for instance. Ma could also make disciples' *kundalini* ascend and descend in a single look, in quite informal a way and without appearing to do so. Sometimes, it was important to be able to take down those who had been awakened too quickly and could not face the sudden inflow of energy.

*Q : Could Ma perform miracles with everyone ?*

V : No. The one who performs the miracle and the one who receives it must be in perfect harmony like a couple of dancers. Even with Christ, it was like this. Those who had no faith could not be saved. When Ma was old, I had a dream, but those images which I saw were as vivid as in reality. I was with a group of visitors, mainly foreigners, on a verandah in charge of keeping Ma's door, and she passed by. I asked them, Did you see Ma ? They answered me, No. When Ma was young, everyone was enthralled by her contact. Afterwards, she was more inside and only those who had intensity and great faith could perceive her power directly.

*Q : Could Ma have stayed longer in her body ?*

V : Yes, of course, but she was fed up. People had not enough intensity to make her stay.

*Q : Yet, crowds seemed to have been galvanized during her kirtans!*

V : It was excitement, not real intensity.

*Q : Some people say that Ma was a tantric.*

V : Tantra corresponds to the worship of Divine Mother. How could she have worshipped the Divine Mother, while she was herself this Mother ? From another viewpoint, for Ma as well as for any advanced sadhaka, all the paths merge in one single Yoga, the synthesis of Yogas if one can say. This is a total Yoga where all the ways are understood and integrated. Only in the beginning are the paths separate.

*Q : Was it often that Ma was cured by herself ?*

V : Once a doctor had prescribed her high doses of turmeric (*haldi*, a yellow powder which is the basis of curry). Afterwards she developed a sort of paralysis in the legs and told me, *I think this because of the excess of turmeric*. At that time, I could not agree with her, because it was not in the knowledge of western medicine that excess of Vitamin-A contained in big quantity in turmeric could give peripheral neuro-pathy, i.e., paralysis. It was discovered only later.

*Q : Was not there many jealousies around Ma ?*

V : Yes, many, but she saw in all that the *lila*, the play divine.

*Q : Do you think that the disciple can become completely independent from the guru one day ?*

V : Jayananda, the young American who at the beginning was with me near Ma, told me a story that first I found stupid, but that later I found very deep. A small boy had total confidence in his father; one day, he put him on the table and told him, *jump into my arms !* The child said, *but I will fall!* The father answered : *Don't you trust me ? Come! Jump!* He jumped, the father moved back and the poor child fell on the floor. The father said, *It was to teach you that you should not trust anyone except yourself!* Likewise, Ma could be very hard with me; but one time nevertheless, she gazed at me with a great love, as if I was her only beloved on earth. It was because she was taking the *bhava*, the mood of Dr. Pannalal, who liked me very much and saw in me the model of mystical love.

*To a young woman who went through a phase where she was strongly criticizing her guru :*

V : If you want a perfect guru, take a photo and she will tell you what you want to hear; but with gurus in flesh and bones, you find shortcomings in them at every corner. How many times I was crossed with Ma !

Achim, a former German disciple of Ma, told us during an evening satsang of his first meeting with Ma : *'It was Christmas eve in 1969 in Nitaida's house in Kankhal (the kernel of the present-day ashram), I was waiting with a friend to see Ma, I had come from Rishikesh for that. Many people were present, and we were told that we would be called. Melita Maschmann, a German lady living near Ma, came and asked us whether the brahmacharis knew our names. We answered negatively, she started laughing and said, 'You believe in Santa Klaus!' and went away. Two minutes later, a brahmacharini came at the door, pointed out both of us in the crowd and introduced us near Ma. It was our first private audience with her.'*

Vijayananda adds that in Bhimpura in 1980, the same kind of episode also occurred. Melita had announced that Ma was much too sick to see anyone, and soon afterwards, as if to contradict her, Ma called Vijayananda and the visitors.

*On the occasion of Gurupriya's Didi's birthday centenary, who had been Ma's assistant during most of her life, Vijayananda was asked to say a few words on her.*

V : I used to speak very little to women, thus I have seldom been in contact with Didi. What I can say is that she worked for Ma ceaselessly, she slept very little. A divine incarnation does not come alone, but with an entourage who helps him or her in his or her mission. Didi's role was to protect Ma, she was the mount, Ma's *vahan*, like the tiger is Durga's mount.

## 2) Ma and Vijayananda

*Q : Did the effect of your first meeting with Ma last ?*

V : This extraordinary bliss that I felt the first night after meeting Ma lasted for a year and a half with the same intensity; afterwards, it became more quiet.

*Q : Have you been helped by the fact that Ma was a woman and was considered as the mother ?*

V : Yes, in this sense that I detached myself completely of the need of other women. However, I did not see her as a woman, not even as a body, right from the beginning I saw the divinity as well as the guru in her.



*Q : It must have been difficult to renounce all of a sudden when you met Ma.*

V : Quite the opposite, it would have been difficult not to renounce everything once I met her.

*Q : Should we test the Guru ?*

V : We should pull the string to see whether it breaks. I did this often with Ma, and the string held well.

*Q : Is it possible to see Ma in the subtle body ?*

V : For the first time in Raipur (near Dehra-Dun) in the beginning of my stay with her I felt her presence which was extremely strong. Then in Almora in 1954, I saw her image as well. At that time I was upset because she had asked me to stay a full year far away from her physical presence. I knew it was she anyhow because of the intense bliss which overwhelmed me. Indeed, she was both outside and inside. This phenomenon happened so that she might teach me a lesson : *I am Omnipresent, you need not be despaired by my departure !*

*Q : Can we see the subtle body of the guru in our dreams ?*

V : Generally speaking, no. For years, I was dreaming of Ma every night, but it was my mind which was playing back memories. Sometimes, nevertheless, she appeared to me with great intensity: then, we could say that it was Ma's subtle body. The main element is formless, this is the awakening of *kundalini*. It is an intense impersonal force which is later dressed with the *samskaras*, deep conditionings of the *sadhaka*.

*Q : Once Ma left her body, were you still able to communicate with her subtle body ?*

V : I am often asked this. I am in contact with Ma as an Omnipresent and formless Consciousness, but not as a subtle body. Before, Ma could awaken someone lukewarm whose demand was not so serious, but now this demand must be intense and then it will get its answer. Ma's photos for instance also help.

*Q : Why did you spend so much time near Ma ?*

V : In fact, I am the Westerner who stayed the longest time near Ma with the exception of Atmananda, who worked a lot to translate Ma's private interviews with foreigners and the books. Several times I tried to go back to the West but things did not materialize. Ma wanted me to stay in India, while she used to let other Westerners go away. I had definitely a strong link with her.

### 3) Ma's teaching

*Q : Why was Ma attracting less people than other gurus or religious leaders involved in large-scale social work ?*

V : Ma had a very high spiritual level. She spoke of Self-realization and of renouncing the world. That did not attract crowds like helping people and performing social service. Ramakrishna said there were few people in the shop where diamonds are sold while there are plenty in the vegetables one.

*Q : Why there were not more realized people around Ma ?*

V : The vocation of a sage like Ma is not to 'give' realization to such or such disciple. In any case, a disciple who gets a complete realization is very rare. Even around Buddha, it seems that only two of them have got it. Great souls come to put into the current as many people as possible. After, their devotees cannot come or fall back. Even if they do not reach realization in this life-time, they can merge into Ma's cosmic form at death or obtain rebirth in superior worlds. And this question has another aspect : should there have been a great number of realized disciples around Ma, they would have stayed within themselves and who would have preached Ma's teaching ? Perhaps they would also have fought with each other for Ma's succession. She wanted probably that her advanced disciples reach the direct realization of the union of *samsara* (the world) and *nirvana*, which means the *sahaja* (spontaneous) *samadhi*, without risking leaving the body for good during a *nirvikalpa samadhi* (a state of complete enstatis with loss of consciousness of the outer world) which is too long. Moreover, a disciple feels that he or she is realized when he or she has attained his or her guru's level. When the Guru is Ma Anandamayi, it takes time.

*Vandana Mataji is a nun in between christianity and hinduism; she was a disciple of Father Le Saux (Swami Abhishiktananda) and currently lives in Rishikesh a semi-eremitic life. She came with a small group to Kankhal and asked Vijayananda to speak of Ma to them.*

V: (After a long silence) : Silence is the best way to speak of Ma. In this manner, her presence is realized.

## FIRST DARŚANA

—Sri Hari Ram Joshi

It was on the memorable Jhanda Mela (Annual Flag Hoisting) day in March, 1933, just four days after the Holi festival, that I decided to go to village Raipur with a couple of friends for the *darśana* of Mataji who had been staying there since about ten months. In the outskirts of the village we met an old woman who told us that Pitāji\* and his attending Brahmachari (Kamalakanta) had gone to Dehradun to see the Jhanda Mela at Gurudwara Ramrai, and that Mataji was in the *dharamśālā*. We thereupon decided to go there for Her *darśana*. In front of the Śivalaya there was a cemented raised platform under a mango tree. We saw a grave, fair, and saintly looking person sitting on that platform reading a book. He wore spectacles and was dressed in a white dhoti and a white woollen shawl. I took courage and enquired from him about Mataji who was reported to be mostly in *samādhi*. He was pleased to inform me that Pitāji had gone to Dehradun and that Mataji could be seen in the *dharamśālā*, a few steps above the temple, after Her coming out of *samādhi*. I then asked him what had brought him to the Raipur temple, whether he was one of Mataji's devotees. He smilingly told me in a sweet voice that he was Jyotish Chandra Roy from Dacca, Personal Assistant to the Director of Agriculture, Bengal Government and had come for Mataji's service, having taken four month's leave from his office. As I found out later, he was popularly known as 'Bhaiji'.

Bhaiji stated further that Mataji, Pitāji and he had left Dacca very suddenly after the completion of Mataji's 36th birthday celebrations at the Ramna Ashram. They had reached Dehradun on June 7th. The following morning they had shifted to Raipur. He then enquired about myself. I told him that I was posted in Dehradun as Inspector of Co-operative Societies since September, 1930, and that on November 30th, 1931, I had lost my wife who had left behind two sons, aged six and two years. About two hours passed in this conversation. My companions became impatient to return to Dehradun. I suggested to them that if they wished, they could go back in the two tongas we had left behind in the village outskirts, but as for myself I would leave Raipur only after having Mataji's *darśana*. I accompanied them to the tongas. When I returned to the temple, Bhaiji took me to Mataji, the Divine Universal Mother, who was sitting on a mat in a corner of the *dharamśālā*,

---

\* Baba Bholanath. Mataji's worldly husband.

wearing a white dhoti, covering Her head in the customary manner. I paid my respectful homage by *sāṣṭāṅga ḍaṇḍawat praṇāma*<sup>1</sup> and placed before Her as my humble offering a dozen sugarcanes which I had purchased at Raipur as I had forgotten to bring offerings from Dehradun. Bhaiji conveyed to Mataji in Bengali all he had heard from me about myself. Mataji did not talk to me directly on this occasion. She only smiled when I placed the sugarcanes before Her. Bhaiji gave me a few as *prasāda*.

At my first *darśana*, Mataji's enchanting and smiling face transformed my mind altogether and brought me the firm conviction that what I had believed to be impossible to be achieved by anyone, namely, the state of '*sṭhitaprajñā*' (perfect sage) as described in Chapter II of the Bhagavad Gītā, She actually was in that very exalted condition. This, I must say, was a great inspiration to me as I had no preconceived notions about Her spiritual attainments, not having heard from any quarter anything about Her *sādhana* and supernatural powers.

I returned to Dehradun late in the evening and related to my mother all about my visit to Raipur, assuring her that on the following Sunday I would try to take her for the *darśana* of the Great Sainṭly Lady. This rather surprised my mother as she was under the false impression that ever since the death of my wife I had, in all probability, developed atheistic views.

The following Sunday, instead of taking my mother to Raipur, I suddenly decided to visit Mussoorie to find suitable agents for the disposal of the sugar that was being manufactured in the open pan sugar factory at village Badripur (Dehradun). On reaching Landour Bazar, Mussoorie at about 9 A.M. I was amazed to see Bhaiji in front of the Mansaram Bank, coming from the opposite direction of Santana Dharma temple. After paying my respects to him, I told him that he should have informed me before coming to Mussoorie as he had promised when I had met him at Raipur. Bhaiji thereupon remarked that the ways of the Divine Mother were quite peculiar. She had no pre-conceived plans for Her movements from one place to another. On leaving Raipur, She had ordered him to go straight to the Kālī Bari *dharamśālā* at Dehradun and from there the following morning to Mussoorie on the way to Uttarkashi. It was because of this that no message about their sudden move from Raipur to Mussoorie could be conveyed to me. He then took me to the Sanātana Dharma temple *dharamśālā* and introduced me to Pitāji who was standing at the gate. Pitāji embraced me and immediately took me to Mataji.

---

1. *Sāṣṭāṅga ḍaṇḍawat praṇāma* Obeisance by full prostration.

At this second meeting, Mataji addressed me directly in Hindi. She first asked what had brought me to Mussoorie and then intimated to me that She and Her party were to leave the following morning for Uttarkashi. I was also told that at that moment they were going to the hill top of Landour Bazar (Depot), from where the whole Himalayan range including Badrinath could be seen. I decided to accompany them. Mataji then wanted to know what I would do with the sample bags of sugar I had brought to Mussoorie. I told Her that the sugar would go with them for their use on their way to Uttarkashi.

Before we left for the Depot I consulted Bhaiji about the coolies, pack-ponies and dandies required for their journey, and detailed instructions were given to my friend, Sri Jamna Datt Sanwal of the Mansaram Bank, for making all arrangements. Mataji was then bare-footed and so I tried to persuade Her through Bhaiji and Pitāji to use a dandi for visiting the hill top. Two dandies were also arranged for Pitāji and Bhaiji. Mataji at first declined to get into the dandi but Pitāji and Bhaiji finally persuaded Her to do so. On reaching the Depot I ordered from Military Dairy two seers of fresh cow's milk and offered them to Mataji, who sipped only a little of the boiled milk after considerable coaxing, and the rest was distributed amongst all those sitting around Her. She then asked me to sing some songs. I obeyed, though I was not a singer nor did I have a sweet voice. However, it appeared to me that Mataji was listening with great interest. Late in the evening we came back to Sanātana Dharma temple and Sri Sanwal told me that he had made all necessary arrangements for the journey of Mataji and Her party to Uttarkashi. I then sought Mataji's permission to leave for Dehradun on foot as the motor road would have already been closed. Mataji advised me to pass the night in Mussoorie, but as I had not informed my mother I decided, though reluctantly, to walk down to Dehradun at that late hour. This time I was promised that Mataji would certainly give me timely information on Her return from Uttarkashi. In the meantime I should be on the look-out for a suitable place for Her stay in Dehradun proper or nearabout.

## GLEANINGS FROM "IN ASSOCIATION WITH SRI MA"

—Sri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Dhaka, Ramna Ashram, August, 1939

**How to still the Mind. :**

Pramatha Babu : Please tell us how to get rid of our doubts!

Ma : Have I not already told you to start your work with whatever your Guru has bestowed upon you. Quite often it is asked, how can the mind become still through japa ? Everyone is anxious to have peace of mind, because without stilling the mind *ananda* is not possible.

I have already explained to you that Guru mantra and Ista are one. To contemplate the Guru or the Ista and to perform Mantra japa amounts to the same because the Name and the Named are identical. So start by repeating the mantra received from your Guru. During this japa meditate on the image your Guru has indicated to you or on your Guru's photo. Where exactly should you concentrate during meditation ? It is good to concentrate in the heart because this is the place where joy and sorrow arise. However, if your Guru has instructed you to concentrate on anyone of the six *chakras*, (along the meridian of the body as explained in the Yoga sastras) it is a different matter. You will concentrate in whatever spot that the Guru has indicated. You may have read about the *chakras* that are situated in different locations of the body, and how each *chakra* has a different shape and a special presiding deity. This body has not studied anything, but it speaks on this subject because it has actually and quite clearly seen all this. By meditating on these different *chakras*, various states or spiritual experiences may be the result, But let us leave all this now.

You will start your meditation by imagining your Guru or Ista enthroned in your heart. There is yet another reason for concentrating in the heart. If you want to grow a tree out of a seed, you bury the seed under the earth and go on watering it. Due to your care and through the strength of the soil the tree grows out of the seed. Why do I stress the strength of the soil ? Because in order to produce a tree out of a seed, good earth is necessary. Even though the tree grows upwards, its roots remain underground, and it is the roots that constitute the life of the tree. Because it is seen that however many branches and twigs may be chopped off, the tree does not wither since its roots are intact. To enable the tree to grow you water it

regularly. This water you pour at its bottom surface, not directly into the roots. The water reaches the roots and helps the tree to grow. Similarly, the roots of this body-tree of ours lie in the head while the branches are down below. The heart is the foundation of this tree and any nourishment given here will reach the roots. For this reason one should meditate in the heart.

A devotee : Where exactly is the heart ?

Ma : The heart is everywhere in the hands, in the feet, in every part of the body. Yet, when we speak about the heart we normally understand the place (pointing to her chest). This is where one should concentrate while meditating.

Now, what should you do when sitting down for meditation ? Whether it is the Guru or the Ista, whom you have placed on the pedestal in your heart, contemplate His form. But during this meditation you find that your mind cannot remain steady. You cannot keep your mind fixed in one place even for a minute. This is why I advised that after placing your Guru on His seat in your heart, watch your breath moving in and out. It is this breathing that enables us to remain alive. However different human beings, animals, birds, etc., may be in species and also each creature from the other, in this respect, as far as *prāna* (life) is concerned, they are the same, Because they all remain alive by breathing. Hence, enthrone your Guru in your heart and contemplate Him as pervading the whole universe through *prāna*, the breath of life. The Guru is all-pervasive. So one should perform japa of the mantra received from the Guru and simultaneously watch one's breathing.

Everybody can do this. But the practice of japa in rhythm with one's breathing should be done on the advice of the Guru. If it is done merely because one has read about it in a book, there is the possibility of the brain becoming over-exerted. All the same, in many cases it is seen that by this practice the japa fits in naturally with the rhythm of the breath. In such cases there is no danger.

For performing puja you have seen how people mould an earthen image and then instil life into it by some special rites. Consciousness (*caitanya sattā*) exists everywhere. It is equally present in every creature (*jiva*) as well as in earth. But because we do not realize that living consciousness is also present in clay, we mould an earthen image and then instil life into it through some special ceremonies. Similarly, enthroning your Guru in your heart, think of Him as pervading everywhere as the life-force (*prāna*) and engage in your japa while watching your breath moving in and out.

The benefit derived from watching the movement of one's breath while practising japa is that the mind becomes somewhat calm. Whether it is a picture or an image, the mind cannot concentrate on it for any length of time. But because

breathing implies movement it is a little easier to tie the restless mind to it. In a similar fashion, to make a restless child remain quietly in a room, one has to provide the kid with a toy.

Now consider something else : the waves that arise in water are nothing but water. Yet, because of their movement they appear to be separate. The same substance is simultaneously quiet and in motion, broken into parts and unbroken. This constitutes the ceaseless *lila* of the universe. Beyond that there is a state where there are neither water nor waves. This is the unmanifest (*avyākta*).

If you concentrate on the waves for sometime you will find that they are nothing but water. In the same way if you continue for some length of time to carry out your japa while concentrating your restive mind on your breathing or on your Guru in the guise of *Prāna*, you will find that your mind has become calm, and the consciousness (*caitanya sattā*) that is always present within you becomes revealed of itself. Once this revelation has taken place, there is an end to doubts.

Another advantage of carrying out japa in rhythm with your breathing is that it can be performed everywhere at all times. Inhaling and exhaling continues without a break; so all you have to do is to perform your japa in rhythm with your breathing. There is no need to keep a picture or photo in front of you. Besides, people proceeding by whatever path, whether that of devotion or dedicated action or knowledge, can carry this out. To imagine one's Guru to be the life force (*prāna*) of all creatures is helpful on the path of knowledge. To enthrone his Guru or Ista in one's heart is helpful on the path of devotion; the performance of japa and the like is an aid on the path of dedicated action. So you see, this method of sadhana will suit aspirants regardless of the path they pursue.

\*

\*

\*

In the evening I returned to the Ashram and found Ma seated on a cot on the veranda of the Siva temple. Speaking to an old man, She remarked : " Baba, do keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth ."

The old man : Are my words so very harsh ?

Ma : (smiling) Not that. When you keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth it will melt slowly and keep your mouth sweet. That is to say, if you do not keep your tongue idle but engage it constantly in japa, you will get the taste of its sweetness. Otherwise a "return ticket" has to be taken -- one has to come back again and again.

Addressing another person, Ma said : "Here we are staying in a *dharmasala*, this is not our real hearth and home. If it were, could we be forced against our will to leave it ? When the call comes we cannot delay even for an instant, neither do



we get the opportunity to make preparations. As we are so we have to quit. This is why I request you to try and follow a path by which you can return to your real home and not have to wander from one *dharmasala* to another again and again.

Pointing towards an aged lady, Ma said : "Ma, with your Gopal remain inside your room and shut the doors. This is the way to peace. One by one you have lost all your teeth, now you are toothless (*bedanta*)\*. If you cannot stick to your Gopal, you will have to return again and become toothless once more.

Another lady : Ma, cannot bear the worries and troubles of my household any longer. There is constant unrest:

Ma : No, you are still liking it, otherwise how could you live in it ? Once a house catches fire, can one remain in it ? One has to run away with great speed. Since you are still living in it, it appears that although there is some trouble, yet you are still fond of your home.

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

Sadek Khan, the Personal Assistant of the Commissioner, called on Ma along with two other Deputy Magistrates. Ma was told that when She had been to Coxbazar, Sadek had been the Sub-Divisional Officer there.

Ma told him : "Baba, just as you receive a pension for working in your job, there is also a pension on this path. In your present position, however much you may earn, you will never be able to satisfy all your wants. World means *duniyā* i.e. based on duality. Therefore, there is happiness and sorrow, light and darkness, virtue and sin. The one is never without the other. Happiness is followed by sorrow and sorrow again by happiness. Therefore you must try to become established in your true Nature. When this is achieved you will find Supreme Peace."

Then the senior District Magistrate, Manindra Babu arrived. When he was introduced, it was mentioned that he was unmarried and was practising yoga.

Ma asked him : "Baba, so you have not tied a garland round your neck and are practising yoga, hathayoga or rajayoga or some other yoga ?"

Manindra Babu : Not hatha yoga; I practise raja yoga. Previously I could be at it for long hours and liked it a lot; but now, due to laziness, I cannot do very much.

Ma : Laziness is certainly an obstacle, an enemy. Well, has this yoga that you practise become natural to you ?

Manindra Babu: I do not understand it. Often it seems to have become natural to me, yet at other times I doubt whether this is so .

[ To be continued ]

\* **Bedanta** -- toothless & Vedanta Philosophy, a play upon words.

# FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

[ Continued from before ]

—Sri P.C. Mehta

## The Puranas:

In Sanskrit, 'Purana' means 'ancient story'. Traditionally, the origin of 'Puranas' is attributed to the recitals of '*pariplava-ākhyāyanas*' or recurring narrations or stories told during intervals in long 'yajnas' or sacrifices. Yajnas sometimes lasted for years. The beginning of these Puranas are traced to '*ākhyāyana-bhāga*' or narrative portions of Vedic rituals. There are eighteen Puranas. Though the stories found in them are very old, the Puranas themselves are later in date than the two epics. Authorship of all eighteenth Puranas is attributed to the sage Vyasa. Literally 'Vyasa' means an author or writer. As such, 'Vyasa' may not be the name of the author. According to Amarasimha, the author of the Amarakosa (6th century A.D.), Purana as a written work is expected to deal with *panchalaksana* or the following five topics: i) *sarga* or primary creation of the categories ii) *prati-sarga* or secondary creation with the categories which includes world cycles iii) *vamsa* or genealogy of the gods and Rsis, iv) *manvantaras* or the 'Manu-periods' of time each under a 'Manu' or primal ancestor and v) *vamsānu-charita* history of the royal dynasties. Purana literature has considerable influence on popular Hinduism.

Among the Vaisnavite Puranas, the Visnu-Purana and Bhagavata -Purana are the most renowned. There are important Saivite-Puranas also.

### 1. The Visnu-Purana:

The Visnu-Purana is one of the oldest. It's likely date is fifth century A.D. Vaisnavites regard it as foremost. It contains the five topics expected in a Purana.

The Visnu-Purana has six books.

Book I contains ideas of time in traditional Hinduism: It opens with i) A hymn glorifying Visnu ii) Thereafter there is an account of the creation of the world. Hindu thought views time as cyclical. . Therefore there is a description of the small and great cycles of time. A *maha-yuga* or cycle of time consists of four small cycles called *yugas*.

First is the *Satya-yuga* (or *Krita-yuga*), the Golden Age of the world. In this 'Yuga' or time period, there are no vices in the human race. All live in harmony and therefore happily. There is no disease and deterioration of the sense-organs in old

age. All the needs of people are fulfilled by mere wish. Therefore, labour or exertion as we know is unknown. The length of this yuga is 4,800 divine years. A divine year is equivalent to 360 human years.

Next is the *Tretā-Yuga*. In this period, there is some decline in human righteousness. Men begin to act from selfish motive and seek reward. As a result Vedic sacrifices become necessary. This yuga endures for 3600 divine years.

The third is the *Dvāpara-yuga*. In this era righteousness declines by half. This brings about diseases and calamities. Human suffering increases. This period lasts 2,400 divine years.

The fourth and last yuga is the *Kali-Yuga*. Righteousness has decreased by three-fourths. As a result there is extreme human suffering, with anxiety, disease, hunger and fear characterizing this epoch. It is 1200 divine years in length.

After this, the cycle repeats beginning with the Golden Age. Each *Mahā-Yuga* or great cycle of yugas is 12,000 divine years. One thousand of these maha-yugas make a *Kalpa*, which in human years comes to 4,320,000,000. This is a day of god Brahma, the creator. Brahma has a night of equal length, which is *Pralaya* or the dissolution. When Brahma's day again dawns, the universe is recreated and repeats the same cycle of *yugas* and *maha-yuga*, until another *kalpa* is completed. God Brahma has a life of only 100 Brahma years. After this time, another individual of good karma from *sansara* becomes a Brahma. Time is infinite; no one can count the number of *kalpas* that have gone by or to come in the future.

A wise man is weary of endlessly going round the wheel of time. He desires freedom from the rounds of birth-death and rebirth. He wishes *mukti* or liberation and to join Visnu and the 'Muktas' or those that have come to *mukti*.

There is another theory of yugas, which is likely to be of later origin. It divides the *kalpa* into 14 *manvantaras*, with each *manvantara* lasting 306,720,000 years. This makes a *kalpa* 4,294,080,000 years long. This is 25,920,000 years less than the *kalpa* of 4,320,000,000 years; noted above. The writers of the Puranas were aware of this discrepancy and therefore added 1,851,428 years to each *manvantara* of 306,720,000 years, which multiplied by 14 yields the figure 4,319,999. For absolute accuracy they added further minute periods.

Each *manvantra* has its 'Manu', or forerunner of the human race. We are now in the Kaliyuga of the seventh *manvantara*. This yuga began after the death of *Krishna*, as described in the Mahabharata.

In Book I is also a flood story involving the Manu of the present *manvantara*. There is also a myth of the churning of the ocean. The story of Prahlada's devotion to Visnu is also there and then there is the myth of Dhruva, the Pole Star.

Book II contains ideas of Space in traditional Hinduism. According to this account :

- i. The earth has seven continents, each surrounded by an ocean.
- ii. Bharatvarsha or India is situated in Jambudvipa, the continent in the center of the earth.
- iii. In Jambudvipa, Bharatvarsha is the most desirable region for rebirth, being a land for the practice of karma-yoga. The other regions are for enjoyment. After many thousands of rebirths living beings may get birth in Jambudvipa, where it is possible to attain liberation. The gods acknowledge that even for them it is a great blessing to be born here.
- iv. Mount Meru, is the tallest mountain at the center of the earth. It is therefore in the center of Bharatvarsha. Its peak is so high that it touches the sphere of the stars. The dwellings of the gods are on the slopes of Mount Meru.
- v. There are also six subtler regions where live angels or gods. i) The lowest region extends from the earth's lower atmosphere upto the sun. ii) Next is 'Svarga', which is higher and the home of Indra and many other gods. Then there are four higher worlds where very superior intelligence dwell. iii) In the third subtler region, saints live for an entire kalpa. iv) The fourth subtle world is peopled by the patriarchs and progenitors of mankind. v) Next is the pure-minded world of austerity, where live the ascetics. And in the last Brahmaloaka live inhabitants who are nearing liberation. They live with the god Brahma until the end of his period of existence and then are united with the Ultimate Reality or Visnu.
- vi. Beneath the earth are the seven regions of Patala. There live the Nagas or serpent deities. These are pleasant regions. The sage Narada visited these places and reported that Patala was more pleasant than Indra's Heaven!
- vii. Below Patala are the twenty-eight 'Narakas' or hells, ruled by King 'Yama'. Here sins are punished with tortures appropriate to the seriousness of the crime. After the punishment is endured in accordance of the law of karma, the person is reborn.
- viii. The 'Ananta' or endless serpent 'Shesha' of 1000 heads, from whose mouths issues forth the venomous fire, which at the end of a kalpa, takes the form of Rudra to destroy creation; is at the base of this universe supporting it. He is all-wise and is worshipped by the gods and the sages.

Book III gives an account of the Manus of the previous six *manvantaras* and the succeeding ones. We are at present in the seventh *manvantara*, presided over by

the Vaivasvata-Manu. About half of book III is concerned with rituals, ceremonies, and ashrams, and the duties of each *varna* or class.

Book IV gives the genealogical lists of the ancient royal families of the Solar Dynasty, who trace their origin to the Sun-God, and of the Lunar Dynasty, who trace their origin to the Moon-God. Occasionally, in between these lists, we find a story about one or another of these kings. Such is the famous tale of King Pururavas and his beloved nymph Urvasi.

Book V tells the enchanting tale of Krisna. It covers his youth as the divine cowherd, his heroic exploits in maturity and finally his death by being shot in the heel by a hunter, after which he unifies with Visnu.

Book VI is important for its description of the dissolution of the world. Three kinds of dissolution are described:

- i) **Incidental dissolution**, meaning the destruction of the creatures, but not the substance of the world;
- ii) **Eternal dissolution**, which is the resolution of all the elements of the world into their primitive source, *Prakriti* or primal matter, which occurs at the end of Brahma's life, when the souls who have not attained *Moksa* go comatose retaining their karma and are reborn again in the next cycle of existence; and
- iii) **Absolute dissolution**. Herein is individual ego-annihilation and the end of a person's *sansāra*. This takes place with the ending of a person's *karma*. Absolute dissolution is *Moksa*.

Yoga according to the stages mentioned in the Yoga system, is recommended for attainment of absolute dissolution. Here, *samadhi* which destroys forever the false separation between the individual and the universal spirit, is union with Visnu. Thereafter, one lives eternally as part of Visnu.

At the end of this Purana, it is said that whoever hears the reading of this work will be free from the contamination of Kali-yuga and his sins. Whoever hears or reads this Purana with intense devotion acquires the perfection of Visnu.

'*Smriti*', which includes Puranic literature as well as the Bhagavad-Gita, could be heard or read by Sudras and women. These scriptures would reveal the path to *Moksa* to these groups excluded from the study of *Sruti*, which are the Vedas.

## 2. The Bhāgavata-Purana :

Scholars claim that Bhagavata-Purana has evolved in three stages. The very old material was developed into a Maha-Purana or great-purana during the early Christian era. The Alwaras, who were the Tamil Bhakti-Saints, and who flourished

between the 5th and 8th century A.D, gave it a final shape. This Purana has five more topics besides the five mentioned as characteristics found in all Puranas.

This Purana is not committed to any particular system of Hindu philosophy; but while accepting all *darsanas* or philosophical systems as valid, and dealing with them in different contexts, it unifies them all through the elixir of *Bhakti* or devotion.

The insight into human life with its struggles, the transitoriness of worldly values, the importance of seeking that which is permanent and the way to it, explored through the entire spectrum of Hindu religion and philosophy, along with an atmosphere of sanctity and joy built within the matrix of abnegation, together with soulful prayers of love and longing for the Divine; all this woven around the most exalting life of Lord Krishna rarely fails to edify the reader who understands it in the original Sanskrit.

It is the very embodiment of 'Bhakti-marga' or 'the way of devotion' and a spiritual masterpiece. "In the sublimity, fervor and comprehensiveness of the pattern of devotion it inculcates, in the dignity, elevation and terseness of its Sanskrit diction and in the lyrical beauty and wealth of imagery of its poetry, there is no Purana that comes anywhere near it. It is undoubtedly one of the greatest productions of the literary and spiritual genius of India". (Quoted from Swami Tapasyananda's translation of 'Srimad Bhagavata', a Ramakrishna-Math publication.)

Visnu being the God of preservation, from time to time he assumes incarnations and descends on earth. Krishna is one such incarnation. The Bhagavat Purana mentions a few of these incarnations mentioned hereunder :

### **The Avataras of Visnu:**

The Bhagavata Purana, popular with Vaisnavites and many others in India today, enumerates the following twenty-two Avataras of Visnu and then adds that the incarnations of Visnu are really innumerable. Visnu has altogether one thousand names which are recited as a litany for the accumulation of religious merit.

- 1) In the 'Kaumara' cycle, Visnu incarnated as Sanak and other brahmin kumaras and practiced brahmacharya.
- 2) In the second incarnation Visnu took the form of a cosmic boar, to rescue the Earth from *rasātala* where the demon Hiranyaksha had hidden it.
- 3) In the Rsi sarga, Visnu appeared as *devarsi* Narada and preached the '*panch-aratra*' doctrine of devotion which frees man from the bondage of Karma.

- 4) In the fourth incarnation Visnu was born of the wife of Dharma Prajapati as the twin Rsis, called Nara and Narayana and became the harbinger of blissful tranquility through the practice of severe austerities.
- 5) In the fifth incarnation Visnu appeared as Kapila Muni, the god of the *siddhas* and through brahmin Asuri reintroduced the lost Sankhya system with its knowledge of the *tatvas*.
- 6) In the sixth incarnation Visnu took birth as Dattatreya, the son of Atri muni and his wife Anasuya and led Alarka and Prahlada to Self-knowledge.
- 7) In the seventh incarnation Visnu incarnated as Yajana, the son of Ruchi and his wife Akuti, and residing in the kingdom of devas wherein his sons the Yamas were most prominent, ruled the *Svayambhu Manvantara* as its Indra.
- 8) In the eighth incarnation Visnu took birth as Urukrama, also known as Risabdeva, the son of king Nabhi and his wife Merudevi and imparted the path of *Paramahansa* which is revered by the steady in mind and all the four ashramas.
- 9) In the ninth incarnation at the request of the Rsis, Visnu became King Prithu and by milking the earth of all medicines and properties became the endeared of the people.
- 10) In the *Chaksusa Manvantara*, Visnu incarnated as Matsya or divine fish and rescued Vaivasvata Manu from the flood by telling him how he could save himself from a coming world deluge. Following the advice of this avatara, Manu built a ship and set sail therein with his family. Then Matsya appeared as a huge fish with a great horn to which the ship was tied until the waters subsided. After the deluge was over, Matsya guided the boat to a mountain where Manu and those with him disembarked to renew the human race along with all other creatures. The other story is that, in the Pralaya waters, Visnu took the form of the great fish and exterminated the demon Hayagriva, who was trying to obliterate the knowledge of the Vedas and thus saved the Sruti from extinction.
- 11) In the eleventh incarnation, Visnu became the 'Kurma' or tortoise to support the mount Mandarachala which was used as the churning rod by Devas or gods and Danavas or demons during the churning of the ocean.
- 12) In the twelfth incarnation Visnu as Dhanvantari emerged from the churning ocean with the pot of nectar.
- 13) In the thirteenth incarnation Visnu took the form of Mohini, the celestial damsel to distract the demons and allow the gods to sip the nectar.

- 14) In the fourteenth incarnation Visnu appeared as Narasimha or the man-lion to rescue his devotee Prahlada and the kingdom from a demon king Hiranyakashipu.
- 15) In the fifteenth incarnation Visnu appeared as 'Vamana' or a dwarf during a yagna by a demon tyrant Bali, who had conquered the Earth and was threatening the heavens of the gods. Therein by asking the gift of area covered by his three steps, Vamana covered the three worlds and thereby prevented Bali from being the monarch of the three worlds.
- 16) Seeing the Kshatriyas persecuting the Brahmins, Visnu appeared as Parasurama (or Rama with an axe) in His sixteenth incarnation and destroyed the race of Kshatriyas in twentyone crusades.
- 17) During Dvāpara Yuga (Copper age), when humanity had fallen and thereby had lost the capacity for comprehending the Vedas in their totality, Visnu in His seventeenth incarnation was born as sage Krishna-Dvaipayana to Risi Parasara and Mother Satyavati. To simplify the Vedas, he divided them into four parts and recompiled them. They are, the Rik, the Sama, the Yajus and the Atharva Vedas. He taught each of them to his four chief disciples, Paila, Jaimini, Vaisampayana, and Sumanta, who in turn taught them by word of mouth, to their disciples, and thus the process went on. In his position as recompiler of the Vedas, He is called 'Veda-Vyasa'.
- 18) In the eighteenth incarnation Visnu appeared as Rama and overcame the demon King Ravana and did many other prowesses.
- 19) In the nineteenth and twentieth incarnation Visnu appeared in the Vrushnikula of the Yadus as Balarama and Krisna and lightened the burden on the earth. The chief purpose of this incarnation was to rid the earth of unrighteousness and the demon King Kamsa. As a youth, Krisna loved to play the flute and infuse *bhakti* or devotion in the hearts of gopis and pull them out of life mundane to life-divine. The *Rāsālila* dance, which is a circle dance in the moon light described in the Bhagavata-Purana, is a special level of consciousness attainable to the exceptionally fortunate devout. The amorous adventures between Krisna and his favourite Radha are an important theme in the Gita Govinda, symbolizing the love between God and the soul. In this incarnation through Bhagaved Gita, Krisna freely bestows the secret of emancipation, to those who have the ear to hear it. Krisna and Rama are the two principal Avataras of Visnu.
- 20&21 In the iron age of Kali when rational justification carries more conviction than *sabda-pramāna* or the 'Word of the Saint', Visnu in His twentyfirst



incarnation will appear as Buddha in the region of Kitaka at Gaya as the son of Ajana to free humanity from suffering, by showing how to be light unto one's own self. The uninformed view is that Visnu assumed the form of Buddha to delude the wicked, so that they would deny the authority of the Vedas and thereby the reality of one universal Supreme Spirit. Another view found in the Gita Govinda, however, is that Visnu assumed this form out of compassion for animals, to prevent them being slaughtered.

- 22) This is the incarnation of the future. When the present Kali-Yuga degenerates into the maximum of wickedness, Visnu will take the form of Kalki on a white horse. He will be the son of a Brahmin named Visnuyasa. With a flaming sword in his hand, he will come to judge the wicked, reward the good and bring in a new golden age, the 'Krita' or Satya yuga. This will be His twenty-second incarnation.

[To be continued]

## FROM THE LIFE OF SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

—Dr. Bithika Mukerji

### Mataji in Dhaka

"What is true and what is false after all? If you touch any finger—you touch me; if you touch my clothes—you are in touch with me—but just as I am my hand or my foot or my clothes, so I am also myself in entirety. Similarly God is One, yet is many. He is as complete in a grain of sand as in man, and also in Himself."

While Mataji was talking in this strain to the people around her, the Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, Khan Bahadur Nasiruddin Ahmed, was seen to be out on his usual constitutional in the fields of Ramna. Some of his acquaintances went up to him and invited him to come and be introduced to Mataji. As he approached the group, somebody said to her, "Ma, he is a Mussalman." Mataji smiled and said, "So am I a Mussalman."

After greetings, the Khan Bahadur asked one of the devotees: "If Mataji has attained peace why does she keep wandering about?" Probably he did not think it polite to accost her directly, but Mataji answered the question herself, "If I stayed in one place, the same question could arise, could it not?" Then she smiled her smile of inimitable grace and beauty and said gently, "Baba, don't you know, I am a very restless little girl. I cannot stay in one place. This is one answer. From another point of view, I may say it is you who see me travelling from place to place. In reality I do not move at all. When you are in your own house, do you sit still in one corner? No, you freely walk about in the whole of it and yet remain in your house. Similarly I also wander around in my own house—I don't go anywhere—I am always at rest in my own home."

"You have found Peace. We are at the mercy of innumerable distractions. Why don't you be generous and communicate some of your Peace to us?"

"The moment you exclaim in desperation, 'O Lord, how to find Peace?' You are already on the path to attaining it!"

Mataji said this so spontaneously and humourously and with such an eloquent gesture of her hands that everyone burst out laughing. Then Mataji said seriously, "If you live with things unpeaceful, how can you hope for peace? People are affected by things in their vicinity. If you sit near a fire, you feel the heat, if you

approach something which is very cold, you feel it also. If you choose to live amidst distractions, how should peace descend on you? This does not mean that everyone should retire from the world and stay in forest retreats to find peace. But what you can do is to live with something which is of the nature of peace. Wherever you are you must live in the company of that which gives peace. I say to you keep in mind always God;: God alone is Peace. Whether you call Him 'Khuda' or 'Kali' is immaterial, because there is One only. The really important thing is to persevere. Relentless perseverance brings about the change in perspective which will establish you in Peace.

"Peace can be attained anywhere in the world or away from it. You say that I have found Peace and should distribute it to others. I say to you that I am a little child and you are my parents. Accept me as such and give me a place in your hearts. By saying 'mother' you keep me at a distance. Mothers have to be revered and respected. But a little girl needs to be saved and looked after and is dear to the heart of everyone. So this is my only request to you, to make a place for me in your hearts."

Mataji's words spoken lightly and yet solemnly touched everyone. After a short while Mataji got up and so the session came to an end.

She stayed in Dacca for about a week this time. The happy throng surrounding her at all hours tried to recapture the spirit of the days at Shahbagh. Many of the women did not return home at all, but stayed in the Ashram while Mataji was there. The small Ashram could hardly contain the swelling crowds, so Mataji again and again went out and sat in the open so that everyone could sit around her.

Bholanath in the garb of an ascetic met his many friends and followers. He was observing silence, but his pleasure in meeting old acquaintances was evident to all. Bhaiji remained quietly at the Ashram although he visited his home. At Mataji's suggestion he invited his wife to come away with him so that both of them could adopt the *vānaprastha* ashram, that is, lead lives like hermits in suitable retreats; but apparently his wife was not prepared to leave home at this time, so when Mataji and her companions left Dhaca he once more went without his wife.

Slowly but steadily it became clear that Mataji was adhering scrupulously, in effect, to one of her own sayings: "Talk about God alone is (worthwhile) talk; all else is vain and full of pain<sup>1</sup>" She entered into the feelings of everybody regarding problems in the world, their difficulties concerning human relationship, and also their puzzlements about their own spiritual life; but like the underlying, unvarying

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Hari Kathai Katha aur sab vritha vyathā'

resonance of the *tanpura*, which accompanies every other instrument of music, she brought everybody round to the awareness of the supreme duty of man, which is to strive for Self-realization. That she gave the highest priority to the path of renunciation became gradually clearer as the years went by. All her answers veered round to the same theme again and again. She would deal with all kinds of questions, but her reply would be a variation of the thought that the supreme duty of every human being is to strive for the realization of THAT WHICH IS. She knew no compromise regarding this ultimate quest. All other obligations, namely, towards family, society, country, humanity, she wove around the one supreme duty towards God-realization. She would say, "To aspire for the realization of Truth is alone worthy of man," or "It is man's duty to bear in mind that he exists for God alone—for His service and for the realization of Him."

Mataji never encouraged anybody to set aside or neglect his worldly commitments, but it was very soon realized by her companions that she had nothing to say regarding those affairs. They were assured of her loving-kindness and the giving of compassionate hearing to their worries, but her grace lay not so much in warding off the evils of human life, like sickness, accidents, misfortunes or death, but in endowing the sufferer with strength and fortitude so that he would be at peace with himself amidst the inevitable changes to be constantly encountered. In Mataji's presence the world was seen to emerge as the necessary ground from where the search for Self-realization could begin for man.

Mataji's first 'choice' for holding aloft the ideal of renunciation as a meaningful way of life fell upon the oldest amongst her followers. In retrospect, it seems that she could not have made a better choice. In April, 1934 she had a *kheyāla* that Shashanka Mohan\* should become a *sannyāsī*. The *sañnyāsa* ceremony of Shashanka Mohan was the first event of this kind in Mataji's entourage. This incident seems sufficiently definitive in its nature for the understanding of Mataji's teaching.

---

\*. Dr. Shashanka Mohan Mukherji, a retired Civil Surgeon and father of Gurupriya didi, a constant companion of Mataji.

## "MUKTI"

— Dhiraj Sapru

Ask not for health - nor fame  
neither riches - nor name  
crave 'n' yearn for but-one-boon  
Freedom-Freedom-Freedom

Pervade the ether - air the sky  
know you see through every eye  
every mouth that speaks is yours  
Freedom-Freedom-Freedom

Love thy neighbour-know you'se him  
taking-is-fun, yet-better-giving  
pour through every pumping heart  
Freedom-Freedom-Freedom

Share all that one can share  
Share all that's good 'n' fair  
Share, but, the-seed-of thought  
Freedom-Freedom-Freedom

Time is but the ticking of clocks  
be not the ship on anchored docks  
catch-the-wind, sail-to-see  
Freedom-Freedom-Freedom

....Space-a concept - of the mind  
yet lapse in thought-could one find ?  
the game unfolds-play for fun  
Freedom-Freedom -Freedom

Effects of cause - well, sounds neat  
strive-to-death, yet, to-systems-beat  
'Be the Law' - for you must declare  
Freedom-Freedom-Freedom

**Jai Ma.**



## SECOND TRIP TO INDIA

—Shraddha Davenport

Mother's seventy-fifth Birthday celebration was to be held in the most holy city of Varanasi (Benares) during May of 1971. There would be a week of daily programs starting on May seventh and culminating in a grand Tithi Puja on May fourteenth in the early hours.

We had received a letter from Chitra asking us to come for this special event. Our friends Haripriya and Swami Nirmalananda were also going to be there. It did not seem possible that we could manage to go again so soon as it had only been six months since our first trip. But by Mother's grace all obstacles were dissolved and once again we were in that wonderful flurry of arrangements for the trip.

Our flight landed in Delhi about 4.30 a.m. on May ninth. After clearing customs, we took a taxi to our hotel on the out-skirts of Delhi. It was so wonderful to be in India again. I enjoyed the drive, especially down the wide street where great trees line both sides and meet a canopy overhead.

Arriving too early to check-in, we took tea on the lawn where we were seated in white wicket chairs. In the first pale light of day, we listened to the sounds of Delhi as she awoke.

The uniformed doorman smiled as he presented me with a blossom from the garden. Birds began to stir and softly chirp to one another. Beyond the gate, I could hear the bell of a bicycle that was passing by. The aroma of little wood, cooking fires, incense and flowers mixed with the sweet fragrance of Indian tea. All of my senses feasted as once again I was romanced by India.

After our baths we went to see the Sharma family. They were surprised to see us and after a little while we understood why. The telegram we had sent them from California several days before arrived as we sat in their living room! We all had a good laugh. It was so nice to visit with them again even for such a short time.

Mr. Sharma went with us to the train station where we got reservations on the May tenth afternoon train to Varanasi. No compartment was available, so we took seats in the air-conditioned chair car. It was a very long trip and we would not arrive in Varanasi until late in the morning of the eleventh. But at least we had some air-conditioning.

We loved being able to see the countryside and Satya took a lot of movies from the door of our car. I was more than a little concerned as I saw him hanging outside

to get a better view. But after some time he returned to his seat. We ate some of the fruit snacks we had brought and as night closed around us we tried to get some sleep. But had little success.

When the train pulled into Varanasi, three hours late, we were delighted to find Swami Nirmalananda waiting for us. He and four brahmacharis from his ashram in Oklahoma had been in Varanasi for some days.

May is perhaps the most difficult time of the year to visit to India because the heat is so intense. Monsoon season has not yet arrived, but its surety is felt in the dense humid air. It was hotter here than it had been in Delhi, but in the days that followed we would often hear people declare that it was "unseasonally cool". We were simply drained of energy, but happy to be so near Mother once again.

Swami Nirmalananda went with us to our hotel where we bathed and put on fresh clothes before going to the ashram. There was no air-conditioning in the hotel, only a large ceiling fan. The water from the single tap in the bathroom was quite warm, just right for bathing.

We went by bicycle rickshaw on a twenty-minute ride down the narrow cobblestone street to Mother's ashram. Unlike Delhi, there were few automobiles on the streets, but many rickshaws, bicycles and three-wheel motor taxis ("scooters"). Cows roamed freely through the traffic as every one yielded to them. Small shops lined the street and there was always a lot of activity day and night.

Inside the ashram gates we saw that an immense pandal had been erected but no program was going on at that moment. We were delighted when Atmananda came to greet us. We asked about seeing Mother, but were told that due to the crowds and busy program we would have to wait until after the Birthday Puja to see Mother privately. We were of course anxious to be near Her, but we would have to wait.

Chitra was almost impossible to catch as Mother had put her in charge of arrangements for the visiting swamis and she was kept very busy. We did get to see her for a quick 'hello'. She said that after the birthday there would be a chance to talk.

Later that day we came to the pandal hoping to see Mother even at a distance. In the great crowd seated there we looked for friends we had met in November and saw no familiar faces until Tapasi's beautiful smile lit up our hearts as she greeted us.

A long platform had been set up against one side of the pandal where several sadhus and dignitaries were seated. We all stood as Mother came in and with folded hands greeted the speakers and the crowd. She took Her seat on the far right end of the platform. I wanted so much to go near Her, and when I saw a line of people

with garlands going to pronam to Her I quickly purchased a garland and got in line. Soon there I was at Her holy feet once again. I laid the flowers near Her knees and bent my head in pronam. When I looked up at Her. She was busily engaged in conversation with the sadhu seated near Her. She did not look at me.

I quietly returned to my seat bewildered and feeling rejected. It was a long time before I could quit questioning why She had "ignored" me and question why I wanted an outer demonstration of that relationship which was within my heart. She had revealed that to me on our first trip, but the reality of it had yet to subdue my ego.

Over the years, by Her infinite mercy I was to receive many mild blows, several were to be visited upon me, in the succeeding days in Varanasi.

In the morning hours a Rasa Lila would be performed daily in the pandal and every afternoon a Ram Lila. The crowds grew larger each day and the heat was stifling. But we attended just to gaze at Her. I longed for Her look, Her smile.

During the hottest part of the day we would go to our hotel room and try to cool off by putting damp towels on our bodies as we lay under the ceiling fan. Or, procuring a block of ice, Satya would chop it into small pieces and pack it around assorted bottles of soda which he had placed in two metal buckets. After a short time they got very cold. Our western friends, including Krishnapriya, who was now living in India, often joined us and we would all share a cool drink, stories about Mother, India, and the great saints who have taken birth in this wondrous land. Swami Nirmalananda told many thrilling stories from the Hindu Scriptures and my heart would quicken as I sensed the familiarity of my true home, the heritage of my soul.

Kirtan was performed non-stop in the ashram and Atmanandaji often took her turn at the harmonium. One evening about eight of us westerners sat around her and joined in the divine chanting. What a wonderful feeling to participate in this celebration. We smiled at each other in shared delight at our good fortune to be here together.

On the afternoon of May thirteenth we stood at the top of Anandamayi Ghat, before the Gopal Mandir, as the Varanasi fishermen filled the air with their dynamic chanting. Their drums and voices were like the Ganges Herself, softly flowing, then building to a great crescendo with waves of emotion as they sang "Jai Sita Ram." Later that same afternoon as Mother sat in the pandal I was thrilled to hear and record Her sweet voice as She sang the same "Jai Sita Ram."

That night—actually about 2:30 in the morning—we entered the great pandal where an immense crowd of people had gathered to join the puja and celebration of



Mother's birth. Satya wanted to take some movies and slides of the puja; so he moved around the pandal through the seated crowd and got to eventually stand right next to the platform where a beautiful couch had been prepared for Mother. A canopy of jasmine arched above it.

HariPriya and I tried to find seats, but it was almost impossible. As we stood in the aisle about a third of the way back, listening to the beautiful kirtan, we suddenly heard the thrilling sound of the Bengali ladies-their greeting of the Divine Mother as She was carried in on a silver palanquin and taken to Her couch. HariPriya and I gasped as we saw Her so pale and obviously in an extraordinary *bhava*. Upon reaching the couch, Mother reclined facing away from the crowd and pulled a cover over Her entire body, including Her head.

Satya was allowed to move very close to the platform for filming and at one time even went to the back side and was able to photograph Mother's face as She lay upon Her couch.

The elaborate Tithi puja was beautiful and gracefully performed by Brahmachari Nirvanananda. The whole function was not completed until dawn, at which time the devotees formed long lines and waited to offer pronams and flowers where Mother lay. Later Mother was assisted back on to the silver palanquin, and still in that divine mood She sat with eyes closed, completely limp, as She was carried to Her room in the ashram.

The heat, crowd, and long hours left us exhausted, but the magic of that night was worth that and more. We went to our hotel room and did not get back to the ashram until the next day, May fifteenth.

Refreshed and anxious to see Mother again, we came to the ashram. We were told that Mother would be coming into the Gopal Mandir and we could go there for darshan. There were so many people in the temple that we were unable to find a place where we could see Mother. There was a balcony over the entrance and as no one was there we westerners thought that would be a good place from which to see Mother. So we all went there to wait for her arrival.

After a while other people began to come to the balcony. One woman ashramite who found our presence as foreigners to be most disturbing, proceeded to make a scene and angrily insisted that we leave the balcony. I was humiliated and fled in tears. By now it was dark, and I went into the deserted ashram compound feeling very hurt and confused. Satya soon joined me and we stood there alone in the moonlight trying to understand what we were experiencing. How could it be that just six short months ago we had been treated with so much kindness and affection by everyone? Our beloved Mother had showered us with so many blessings.

looking into our very being with Her wondrous eyes and claiming our hearts as Her own throughout eternity.

Now it seemed that we were not only strangers whose presence was offensive, but far worse—that Mother seemed to ignore us or did not even know us. We stood looking to Ganges pondering these things and wondered why all this was happening.

Then we saw a figure approaching us. It was Brahmachari Bhaskarananda. He said, "There you are! I have something for you." His hand extended over mine and as he dropped something into my hand, he explained that it was a small piece of the cotton saturated with aromatic oils which had been upon Mother's holy feet during the Tithi Puja.

We were stunned. I did not think he was even aware that we were there, much less that we would be deemed worthy of such a treasure. Mother's touch and timing are unmistakable, for this could only be Her doing. Suddenly in the midst of our sorrow we were full of joy.

As we pronounced to Bhaskaranandaji we shared together not only the great blessing of that gift, but the knowledge that Mother was very much aware of our condition. We were just getting a little taste of the various mysteries which we would experience when we drew near Her presence—the intensification of the conflict between physical and spiritual values, and the exalted feeling as She always triumphed in the heart.

We were to spend seven more days in Varanasi. One day there was a sudden heavy rain, and in spite of our umbrellas we were drenched on our rickshaw ride to the ashram. Laughingly we agreed that it was wonderful to get some relief from the heat and we were sorry it rained only that one day.

There were a few opportunities to talk with Chitra and we were feeling much better. Every day we came for Mother's darshan and though we could not sit very near Her, we could at least see Her.

Satya had a wonderful experience at one of those darshans in the Gopal Mandir where Mother allowed him to see Her in all Her gentle sweetness and beauty, piercing his heart as only Her love can do.

HariPriya and her husband Krishnadas had been in India for several months and expected to stay for several more. Their health was not too good and the heat and crowds were very difficult for them, so they decided to go to the mountains and rejoin Mother later when there was a better chance to be near Her. We were sorry to see them go, but certainly understood.

One day seven of us hired a boat so that we might get a view of Varanasi's many ghats and temples. Small boys and goats cavorted upon the steps as adults

and children bathed in the low waters at the river's bank. Swami Nirmalananda pointed out many places that we had heard of and Satya took movies. What a thrilling experience to see all those ancient and most holy shrines, to touch the sacred waters of Ma Ganges, to know that we had indeed been well blessed to set foot upon this land sanctified for thousands of years by the elite of the Lord.

We shopped for gifts and bought some jewels as presents for our little Gopal who was waiting in our meditation room in California. California! Surely on another planet. It was strange, but even when I was feeling sad, it never occurred to wish that I were there. No, it was much too late for that—because truly my heart had been born of Her and there would never again be another "home" for me, no matter what might happen.

Just when it seemed that our whole trip would be spent in Varanasi we were given the news that Mother was going to Vrindavan and only three or four of Her brahmacharinis would be going with Her.

Swami Nirmalananda, his brahmacharis, Krishnapriya, Satya and I all asked permission to go to Vrindavan with Mother. We were ecstatic when Mother said, 'yes'. At last we were to be with Her in a quiet, intimate place and the chance for private time with Her was no longer remote.

Travel arrangements had to be quickly made. Train reservations were very difficult to get on short notice, but we found that we could fly from Varanasi to Delhi, then hire a car to Vrindavan. That would be the fastest way and we would have the maximum time with Mother. So we made reservations on the local airline. I packed our luggage for the flight scheduled to leave the next day. Then we went to the ashram for a very special treat.

One day Chitra had introduced me to a lovely lady from Calcutta, named Moni Chaudhuri. Her whole family had been devotees of Mother since 1937. Monidi was very kind to me and even taught me the words to some bhajans one day as we visited the ashram. Then on our last day in Varanasi she told me that there was a phonograph record of Mother singing which was made in Dacca in 1937. Monidi said that the record was there in the ashram and that if I could come in the evening she would get a phonograph and let me hear the record. So I brought my tape record and we hurried to meet Monidi. She had some difficulty in finding a phonograph that was in working order and it was getting quite late. Satya had some business to take care of at the hotel so he returned there and I waited with Krishnapriya. We had agreed that after hearing Mother's record, Krishnapriya and I would share a rickshaw back to the hotel.

As I waited for Monidi, I went up stairs to the Annapurna Temple above the courtyard overlooking the Ganges. As I stood gazing down at gently winding expanse of silver, I suddenly started sobbing. As tears flooded my eyes, I heard myself say, "I may never see the Ganges again." How strange, I had no idea that I felt such a strong attraction to those sacred waters.

It was about 11:00 p.m. when Monidi located the only working phonograph in the ashram. It was not electric and had to be cranked by hand. The speed was a little fast, but at least it would work. She brought it to the courtyard along with the cherished record. Two or three other devotees had also waited with us to hear Mother's sweet voice.

I set my tape recorder near the phonograph and we were all thrilled as we listened to Mother sing. At one point Mother broke into peals of laughter, and it was so infectious that we all laughed too and I had to start my recording over several times. Krishnapriya just could not resist Mother's voice, and finally I promised her that if she would just not make any sound while I recorded the tape that I would play it in the rickshaw as we returned to the hotel and she could laugh and exclaim as much as she wished. In the way, thanks to Monidi's patience, we did hear it all and my copy was made.

After thanking Monidi for her great kindness, Krishnapriya and I left the ashram in a very intoxicated state. We found a rickshaw and as I promised, I played the tape. Mother's sweet voice and laughter filled the street that night. Our driver could not resist turning to look at the two crazy western women laughing and calling Ma's name. In fact everyone we passed must have thought we were mad. And so we were! Mad for that Beloved who steals the heart away.

Suddenly we saw Satya coming from the opposite direction in a rickshaw. We stopped both rickshaws in the middle of the street and he explained that he was going to the ghat at Mother's ashram to get Ganges water which we could bring back to the States with us. He would meet me at the hotel.

Enveloped in joy, Krishnapriya and I finished our ride through the magical night filled with a myriad of stars.

## SOARING TO KAILASH WITH MATA ANANDAMAYI

—Antonio Eduardo Dagnino

Thirsty, elated, obsessed,  
passionate, persevering, depressed,  
I walked through India's sacred breadth  
looking for Shiva; looking for madness and love,  
for a light from above,  
From inside, beyond the scope of my eyes.  
... But at the feet of the blue snow-capped peaks,  
tired, I fell like a dove with blood on its beak,  
lonely and weak.....  
Then, a magical, unexpected vision on dream  
- answering my prayers-got me again on the wing:  
With flaming eyes emitting hues of all dyes,  
the Mother of mothers took me soaring with Her on Her flight...  
Light as light,  
from my prone back-bone I ejected  
and my spirit projected toward the vertical column  
of far-away Mount Kailash, this world's spinal column.  
.... And as we rose,  
I saw a rapture-petalled absolute rose,  
and over those deep petals we climbed, rung by rung,  
into higher levels of intoxication with bliss forever young.

●

## FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—'Kirpal'

Varanasi, 22.9.1956

Sree Ma : The Lord and the servant. The sweeper cleans the outside area; the servant washes and cleans the vessels; but the pollution of the mind can be cleansed by God alone and no one else.

Sree Ma : (to Kunwarni Bhadri's mother) As a mother creates and gives birth to a child and the mother herself serves the child and no other. Similarly God alone can cleanse and no one else. One's service to oneself.

Dr. Pannalal questions Ma about the general trend of scolding sturdy beggars.

Sree Ma : There was once a sweeper woman and a beautiful queen. The sweeper woman decided one day to sit down at one side in a fixed posture (*asana*) with single-minded concentration. People gradually started flocking and offering fruits and garlands, but she did not look up, nor took the slightest notice. Now all this reached the queen's ears and she said to the King, "There is the Ganga (holy river) flowing by our door step, and we don't go to this great saint". So the King and queen went and laid their offerings. But still the sweeper woman did not look up. But through the corner of her eyes she managed to see the King and queen and then came the realisation that worldly matters are false and took to true *sannyas* (renunciation).

Dr. Pannalal : What is the easiest path to realisation ?

Sree Ma : *Anupāya* : (i.e. not through any means)

Dr. Pannalal : But first one has to strive.

Sree Ma only smiled.

Dr. Pannalal : Does God create the evil ?

Sree Ma : Everything is His creation. Just look : There is a senior officer and he drinks and gets intoxicated. Seeing his miserable state the others decide, "Oh, let me not be like him". To attain to that state, whether you invoke Krishna, Rama, Shiva, that is the supreme state; where no disaster can exist. One's own state, one's treasure. God is bound to his devotees. They have taken refuge at His holy feet and received His blessings. There the desires and cravings for worldly matters do not exist. Each

should abide by his own faith. The muslims offer 'namaz' and should follow their own faith. You offer puja and various rituals. You should observe your own rites. But you should fix regular times for your prayers. By listening to the Divine scriptures the path to Immortality may be opened.

## SPRING IN VIRGINIA

—J.C. Chatterji, Lt. Gen. (Retd.)

Blossoms, blossoms and blossoms abound  
 Cherries, Dogwoods and Bradford pears  
 God's gifts of fleeting pleasures  
 To savour, make many and play around.

Flowers, flowers and flowers abound  
 Crocus, Daffodils and Forsythias yellow  
 Tulips, Hyacinths and Azakas to follow  
 Time to wake up and look around.

Colours, colours and colours abound  
 Pink, orange, purple and reds  
 Green, blue and whites of all shades  
 Absorb, elevate and meditate on subjects profound.

Shooting trees, chirping birds and blue sky abound.  
 Clouds, rains and thunder sadden, gladden and frighten the life  
 Hark instead, O' traveller, the call of the loud life  
 And march towards the Goal, wary of the trap of the merry-go-round.

## MA ANANDAMAYEE SCHOOL AGARTALA, TRIPURA

This educational institution for the young children established with the blessings of Sri Anandamayee Ma, has a distinctive history behind it. More than 19 years back in March, 1982 Sri Ma had installed an exquisite *moorti* of Goddess Saraswati (the Goddess of Learning) out of her spontaneous and divine *Kheyal* in the newly-established ashram in Agartala, in the far away north-eastern state of Tripura, very near to Sri Ma's birth place in Bangladesh.

The ex-ruler of the Tripura State, Maharaja Veer Vikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur, had out of his devotion for Ma, whom he named as the "Daughter of Tripura", arranged for being offered at her feet a beautiful plot of land along with the famous temple of Uma Maheshwar, situated on the eastern bank of a lake in front of the majestic Tripura Palace. Along with the same, the Maharaja also donated another plot almost adjoining the temple area. Sri Ma during her last and final visit to Tripura, while looking at the same plot, had exclaimed of her own—"Some good work could be done here".

It is significant to record in this connection that Ma out of her inscrutable *Kheyal* had also arranged for the ceremonial puja of Goddess Saraswati for three consecutive years on that very spot where the white marble *moorti* of the deity was installed by Her. Reasons behind this divine *Kheyal* will never be known to any other human being.

Can there be any doubt that it was the divine inspiration of the Goddess of Learning Herself which has urged the devotees to establish the "Ma Anandamayee School" on that very land, which will undoubtedly be the most befitting memorial of Ma's spontaneous *Kheyal* ?

As a result of the dedicated efforts of a number of Ma's devotees and an initial grant of Rs. 2.00 lakhs obtained from the local M.P. Fund the school has taken its shape atleast to some extent and has started functioning from July, 2000.

Special mention should be made of those who have come voluntarily with their unstinted support at the hour of particular need. The management of the local ashram is deeply grateful specially to Swami Bhaskaranandaji, Nirvananandaji, Nirgunanandaji, Ma Anandamayee Seva Samiti (USA). The Abbey of God's Love (Hawaii), Dr. Bipin Bhatt (USA), Sri Mohan Murjani (U.K.), Sri B.S. Rathod



(Ahmedabad), Sri Priyabrata Bhattacharya, Sri Banibrata Saha, Sri Kumud Bandhu Saha, Sri Anil Saha and a host of others from Agartala.

This centre of learning in Sri Ma's name, which has started functioning even with only four rooms, needs atleast some essential furniture and fixture for the library and the Principal's room and atleast two more rooms urgently with toilet facilities for the children.

It is needless to say that any assistance, however small, towards this noble cause will be most gratefully acknowledged.

JAI MA

*Secretary,*  
**Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha**  
(Ma Anandamayee School Fund)  
Palace Compound  
P.O. Agartala - 799001  
Tripura State