

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

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MATRI VANI

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

* * *

A competent teacher, who understands every change in the movement of the disciples *prana*, will accordingly either speed up the process or slow it down. He who guides must have first hand knowledge of everything that may occur at any stage. Without the help of such a doctor, there is danger of suffering.

* * *

To let the mind dwell on sense objects it still further increases one's attachment to them.

* * *

Ears have been given to you to hear the satsang, eyes to see the form of the Lord, feet to do the *parikrama*, hands to do japa, to do the worship of the Lord.

* * *

When there is real meditation which evokes indifference to the world, you will begin to pine keenly for the Divine, you will hunger for it and realize that nothing transient can appease this hunger or satisfy you.

* * *

What is known as the fruit of effort is nothing but the illumination of the particular aspect towards which the effort has been directed. Unveiled light (*nirāvaran prakāsa*) is He Himself, the Eternal.

* * *

An object of sense (*viṣaya*) is that which contains poison is full of harm and drags man towards death. But freedom from the world of sense objects (*nirviṣaya*) — where no trace of poison remains — means immortality.

* * *

While absorbed in meditation, whether one is conscious of the body or not, under all circumstances, it is imperative to remain wide awake, unconsciousness must be strictly avoided.

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As one becomes capable of real meditation, and to the extent that one contacts reality, one discovers the ineffable joy that lies hidden even in all outer objects.

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Real vision is that vision where there is no such thing as the seer and the seen. It is eyeless — not to be beheld with these eyes, but with the eyes of wisdom. In that vision without eyes, there is no room for '*division*'.

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By constantly dwelling on the thought of God, all the knots that make up the ego are unravelled, and that which has to be realized will be realized.

●

REPLIES TO WRITTEN QUERIES

BY

FOREIGN DEVOTEES

— Vijayananda

Bhakti

Q : *It is often said that the relationship between guru and disciple is beyond the personal level; but would not it be more exact to say that the relationship is first very personal and then only it reaches the impersonal ?*

V : The relationship between a real master and a genuine disciple is something wonderful. One must have lived it to understand it. It is basically a relationship of mystical love, which is very different from human love which looks for physical contact. Mystical love is at the level of pure Consciousness. The spark of divine Consciousness which is in the disciple is attracted like a powerful magnet by the Omnipresent Divine, who radiates through the physical form of the perfect Master.

But in the beginning the disciple confuses or rather limits the Divine with the physical form of the Master. A Personal relationship is then created, but it exists only from the disciple's point of view. This relationship is useful in the beginning of sadhana because it creates an affective transference and enables one to be freed from worldly attachments. When the disciple reaches a certain maturity, the master liberates him from personal attachment by having him discover the Divine which resides in his own heart and which is one with the omnipresent Divine.

Q : *Most Westerners inspired by Ma do not do puja to her, while this practice is very common among Hindus, be they in ashrams or at home; do they lose something?*

V : Real puja is a mental attitude. Ritual is there to awaken this attitude of love and veneration. Westerners do not need to use the same rites as Hindus, but when one is about to start meditation, it is beneficial to establish a contact with the master, Ma in our case, so that she imparts the required spiritual energy to you. And for this, a certain form of puja may be useful : reciting a few mantras, lighting an incense stick, making a pranam, etc.

Q : *Ma said time and again that she is not 'this body'. Is not the cult of her samadhi around her body a regression from a lofty vedantic teaching to a form of cheap popular devotion ? Is it not a depressive attitude for those disciples who cannot mourn the link they had with Ma when she was in her body?*

V : The tomb of a great sage and over all that of Ma radiates beneficial vibrations which grant peace of mind and make spiritual life easier. What people come to find near Ma's *samadhi* is their own inner resources, of course, not everybody is at the same spiritual level. Some people can find there a reminiscence of the days spent near Ma, but if it helps them to get peace of mind, where is the harm?

Q : *Sometimes, you say that a firm posture is necessary for the yoga, for the awakening of energy (kundalini), but that japa or observing the mind can be practiced in any position. Yet, does not these two last forms of meditation require a good deal of energy?*

V : Everything depends upon what you mean by the word *energy*. In *Kundalini* Yoga, you want to develop a *super-energy* to go towards realization at quicker pace. This energy is a sublimation (or rather a divinization) of a power which is usually wasted in sexual relationships among ordinary people. To follow this yoga, one must then follow a life of complete chastity and of reclusion. When *kundalini* awakens and rises in the central channel, a bad posture may block its ascension. In any case, when this rising up happens, the spine becomes straight spontaneously.

Regarding the methods based on japa and the observation of mind, they are preliminary techniques to purify mind and prepare it to the possibility of an awakening of Divine power. They may be practiced in daily life. They are still in the field of verbal thinking. When the vital force penetrates the central channel (that is to say when *kundalini* ascends in the *sushumnā nādi*), mind becomes silent and the question of *vichāra*, of observation of the mind, does not arise any longer.

Q : *Some people see in Vedanta a dry intellectualism. In which aspects are Vedanta and love inter-related?*

V : This has often been the approach of those who exclusively follow the path of Knowledge. In this path, there is a maximum use of the intellectual element by the practice of discrimination between what is transitory and what is Real, by the observation of mind and coming up to the source, our 'I', or also by

the search along the line of the question, 'Who am I?' as the great sage Ramana Maharshi used to teach. But limiting oneself only to the intellectual element is false *Vedanta*, it is like wanting to fly with one wing only. Two wings are necessary, and the second one is the affective element which means *Bhakti*. Generally, the *Vedanti* does not worship a personal God (although there is no difficulty in him doing so if he feels it). His love is directed on the Guru, not the physical person, but the one who is *Jnanamurti*, embodiment of Knowledge, the one who leads us towards the all-pervading Supreme, the Formless, the *Akshara* (indestructible) *Brahman*, which is our real Self. For the genuine *Vedanti*, the love that he has for his or her Guru is directed through him or her towards this imperishable, eternal Omnipresent, which is not affected by anything, not even the final dissolution. This is a high quality of love, one must have felt it to know what it is. In reality there are not two different paths, *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. Both are two aspects of the same *sadhana*, they are not separable. For some, *Jnana* is on the surface and *Bhakti* in the depths of the heart, for others, the reverse is true.

Yoga and the West

Q : *In Hinduism, a member of a couple is allowed to take sannyas even if the other does not agree, this is tolerated. Does not this custom represent an ethical problem inasmuch as marriage, as in Christianity, is considered as a life-long commitment?*

V : According to the general rule, *sannyas* should not be taken if the spouse does not agree, and it seems to me that a master will not give initiation to *sannyas* if he knows that the wife or husband disagrees, but there are exceptional cases. When the spirit of renunciation is very intense nothing counts anymore. The situation becomes similar to one who escapes the flames of a burning house.

Q : *Kumbha Mela is going on in Hardwar (March-April 1998). What is your position regarding this form of Hinduism for the masses?*

V : Kumbha Mela is a big meeting (I would almost say a fair) which occurs every twelve years at four different dates. It attracts huge crowds of pilgrims and sadhus (one says sometimes ten million or more). Tradition makes it a duty for sadhus to come out of their retreat to attend it. Hence, this represents an opportunity to meet sages who would be inaccessible the rest of the time. And even if one does not meet them, their vibrations mixed with the religious fervour of big crowds create a marvellous spiritual atmosphere which permeates you even if you do not want it. This is an important chance to meet

them and to perfect one's spiritual life either by vibrations or even by practical advice if one is lucky enough to meet a great sage. In addition to this, the bath in the Ganges at the sacred location and at the auspicious time reputedly gives liberation (*post mortem*) from the cycle of birth and death or at least purifies the most serious sins.

Legend says that in the beginning of creation during the churning of the ocean of milk a jar, *kumbha*, full of nectar of immortality, *amrit*, emerged among other wonderful things. A great fight started between gods and demons, everyone wanting to take possession of this jar. During the row, a few drops of the precious liquid dropped at four places in India. Hardwar, Allahabad, Ujjain and Nasik, and Kumbha Mela wants to celebrate these events. The intense faith of pilgrims and monks creates a very strong spiritual atmosphere which influences even those who do not believe in these legends. And this impregnation may be a departure point for a spiritual life, or intensify the practices of those who are already on the path.

Q : *Un Francais dans l'Himalaya (A Frenchman in Himalaya) has just been published at Terre du Ciel. Knowing the French people from France, inasmuch as you see every week some new ones passing by, on which point of the book do you expect to be well understood, and on which other not?*

V : This book is a patch of most variegated texts written from 1951 until recently. The biggest part, the articles on Ma, was written for a very limited readership, that is to say the group of ardent devotees who were with Ma at that time, Hindus, mostly Bengalis, and very few Westerners. Those who follow a spiritual discipline will nevertheless find in this work bits of useful information.

Regarding the questions and answers, the most recent part of these writings, they were mainly meant for Western visitors and corresponds every time to the level and the mental attitude of the one who asks the question, but as all the answers are from the field of spiritual life, a *sadhaka* will be able to discover in them some useful advice.

Q : *In rich countries like France and Sweden, the suicide rate is much higher than in India : why is it so?*

V : The person who commits suicide does so to escape a suffering which may be physical, but most often is mental. A person who is going to do it (except if he or she is already a well-known psychotic) has reflected for a long time before taking this decision. They usually are atheists fed with existentialist

philosophy who think that after death is only the great nothingness. This type is common in the West while in India real atheists are very rare. Every Hindu has somewhere in his subconscious the belief in a divine Power or at least that every action produces a *karma* and that there are future lives which are conditioned by the action that he performs. Suicide is considered a crime and is reputed to produce quite untoward rebirths. The one who committed suicide is said to become a *preta*, a very miserable ghost, who is ever hungry and thirsty and who has too small a mouth to satisfy his needs. When these beliefs were inculcated in you right from childhood, you think twice before putting an end to your life.

Moreover, people in the West have explored all kinds of possible pleasures, saw that they did not lead anywhere but have nothing to put in their place. People who know how to discipline themselves always maintain hope, and hope makes one live.

- Q :** *Nowadays, the term spirituality is so often used that it seems to lose its intensity. How would you define it?*
- V :** Spirituality, the genuine one, is this mental attitude which allows one to reveal the eternal Divine who resides in each of us and who is indeed our most intimate Self. This Divine is veiled by negative emotions and by the tendency of the mind to look for Peace and Happiness in a reflection of the Self of sense objects. Thus, what is needed is to reverse this mental movement towards the subject. As Kathopanishad says, this is *avritti chakshu*, looking inside.

HARMONIZING THE OPPOSITES

— Prof. Vic Mansfield

A Dream Expression of the Problem

About five years ago, I had the following memorable dream :

A great holy woman is coming to an Indian town where I am staying. There is much commotion and preparation for her arrival. Several of her devotees and attendants are bustling about



with great excitement and anticipation. It is all very Indian. I am swept up in the excitement and am eager to see this great woman. I have never met her before, but I have a mental image of her as an older woman.

A few of the close devotees or nuns with this great woman give me a frieze of elephants. It is approximately 18 inches on a side, made of heavy copper or bronze with a beautiful patina. I am very moved by their generous gift.

I have a burning question to ask her. My wife says that I don't know the right protocol or how to address this great woman. I say, "I don't care about any of that. I will just throw myself at her feet and sincerely ask how I can harmonize the head and the heart."

The dream ended with a clear question, but, unfortunately, no answer nor experience of the holy woman. Here I'll amplify the symbols in the dream.

It is not appropriate to be too literal about the dream and expect that it is about a living Indian holy woman. Nevertheless, just after the dream, in an attempt to amplify the symbol of the holy woman, I started thinking about those few Indian holy women of whom I had heard. A friend gave me a catalog from which I sent off for some photographs of Anandamayi Ma, surely one of the greatest of India's modern women saints. When I got the photograph shown here, I knew it was a very close approximation to my dream image of the holy woman. Anandamayi Ma was famous for her devotional approach to spiritual life within the Vedanta tradition and her spontaneous absorptions into the divine. However, in keeping with my

desire to avoid being too literal, I am not interested in tying the dream closely to her or her doctrine. Instead, I simply use her image as a way of deepening my reflections on the dream.



I associate the bronze frieze of elephants with my lovely experiences of temple elephants in India and their prominent appearances in my previous dreams. One of the most popular gods in the Indian pantheon is Ganesh, the male elephant god. Because this figure, surrounded by the feminine in the dream, is the only dream reference to the male principle (other than the dreamer), it takes on special emphasis.

In Indian mythology, Ganesh was the son of the goddess Parvati, who made Ganesh out of the dirt from her own body. Parvati was preparing for the return of her husband, the great god Shiva, and asked Ganesh not to allow anyone into her bath. Ganesh, not knowing Shiva, tried to prevent him from entering, but Shiva flew into a rage and cut off the boy's head. When Parvati

learned of the tragedy, she made Shiva restore the boy to life. He did so by replacing the severed head with the head of the next creature that came up the hill . . . an elephant. Ganesh was rewarded with the power to remove obstacles for any new undertaking. He is always propitiated at beginnings, whether of a worship of other gods or the start of a day. He is also a god of wisdom, partly because he was the scribe for the Mahabharata, the poetical history of man. Ganesh is a special favorite of scholars and authors. Although I receive no answer to my question nor visit with the holy woman, I am given a gift associated with Ganesh, the god of wisdom, who removes obstacles for new undertakings. In light of the dream, I find it interesting that Ganesh has unusual head problems.

The photograph shown above is from a statue I have of Ganesh. This one is different from the usual representation of Ganesh because his appearance with a consort and pose has a decidedly tantric flavor. appearance of Ganesh with a female consort seems particularly appropriate for the present dream discussion.

Another major symbol is the feet of this holy woman. The feet of gurus have a special significance for Indian devotees of all types from the simplest *bhakta* or devotional person to the most sophisticated *jnani* or philosophically oriented practitioner. For example, India's most revered non-dual philosopher, Adi Sankara wrote, "Eight Stanzas in Praise of the Guru." Here are the first three stanzas that illustrate the reverence toward the guru's feet :

*Though your body be comely and ever remain in perfect health,
Though your name be unsullied, and mountain high your horded gold,
Yet if the mind be not absorbed in the guru's lotus feet,
What will it all avail you? What, indeed will it all avail?*

*Even if fortune bless you with riches and a virtuous wife,
With children and their children, with friendship and the joys of home,
Yet if the mind be not absorbed in the guru's lotus feet,
What will it all avail you? What, indeed will it all avail?*

*Though the lore of the Vedas take up its dwelling on your tongue,
Though you be learned in scripture, gifted in writing prose and verse,
Yet if the mind be not absorbed in the guru's lotus feet,
What will it all avail you? What, indeed will it all avail?*

In my visits with the late Sri Sankaracharya, I was struck by how he would take offerings, anything from fruit and flowers to silk, and always touch them to the forward top of his forehead was always in contact with his guru's feet. Thus, touching offerings to the top of his head was symbolically offering them to the feet of his guru, to his incarnation of deity. Sankara's devotees also did full prostrations at his feet. In summary, prostrating at the feet of the guru is a gesture of deepest reverence, an acknowledgment of our dependence and need for the guru, and an expression of humility. All this may seem like Indian spiritual excess, until we think of Mary Magdalene washing and anointing the feet of Christ.

I now turn to the question posed in the dream of how to harmonize the head and the heart. The "head" for me means intellectual pursuits such as science and philosophy—the masculine realm of the Sun. It is the active, willful, and analytical approach to knowledge, whether of the external world or the world of ideas. It usually apprehends of object by separating from it, by considering it in a detached

way. Despite its detachment, there is real satisfaction and joy in using the head and it clearly yields results. As for the "heart," it is primarily associated with spiritual, psychological, moral, and aesthetic experiences, along with what I call transformative self-knowledge. Rather than active, willful, analytical and detached heart knowledge is receptive, intuitive and knowledge through identification with the object—the feminine realm of the Moon. Although the head and the heart may have some overlap, they are two distinct principles and one cannot be reduced to the other.

Let me give a concrete example of head and heart within one particular discipline. Over the last couple of decades, I have made a significant effort to understand the Mahayana Buddhist principle of emptiness, that all phenomena of both the inner and outer world are totally lacking in independent or inherent existence. To follow the philosophic arguments put forward for this view and the implications of the principle of emptiness is demanding head work. However, the other equally great principle within Mahayana Buddhism is the doctrine of universal compassion, that my entire feeling nature and value system must be reorganized so that the welfare of all sentient beings takes priority over my native selfishness. There are a few intellectual arguments for the doctrine of universal compassion, but it is primarily a matter of the heart, of developing a sufficiently deep empathy for all suffering humanity and acting on that realization. Of course, developing universal compassion is a long and arduous process. With these amplifications, let me turn to a few analytical reflections on the dream.

As an unconscious compensation, this dream impress upon me how critical the question of harmonizing the head and the heart is for me. The head, the masculine, solar realm of action, reason, and will, is not in harmony with the heart, the feminine, lunar realm of receptivity, intuition, and empathy. This is not a happy realization, but there is some hope that I can get help from this Sophia or wise feminine within. In addition, representatives of this deep femine present me with a masculine principle (Ganesh) that has special reference to head problems and may help with a fresh beginning in thought and writing—the head realm. Finally, the dream suggests that the way to be sought for knowledge comes not from heroic action, but from humble prostration.

May Ganesh remove obstacles in my attempt to articulate some concluding thoughts about the relationship of science to the sacred, a critical example of relating the head to the heart. Part of that gift from Ganesh may be the realization that the dream only announces the importance of the problem, but I have not been given the answer. Nevertheless, I set out on the exploration¹.

1. Swami Nikhilananda, translated these hymns of Sankara in *Self-knowledge* (New York : Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1970) p. 175.

MOTHER COMES, EVER COMES

—Sri U. C. Dutt

Day before Shiva Ratri, 1956, a tonga was moving fast along the main road of Vrindaban. Attention of the passers-by was drawn by a tumultuous crowd and some cars inside the precincts of a temple. All of a sudden a car rushed through the gate and unexpectedly halted a few steps ahead. Lo! Mother was there. While passing, She caught sight of me sitting in the tonga, stopped her car and called me. I ran to her and bowed down. Ma enquired what had brought me there. I told her that I had come on an official visit to Mathura and Vrindaban.

I did not know that Ma would be there and the scene suggested that some thing unusual was taking place. Ma told me that Lord Shiva was going to be installed in the Ashram next day and asked me to attend the function. Mother's presence and the prospects of spending some time round Her struck all the chords of my heart. Thus came Mother to her son.

Again, on the eve of Holi, some of my relatives went to Vrindaban and paid their homage to Mother who was then staying there to observe the festival of Love. Centuries ago, the Blue Boy had played His flute and danced there in tune with the heart-beats of His playmates and milk-maids. Perhaps their associations took visible shapes and Mother decided to pass the occasion on the bank of Yamuna to put a new life into the old leela. She observed Holi in Vrindaban in 1956 and 1957.

Learning that the visitors were my relatives, Mother said to one of them. "Write to Upen that his daughter wants to meet her father" I got the message, but could not go to Vrindaban immediately and wrote enquiring if the daughter would come to father or the son should go to the Mother. The letter did not reach Mother for a long time and so a reply was not received. Then I did not know that Mother would actually come to Her son.

I had the privilege of Ma's darshan again at Varanasi in May, 1956, during her 60th birthday celebrations. On that festive occasion, Mother was extremely busy, but She was all sweetness and love. Like a pillar of light She was moving from place to place and bringing joy to all around Her. In my presence whenever She met a group of devotees, She would refer to an old incident in a jocular mood and tell them, "I went with this Baba to Dehradun side, but Baba went away leaving me behind".

About 28 years ago I had accompanied Mother to Sahasradhara. On my way back, as already arranged, I took leave of Her and the party at Rajpur and prepared to go to Mussourie. I retorted most humbly, saying "A son may leave a mother, but a mother cannot leave her son". All present, including the Mother enjoyed the fun. Like a true mother, She fed me sumptuously before I left Varanasi. I cast my last lingering look at her lotus feet. The whole atmosphere was charged with Her divine spirit and every thing seemed to have been softened with Her overflowing love.

Mother comes

In 1957 Seth Gujar Mal Modi informed me that Mother would be spending a week at Modinagar after Holi and more than one hundred sadhus and devotees would be accompanying Her. My joy knew no bounds. I was waiting impatiently for the day when Mother would come.

An elaborate arrangement was made to receive Her in a garden house outside the town. A big pandal was erected on an extensive lawn for Rasa leela, lectures, bhajan etc. and at some distance a shamiana was ready for Akhand Kirtan. Tents were pitched to accommodate 400 persons. Hundreds of mango trees smiling through blossoms and multi-coloured flower-beds dancing breeze called visitors to a place of rest. My joy was not unmixed with a sense of sorrow, for Board's examination would begin soon and I would be almost a prisoner in one of the biggest examination centres.

Mother arrived in the evening. At Her bidding, the procession was abandoned, a big crowd headed by Shri Modi accorded Her a most respectful welcome with garlands and arti. I saw her from a distance. A stream of people went to Her room for darshan and Modiji saw me standing outside and called me in. Mother gave a broad smile and said "I knew you were here, someone told me. Did you write to me?" I replied. "I wrote a long time ago, not recently. I was thinking of coming to Vrindaban this time during the Holi but could not." Mother said, "Why did you not go; there was *mahārāsa* at Modinagar".

Programme for the week was indeed attractive

Hari Baba's Kirtan	4 AM
Rasa leela	8.30 AM–11.30 AM
Lectures and bhajans	2 PM–5.30 PM

Mother received visitors anytime when free between 10 AM and late hours at night. After lectures in the pandal, She led kirtan chanting in a melodious tone and recited Divine names for about 15 minutes, in which all present joined in a state of

forgetfulness, so that several thousands behaved as one man. They seemed to have lost their identity in a living presence of the Divine.

Hari Baba's life was a lesson to all. He would follow the programme like the hands of a clock and would remain all absorbed in what he said. He remained oblivious to the world outside, He lived and moved in a world of his own. He fanned the actors considered as Krishna and his companions at the leela, rang a big bell at kirtan and talked about the glories of devotees in his discourses. His single pointed devotion, self-forgetfulness and tenacity of purpose marked him out as a saint of outstanding nature and ability. In fact he was the master of ceremonies there.

One day some of us were sitting in Mother's room. Mother hinted at self-knowledge as the Supreme Knowledge. It is essential, Bhajan is the means, but it becomes spontaneous. No one can do it. Did She mean that Bhajan goes on automatically once the spiritual energy is roused by the grace of the Guru? Then Ma said "What about death? Death has to die; it has to be killed." At this stage Modisaheb ushered two gentlemen into Mother's presence. One was Raj Pandit of the Patiala Darbar and another was Seth Narain Das Bajoria, a man of culture and learning. They were introduced and Mother began to talk again of Supreme Knowledge, "What exists is one, it has become many and appears in several forms. You have come to yourself." The ensuing conversation:

Pandit - Are you Maitreyi?

Mother - I am your little daughter.

Pandit - You are Gargi, who had discussions with Yagnavalka.

Mother - I am what you like to call, your little girl. I know nothing and often talk nonsense.

Pandit - No, you are Gayatri.

The Pandit recited some slokas in great joy and took leave. Shri Bajoria, who as a rule avoided the company of women, sat quietly in all humility. Later he told me that when he saw Mother for the first time at Hardwar, he saw his own mother who had died long time ago and he could not restrain his tears. He wept for about half an hour. He felt the presence of Divine Mother in her.

Two days after I was detained in the college for conducting examinations and felt sorry that Ma had come so close but I could hardly have her darshan. To my great joy, Ma sent words that She would visit the college. Mother arrived accompanied by Mrs. Gujarmal Modi, some sanyasis and brahmacharis. I conducted the party to Geeta Bhawan, a hall with life size paintings of saints.

patriots, gods and goddesses. Ma and her companions were seated on a raised platform. Ma took the lead in kirtan music joined by the rest of us.

Who is Ma ?

In a brief speech I informed the audience how about 28 years ago in Haridwar I had the privilege of watching Ma in a state of samadhi (trance) that lasted for hours. I described how She was brought down to a normal condition with much difficulty uttering the Divine Name into Her ears and how spiritual symptoms (*lakshans*) manifested themselves in the process of Her descent to normalcy. Further, I recounted Her own statement that Ma had no previous birth, nor would have another. Then what was She? Most humbly, I requested Ma to tell us who She was. As usual, Ma avoided the answer and said softly, "What shall I say?"

On our request, Ma addressed the students and advised: "Get up early in the morning and take Divine Name that appeals to you, touch the feet of your parents, attend to your studies, obey your elders, speak the truth and play as much as you like." Like a simple child she looked at me and said that she had nothing more to say. Out of Her infinite grace, Mother came to our college and turned the place into a place of pilgrimage with the touch of her lotus feet.

When I became free I went to the summer house in the morning and spent the whole day there, attending the Rasa leela, taking part in the bhandara, listening to lectures and kirtan. I could see Mother from a distance. She was sitting like a statue at the Rasa and was chanting the divine name moving in a circle with a party of singers from Delhi.

In the afternoon I came to learn that a respectable lady pressed Mother to show her some supernatural forms. Ma told her in that case she would lose all touch with the world. The lady persisted. She is reported to have seen a dazzling light (*jyoti*) and screamed loudly. The lady said that it was all Mother's grace.

After sunset a Brahmachari conducted me to Mother. His Holiness Swami Sadananda Tirtha of Shankara Math, Uttar Kashi, was there. I told Ma that I would retire (from service) the next July. I reminded Her that six years ago Ma had advised me to accept the Modinagar assignment for one term.:

The following conversation took place : .

Ma Where will you settle ?

I I have a small house at Kashi and may stay there.

Ma Oh yes, Kashi is an excellent place. Gopi Baba (Mahamahopadhyay Gopi Nath Kaviraj) is there. When you go there we shall be meeting in the evenings.

I : Then I shall go to Kashi.

Ma : Yes, you do. You have seen all about this life. According to Yogis, Kashi is the centre of illumination—*Ajnachakra*, the seat of Shiva and Shakti, above the earthly existence.

The word evening is significant. Does it mean the evening of life? A child plays the whole day and longs for the mother when darkness gathers with the approaching night. Sunset and the evening star, one clear call for me. Mother's call is clearly heard when the bustle of life subsides. She calls us day and night. Who cares to hear? She comes without fail. Who cares to see? She knocks at the door again and again. Who cares to open? She goes back with tears in Her eyes. Who cares to know? The child plays with toys in a doll house, awfully busy, no time to spare for Her. Wife and children, gold and fame, absorb our attention. We ignore the presence of Mother. She comes, ever comes as sights and sounds, as thoughts and feelings, as pleasure and pain.

Wise people say that Ma is a temporal expression of the eternal spirit—a special creation of the Divine - an emanation of the ultimate Reality, whose manifestation is the universe. She is in and beyond everything. Her vast presence overwhelms me and creates a gap between a tiny creature, such as I, and a mighty one who transcends all limits. These ideas are indispensable to those who move in and build up a system of ideas with reference to a universe of discourse. They dive deep into the mystery of life and present the world with bright gems of rare wisdom.

I am a fool with very little understanding and dare not measure the unmeasurable. I want Mother, mostly human—a mother who can move on my level and respond to my feelings. It is enough that I have got one. I am not at all anxious to know if She had any Guru, human or Divine—if She is ever established in Brahman, as a part of Her nature. I do not bother about Her actual position in the hierarchy of gods, angels or exalted souls. She is the Mother who lives for Her children and fills up gaps in their lives. If we feel thirsty let us take a glass of water. What is the use of knowing the amount of water in a river? If we cannot do without Mother, Mother too cannot do without us. If we leave the toys and cling to Her She appears everywhere in the blue above and the green below. Her smiling face is seen through every visible form and every neutral state.

She comes, comes, ever comes.

ON HER BIRTHDAY

— "Shobha"

Have heard and read of *Vaikuñth Dham*
Have heard and read of *Swarga Lok*
Have seen the colors of rainbow only in the sky.
I vow to-day in all my earnestness
I saw - I touched-it fleet past-by
In motion of grace-whispering in silence
The music of solitude
It was not in a dream
It was not in the sky
It was not in the flow of the Ganges
It was here at the samadhi mandir
Here in the holy land of *Siddha peetham*
Kankhal Dham—
She came - dressed with nature's gaiety
Colours- blossoms-fragrance and charm
Blows of conches-beats of drum
Chants of slokas-chorus of songs
Mist of incense - fragrance of jasmine
Chandan and *mogra* - SHE came.
The holy soil welcomed HER
Dressed in earthy colors of satins and chiffons - crisp colors
of South and Bengal
Silks of China, bears of Japan
We welcomed HER in royal grace.
Gifts and gifts-sweets and nuts, spices and fruits-candies and bangles anklets and
armlets-gold and silver, emeralds and pearls-fragrance and flowers awaited to be
blessed by HER here in the Holy land of *Siddha peetham* - *Kankhal Dham*:
Draped in white-flowing tresses
Hanging loose - encircled by *rishis*
SHE gazed with compassion, not winking once
SHE saw all, not missed one
Far and near - East or West
SHE was there at this moment
with all who remembered
On this day of HER Birthday.
Purna Brahma Narayani Ma.

BE THOU A YOGI

—Gary Y. Empie

"Father, the yogi leaves the world and does meditation. What good does he do for the world? How is he fulfilling the purpose of creation? How can his way be called religion?"

"You have asked a good question, my son, which every yogi must answer.

That love which is so deep that deepness is forgotten, which people seek because they know it is theirs, which makes one cry and gives joy in which one cannot say "I" any more because he has merged in his beloved —that love is the love of the yogi. Dear son, be thou a yogi.

That Power for which all the world seeks power, which is our rightful power, by which all things can be done —that is the power of the yogi. Noble son, be thou a yogi.

That joy which the world is trying to get in various mundane pleasures, which depends on nothing for its support, which is the nature of the Self — that is the joy of the yogi. O son, be thou a yogi.

That good for which people try to do good in their various and often conflicting ways, which is known to be good by all, which is lasting, full, and the nature of the Self — that is the good of the yogi. Wonderful son, be thou a yogi.

That stability for which the world seeks money, comfort, and friends, which is unchanging and the nature of the self — that is the stability of the yogi. Peaceful son, be thou a yogi.

That purity which allows undisturbed communion with the Self, for the sake of which the world observes cleanliness, order, and faithfulness, which the Self brings about, which is sought in remorse and by the ignorant in jealousy, which we feel wind, rain, sun, and earth have due to them bringing, bathing, warming and illumining, and grounding us in the Self which they are the nature of, Ye, which all things have to be one who sees the Self — in that purity the yogi knows nothing and is nothing other than the Self. Chaste son, be thou a yogi.

That humility which the world mistakenly seeks in degradation, which comes from oneness with all, which has self-respect and dignity — that is the humility of the yogi. Precious son, be thou a yogi.

That compassion which all have partially, which is fearless, without prejudice, heals effortlessly and honors all, which is in and of the Self alone — that is the compassion of the yogi. Gentle son, be thou a yogi.

That courage with which all action is done, which sees nothing, which honors the Self in all, is unaffected, and is, with purity, the way to strength — that is the courage of the yogi. Brave son, be thou a yogi.

That knowledge which is of the Self, which, when partial, appears to be of the world, which has value only because it is the nature of the Self, which is known by the dissolution of the mind, which, when known, all things are known — that knowledge is the knowledge of the yogi. Wise son, be thou a yogi.

That companionship which people seek in marriage and friends, which animals seek in going from one to another, which is cherished because we see ourself, which is ever present, one with all, and of the Self — that is the companionship of the yogi. Amiable son, be thou a yogi.

That silence, seeking which the world sleeps, which the creation honors at dawn and dusk, which the body rests in between breaths, from which speech arises, which honors love — that silence the yogi honors by solitude. Quiet son, be thou a yogi.

That exquisiteness of life, to show which people seek attention because they think the world is not honoring it, and those people are that world. It is because the world has denied the yogi that the yogi lives in solitude, for that exquisiteness is its own joy, is content in itself, and is shown to those who want to see. Such is the life of the yogi. Honorable son, be thou a yogi.

That truth which people seek in words, which is sought is anger and hurt, which honors love, which, when spoken, the creation honors, which is always revealed, which is free from fear, being its own support — in that truth the yogi lives, acts, and has his being. Innocent son, be thou a yogi.

That, for which this creation has come forth, which the creation honors, for the fullness of which all things are done, which has no purpose, but is simply itself — that the yogi is. Son, of that, be thou a yogi.

That giving of oneself, for which giving is done, which is an expression of what belongs to all, in which even giving is given, for which all the world begs — that is the gift of the yogi. My son, be thou a yogi.



THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

[Continued from before]

—Sri P. C. Mehta

1. The doctrine of 'Karma' :

The belief in "Karma" has a profound influence on the life of the Indian people. There are four aspects of it.

- 1) The doctrine extends the principles of causation to morality or the sphere of human conduct and teaches that as every event in the physical world is determined by its antecedents, so everything that happens in the moral realm results in a consequence.

The question that is inevitably asked is: if this is so, does not the doctrine become fatalistic and leave no room for the exercise of freedom ?

To answer this question, we have to understand what 'freedom' is.

- a) To be under the sway of extraneous factors is not freedom.
- b) Acting from urges and impulses amounts to being controlled by the vagaries of ever-shifting desires and is not freedom.

Freedom primarily means freedom from compulsions either of external factors or inner urges, Absence of determination is not freedom. Acting through the right kind of determination is freedom. Therefore, freedom should be regarded as consisting not in unrestricted license, but in being determined in oneself to act in the correct manner. Acting correctly is always acting morally.

Besides, ethical behaviour is not a matter of evolving principles and then matching one's conduct therewith, through the exercise of will, This sort of an exercise becomes an inner struggle, where the urge is to act in one way and the evolved principle pulls the other way. Some times one wins and sometimes the other.

Ethical behaviour is natural and the only behaviour possible to a man of understanding; because through self-awareness, he has eliminated the domination of outside factors and inner urges or promptings of the 'self'. He is a witness to both and therefore his freedom lies in his ability to make the right decision without being swayed by either. Such a one always acts morally. He has no choice of

conduct. Established as he is in '*Karma-Yoga*', he lives as pointed out in stanzas 30 & 31 of the third chapter of the Bhagvad Gita, outside the realm of karmic bondage. This is achieved through the right kind of insight.

When therefore we ask whether belief in karma does not result in fatalism, what in fact we mean is whether it does or does not preclude self-determination. It is evident that it does not, because the doctrine traces the causes which determine the present state, to the very individual that acts. 'Destiny, thus becomes only another name for deeds done in previous births'. (See Yagnavalka Smrti I, 349; as also Manu Smrti vii, 205).

It is the individual himself who has set in motion causes which have ripened and are giving the present result. Such result though called fate, is really set in motion by the individual himself. He has by previous action caused it. This very ability to put in motion forces which will ripen into an effect, proves that the individual has self-determination, i.e. the free will to cause desired results.

What is even more pertinent is that through the above described freedom of action, he is capable of acting without creating further karmic bondage as well as emancipating himself from accumulated karmas and thus be free for ever from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. This is the real freedom of action.

Theory of transmigration:

We have already stated that probing deep into their own consciousness, the *Rsis* surpassed subtler existences and in search for the beginning of all creation found that the eternal principle behind the universe and the essence of man was the same. From this identity they probed into the journey of this Divine principle away from its source and then back to it. The Divine principle which is the spark of the Divine has to undergo this journey to get control over vibrations at all levels of existence; that is from gross to the most refined, to fulfill its destiny and thus be a master of the universe. Therefore, during the process of involution, the Divine spark had to attract and embrace gross vibrations to enter grosser levels. On the upward journey, it had to shed the gross vibrations and attract and embrace refined vibrations. Thus in his early stages of incarnation, man accumulates a heap of bad karmas which he has to wipe out over several lives. Thus has arisen the notion of man being born a sinner.

The gods who are in charge of fixing the destiny of man during each birth, distribute the accumulated karmas over several lives to give him a chance to wipe them out and rise over them to fulfill his Divine destiny. Thus causes do not ripen into effect immediately but have to wait for the previous causes to ripen.

There are three levels of Karmas. They are called '*Sanchit*' or accumulated, '*Kriyamāna*' or about to be put into fruition and '*Prārabhda*' or those which are already set in motion for fulfillment. The simile of an archer standing with his bow and arrow and a quiver with several arrows is given. The archer has already shot one arrow. This constitutes '*Prārabdha-karma*' or the destiny of man through which he is right now passing. This destiny cannot be undone. The archer has one arrow in his bow which he is about to shoot. He is still capable of withdrawing it. This is '*Kriyamāna-Karma*'. These karmas can be wiped out by right action. The arrows in the archer's quiver are '*Sanchit-Karma*', and being accumulated karmas can also be annihilated through '*tapas*' or austerity and right conduct.

It is said that '*Prārabdha-Karma*' or immediate destiny which normally cannot be wiped out, can be eradicated by God, who in this context is defined as '*Kartum akartum anyathā kartum saktah*', i.e. 'capable of doing, not doing or undoing'. By praying to the Divine as '*Mata*' or Mother, it is said that at Her touch difficulties turn into opportunities.

Since man lives within the Divine evolutionary will, though karmas can constitute hindrances, they can never prevent a true aspirant from progressing towards emancipation. Further, under Yoga there are a number of ways in which a true aspirant can or is helped to overcome or wipe out karmic obstacles.

The rational argument to justify the theory of transmigration is that we see men prosper or suffer without any apparent cause. Similarly, we see that man does not always reap in this life the fruit of the good and evil he does in it. Therefore a single life is too short a period to bring about the ripening of karmic causes into effect. Therefore there has to be the continued existence of the '*jiva*' i.e. 'self in a succession of lives, called '*Sansāra*'.

Thus the theory of transmigration is a necessary corollary to the doctrine of karma. According to Kant, the fact of moral consciousness is the guarantee of personal immortality; similarly, the law of karma is our assurance of the truth of transmigration. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad says '*Yat karma kurute tadābhisampadyate*' (Brh.iv.5) i.e. 'According to his karma, a man is born'.

Thus the doctrine of destiny emphasizes human freedom and does not lead to fatalism. Right understanding of it encourages man to live the Gita way in detachment and tranquility.

Why is there evil in a world created by merciful God ?

The theory of 'Karma' delineates self-determination i.e. free will to cause desired results. Man is responsible for creating the conditions in which he finds

himself. God's interference would amount to denial of this free will. Such denial would amount to living in a golden prison. It is better to live in freedom than in any kind of prison.

And yet we see that God's justice is always coupled with mercy. It is shown in two ways. When a 'sadhaka' or a true aspirant for Mukti, is greatly hindered in his progress by the burden of his karmas, God's grace lifts him out of it. Secondly, as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita, 'Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati Bharata, abhyuthānamadharmasya tadātmanam srijāmyaham', meaning 'Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and a rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself. (Gita IV, 7)

[To be continued]

URGENT CIRCULAR

All our subscribers are requested to note that subscriptions paid for the year 2002 will be over with this October issue.

They are requested to send subscription amounts for the year 2003 latest by the last week of December, 2002 to enable us to send the next issue in time.

—Managing Editor

DIVINE MOTHER

—Dhiraj Sapru

..... and no seed shall sprout before its time
and no bud shall bloom before its time
no fragrance shall scatter before its time
and no wave shall break before its time

.....and no heart shall open before its time
and no thought shall form before its time
no deed shall manifest before its time
and no eye shall see before its time

.....and no door shall yawn before its time
and no path shall gleam before its time
no understanding shall bless before its time
and no realization shall bestow before its time

.....and no birth shall unite before its time
and no death shall separate before its time
no joy shall gladden before its time
and no sorrow shall sadden before its time

.....and no distance shall thaw before its time
and no walk shall draw before its time
no starting shall start before its time
and no ending shall end before its time

.....and the time has struck and it is now
and let abundance grace for it's time now
and let containment abound for it's time now
let hearts overflow for it's time now...

.....and the time is mellow and it is now
and the mother be peaceful for it's time now
and the son is apt for it's time now
the dawn must flood for it's time now...

.....and Ma has spoken for it's time now
and let union prevail for it's time now
and let blessings deluge for it's time now
let the nectar surge for it's time now....

Jai Ma

OUR TRIP TO NAIMISHARANYA

—Shraddha Davenport

As Mother had given us permission to join Her on January first, we got reservation on the night train to Hardoi for December thirty-first. From Hardoi we would have to go to Naimisharanya.

It was still very dark when our train arrived in Hardoi on the morning of January first. After collecting our baggage, we made our way to the front of the train station and secured four bicycle rickshaws. Two were loaded with luggage. Satya and I each took separate rickshaws, keeping special and fragile things by our sides as we rode off into the still, black night. The only sounds were the clicking of the bicycle chains and the wind blowing across my ears as I wrapped my chaddar securely around my head and shoulders. I do not know how our drivers managed to stay on the road for they had no lights.

After very long time we arrived at the bus site. As the first day of 1975 dawned, Satya managed to purchase tickets for our trip to Naimisharanya. There were several buses there waiting to be loaded. Ours turned out to be the one with no doors on the side, several missing windows, and seats that were actually wooden benches. Our luggage was loaded atop the bus and we took our seats on a bench behind the driver. The air was still quite chilly, especially as it whipped through the open bus. We bundled up in our chaddars hoping not to catch cold.

As the bus attempted to move through the town we saw many ox-carts laden with groundnuts (peanuts). It must have been harvest time, as farmers choked the streets with carts and piles of nuts. Our driver's partner went ahead on foot, trying to clear the road, but it was very difficult and took a long time to get out of town. Then we were treated to beautiful green fields and peaceful countryside that stretched all the way to Naimisharanya.

Upon arriving at Naimisharanya the bus stopped beside a large tree where a chai stall and a guava stand offered refreshments to the passengers. We stepped off the bus and I stood with some of our belongings while Satya collected our luggage from the roof of the bus. As the baggages around me increased, so did the crowd of local men who had been gathering. They stood with sober faces and silently stared.

We had been told that there were two rickshaw-type wagons available for transport in Naimisharanya, so we asked the men around us how to go about hiring

them. No one said a word. We made several attempts, but no one would speak. Finally we said that we wished to go to Ma Anandamayi Ashram. Suddenly the solemn faces smiled and Indian hospitality embraced us. One rickshaw driver miraculously appeared, then he went to fetch the second one.

Soon all of our luggage was loaded. We went on the rear of the wagons as they carried us down the dirt road of that sacred village toward Mother's ashram. In 1972 we had missed the chance to come to Naimisharanya so we were very grateful that Mother had given permission for us to join Her there.

In ancient times the holy rishis had prayed to the Lord for a special blessing. Their petition was that He reveal to them the most sacred place on the earth where they might spend their days in sadhana. The Lord replied that he would hurl his mighty chakra and where it landed would be the most sacred place. Like a lightning bolt the glorious missile flashed through the heavens and piercing the earth in the forest brought forth a bubbling spring which would be called Chakra Tirtha. The village which grew up around it is Naimisharanya. Many pilgrims come to bathe in the holy waters of Chakra Tirtha and bask in the divine atmosphere of this lush and peaceful place where great rishis once dwelt and Lord Ganesha transcribed the sacred Mahabharata epic as it was recited by Vyasa.

Mother's ashram in Nimsar (Naimisharanya) is in perfect harmony with its surroundings. Upon entering the grounds we saw the beautiful Puran Mandir on our left. Here the shrine holds the complete Puranas where worship is performed regularly. Just behind the Puran Mandir, construction of a new temple was almost complete. We learned that this was to be the site for installation of the "Sacred Flame"—the same flame that has been kept burning in Varanasi, Kankhal, and other of Mother's ashrams since it was lit for Kali Puja of 1926 in Dhaka. To our right was a garden and a path leading from the Puran Mandir to a two-storey structure which was Mother's house. The ashram land sits high and looks down on gently sloping fields. Among the trees we saw sheep grazing and in the distance a caravan of camels followed a winding path. Beyond this serene and charming sight, the silver Gomati River gently nourished the earth.

We were greeted by Nirvananandaji, who was the only person on the grounds when we arrived. He instructed our drivers to take us to a dharmasala a short distance away in the village. Inside the door of the dharmasala a broad stairway climbed up to reveal a concrete courtyard. The courtyard was recessed about one foot below the wide walkway which surrounded it. The rooms were built around this square which was open to the sky.

We met the Muninji (manager) who showed us to our room. The concrete floor and the walls were not clean, but when we opened the shuttered window overlooking the street there was only beauty. Because of the stairway rising within the dharmasala and the street outside dropping as it went beyond our location, it was as though we were on the second floor and could see over rooftops, glimpsing a simple and peaceful way of life that we became very fond of during our two weeks in Nimsar.

Mother was taking a few days' rest so She was not available for long darshans, but usually would come to sit in front of the Puran Mandir for a while around 10-00 or 11.00 a. m. The atmosphere was most relaxed and very few people were there.

On our first day we took our meal at the ashram but most of the time did our own cooking in our room. Thanks to Bhaskaranandaji's nephew, Kamal, we got wonderful vegetables at the market twice a week when the farmers came with their produce. Kamal interpreted and helped us in many ways.

Every day we would get up, have hot Ovaltine, take our baths, dress, and go to the ashram. There we sat in the warmth of the sun as we waited for Mother to come out, She often walked around the grounds accessing the construction that was going on. We would follow behind Her or stand and watch from a little distance.

On the evening of our first Sunday in Nimsar, Mother sat with us inside the Puran mandir. There was no electricity until about 10: p. m. When it got dark someone lit a Coleman-type lantern which made a soft blue glow. We sat at Mother's feet with only a few Indian devotees in hushed silence. The room was charged with adoration as Mother looked at us all so lovingly and with a sweetness that is Hers alone. Pushpa had come, and upon Mother's request she sang. Her mood was so extraordinary. I was sorry not to have brought my tape recorder that evening.

Satya's birthday was coming on January seventh. We told Bhaskaranandaji that we wished to do worship of Mother on that day and sincerely requested his assistance so that it might be done with as little error as possible. He kindly agreed. As that day drew near, I got very nervous and began to wonder what I had gotten us into. But my fears were all for nothing as Mother shed Her grace on us that divine day.

We arrived at ashram about 9.15 a. m. Satya was wearing new silk kurta and I a new silk dhoti. We had never done worship of Mother alone before, only as part of a group, so we asked Bhaskaranandaji and Billoji to help us keep it private to minimize our nervousness and any distraction.

Mother came down from her room about 10.45 a. m. and Bhaskaranandaji spoke with Mother, telling her of our wish. Without a moment's hesitation Mother walked up the step of the Puran Mandir, entered, and took Her seat. We followed Her inside as Bhaskaranandaji told the few people standing near to stay outside, that this was a "private".

I placed all the puja articles on a silk cloth at Her feet and sprinkled them with Ganga Jal. We washed our hands with the sacred water and I heard Bhaskarananda tell Mother that it was Ganga Jal. As we had requested, Bhaskarananda quietly indicated the order in which we should offer the items. We each performed all of the offerings. After bowing before Her, Satya put sandal paste on Mother's forehead. Then I also gently placed my finger upon Her delicate skin to apply the fragrant paste. I could not believe that I was allowed to touch that divine countenance.

Our next offering was white silk cloth which we placed behind Her and together draped over Her shoulders. We placed a bag of nuts and raisins at Her feet, adorned Her with a garland of sea shells, and placed flower blossoms in Her hands and lap. We had brought a small wooden music box for Mother. I had put a Gita Press picture called "Rishi Ashram" on the lid, as it looked like Naimisharanya. The melody it played was "Sunrise, Sunset" which reminded me of the reference Mother often made to points of confluence.

Satya and I did not know all the words to the arati songs, so Bhaskarananda suggested that we play the music box as we rang the small silver bell and waved incense and then camphor before Mother. And so we did. I could not help being amused as I felt sure that this must have been a unique arati-done to a music box melody. But Bhaskarananda was smiling and Mother warmly smiled at us as we pronounced. Then She dropped towels over each of our heads. People had quietly filled the temple as our puja progressed, but we were so engrossed with Mother that we did not even notice and it did not distract us at all.

After the puja, Mother was going to distribute the nuts and fruit as prasad. The bag they were in was a ziplock plastic bag but Mother seemed unfamiliar with it. Satya showed Her how the ziplock worked, and after She pinched the bag almost shut, pressed it next to Her, forcing the air out, then pinched the last part closed as She had seen me do. Now even a ziplock plastic bag reminds me of Mother and how She teased us on that wonderful day.

I placed the puja articles in a box, and as Mother stood to leave the temple I spread the silk cloth which had been under the puja articles before Her, hoping She would step upon it. She granted my wish.

For several years I had dreamed of coming to Naimisharanya with Mother. She was fulfilling that dream and instilling life into my faith.

We walked south ward on the road that runs past ashram to visit the Hanuman mandir, then down to the bank of the Gomati river. When people came on pilgrimage to Chakra Tirtha, a ferry boat carried them across the river at this point. Our dharmasala was in the opposite direction in the village.

Down the narrow cobblestone road past the dharmasala was the beautiful Chakra Tirtha. The waters of that holy spring were contained in a large circular concrete basin with graduating steps reaching down into the pool. About half way to the center, extending above the water's surface, was a concentric circular wall. Its sides had evenly-spaced openings all the way around to allow free flow of the water. It was painted a very rich rust color. One time we saw two young boys swimming inside the inner circle. They climbed on top of the rust-colored wall then dove into the icy water and swam to the steps. Because this water comes from a spring there is a small amount of constant run-off. A beautiful iridescent blue bird sat next to the trickling overflow. We watched as the water moved down through the grassy slopes where two peacocks stood amid the trees. It looked like a place where one might see Lord Krishna playing his flute.

[To be continued]

ABOUT SETH JAMUNALAL BAJAJ

and

MAHATMA GANDHI'S MEETING WITH MA

– Hari Ram Joshi

It was on hearing from Kamala Nehru about Mataji that Gandhiji had directed Seth Jamunalal Bajaj to meet Her, when Sethji was on his way to Mussoorie. He was going to see Indiraji, our Prime Minister, who had returned from England some time in the summer of 1941 and was staying in Mussoorie for reasons of health. Jamunalalji went to the Raipur temple before proceeding to Mussoorie and requested Mataji to fix an hour for a private interview, preferably in the early morning after his return from Mussoorie on his way to Wardha. [It may be interesting to mention here that Seth Jamunalalji did not like to be addressed as 'Sethji' and Mataji therefore told him that in future he would be called 'Bhaiyaji', which he greatly appreciated.]

On returning from Mussoorie, Bhaiyaji again went to Raipur for Mataji's *darsana* and his private interview. The following morning, at about 4 A. M., he entered Mataji's room quietly and sat near Her on the floor. Mataji was lying on a mat, covering Her whole body with a white bedsheet. Bhaiyaji, seeing that Mataji was resting, began to give a light massage to Her feet. After an hour, Mataji uncovered Her face and Bhaiyaji started weeping and begged Mataji's pardon for massaging Her feet without having asked Her permission. He had done this because he felt the same sort of *matri bhāva* (motherly affection) on approaching Her as he used to feel when meeting his own mother.

Mataji related this Herself to Bapu on the night of February 20th, 1942, at Sewagram, ten days after the death of Jamunalal Bajaj. She also told Bapu that Bhaiyaji did not want to go back to Wardha but wished to remain with Her for the rest of his life. She however could not permit him to do so without the express consent of Bapu, since Jamunalalji regarded him as his father and Guru. With Bapu's permission Bhaiyaji however did stay with Mataji at Dehradun for about a fortnight. He tried his level best to persuade Mataji to go to Wardha to meet Bapu with whom he wanted Her to discuss in private many a complex problem facing the country and humanity as a whole.

At the time of Bhaiyaji's departure for Wardha, Mataji enjoined on him to observe complete silence every night from sunset to sunrise, and not to make any plans for the following day's work for the next period of six months or so. Bhaiyaji did follow Mataji's instructions. Unfortunately he died within the specified period of six months, on February 10th, 1942.

On February 10th itself, when Mataji was staying in Lucknow for about a week, She all of a sudden decided to leave for Kanpur by the first train available directing me also to accompany Her. At Lucknow station, Sri Kamalnayan Bajaj, son of Sri Jamunalalji, who was also proceeding to Wardha same night, on seeing Ma came to Her compartment and informed Her that his father had passed away that same afternoon. He tried to persuade Mataji also to go to Wardha with him and thus fulfil the ardent desire of his father. But Mataji did not give any definite indication to Kamalnayanji as to when She would visit Wardha. At Kanpur, Mataji suddenly directed me to get Her tickets extended upto Jhansi, where She, Didiji, Swami Paramananda and Abhaya broke their journey. On my return to Lucknow I received a wire from Swami Paramananda asking me to meet Mataji at Jhansi immediately. Mataji then left for Wardha with me, breaking Her journey for a day at Lalitpur. We reached Nagpur on February 16th and passed the night at the railway station. The following morning we took the train to Wardha.

On reaching there Mataji permitted me to inform Janakiben, the widow of Bhaiyaji, of our arrival. We were taken to Gopuri where Bhaiyaji had made arrangements for Mataji's stay. One Swami Atmananda, aged over sixty years, belonging to the Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram, was also staying at Gopuri. Bhaiyaji had of his own asked the Swami to remain there and meet Mataji who was expected to visit the place in the near future. Swami Atmananda narrated all this to Mataji at Wardha. Bapu had gone to Calcutta to meet Chiang-Kai-Shek and returned to Wardha on February 19th to attend the 10th day ceremony after Bhaiyaji's death. Instead of the traditional *sraddha*, 12 hours of uninterrupted *yajna* of *takua dangal* (spinning charkha) was performed. Mataji was invited by Janakiben to attend the *takua dangal* ceremony which was attended by Bapu, but Mataji did not go. On the completion of the spinning, when Janakiben and others returned to Gopuri at about 5 P.M. for the evening prayers of Vinoba Bhave, Mataji suddenly decided to leave Wardha for Nagpur by the first available train. This greatly upset Vinoba Bhave, Janakiben, Rajendra Prasadji, Kamalnayan and all others, as they had already informed Bapu about Mataji's visit and Her likely stay at Gopuri for at least a couple of days more. But Mataji was not inclined to change Her decision. However, quite unexpectedly we were notified that the train to Nagpur had been

cancelled on account of urgent movement of troops. Janakiben, Vinoba Bhave and others tried to persuade Mataji to go to Sevagram and meet Babu, as otherwise he would be greatly annoyed with them for giving him wrong information about Mataji's sojourn at Gopuri. Babu was informed on phone that Mataji wanted to leave Wardha. He thereupon sent a message to Mataji that in case She stuck to Her decision to leave without meeting him, he would come to Gopuri to meet Her.

As it was time for evening prayers at Gopuri, Mataji told everybody to go and attend them. The next moment, She asked me to arrange for a car and Mataji with all of us left for Sevagram to meet Babu. Babu thus met Mataji for the first time. He was certainly attracted by Mataji's radiant personality. But due to peculiar circumstances of this meeting at an odd hour and without previous intimation, he could not find leisure to talk to Mataji in private, although this was the cherished desire of his great disciple, Seth Jamunalal Bajaj. This was all Mataji's own *Lila*.

As soon as Mataji entered Babu's room where he was playing his *charkha*, (spinning-wheel) She called out loudly: "Pitaji, your *pagal bachhi* (crazy daughter) has come to see you !" Babu remarked laughingly that if She really were a *pagal bachhi*, She could not possibly have impressed men like Jamunalal whom he himself was unable to give inner peace, in spite of his best efforts during thirty years of close association with him. Babu also told Mataji that he himself had asked Jamunalal to meet Her, the Guru of Kamala Nehru. Mataji at once emphatically declared that She was neither Kamala Nehru's nor in fact anybody's Guru. Babu also related to Mataji Jamunalal's cherished desire that She should stay in Gopuri for at least a month.

Babu did not allow Mataji to move to Wardha that night and succeeded in persuading Her to remain with him at Sevagram. Beddings were spread for Her and Babu on two wooden planks close to each other in the open veranda of Babu's cottage. Babu, being a patient of high blood pressure, had to go to bed at about 10 P. M., when light massage was administered to his body by his attendants, Dr. Sushila Nayyar, Amrit Kaur and others. Babu got hold of the wrist of Mataji's right hand as She was sitting close to him. While the ladies were busy massaging Babu, Mataji asked them what they would do if Babu was taken away by Her. Mataji repeated this question three times and one of the ladies replied that they would also go with Babu. Mataji then told Babu that at an opportune time She would take him away.

I was greatly upset on hearing this, as I thought that Mataji was perhaps giving an indication of the early death of Babu which might occur within a year or so. Mataji did not appreciate my interruption and ordered me to keep quiet.

THE FOUNTAIN OF UNDEFINED ECSTASY

—Sri Sohan Mukhopadhyay

**"OM BHAVATĀPA PRANASINYĀ ĀNANDAGHANA MURTAYE
JNANA BHAKTI PRADAYINYAI MATASTUFBHYAM
NAMO NAMAHA"**

A journey & pilgrimage, a prayer, 1896-1982. The Niagara of Divine Bliss — Sri Anandamayee. The divine light dawned on the suffering mankind to heal with a Midas touch and to teach them an art of living. Sri Krishna revealed Himself through Gita—the song of humankind. Sri Anandamayee's silence becomes eloquent, Her sparkling smile, Her dazzling calm, but deep eyes, her dynamic presence is without a shade of doubt great inspiration to the spiritual aspirants. Till date Sri Anandamayee is an immortal source of illumination. Her position in the spiritual scenario of India, the land of sages, is very unique. She speaks very little, but what she does are not words but spells that enchants her audience, even today. As in accordance to Her divine words that say she is forever and all pervading. The bun on her head, the white, all- white, moon-lit washed dhoti, the fresh garland on her is sure to stop a passer-by and fold his hands in prostration, Love personified, the true model of all the divine teachings of the universe, is the 'Joy-permeated Mother', as Swami Yoganandaji aptly expresses. No one can turn away his face from Her, if he is an atheist he has to accept that there is 'something supernatural' in this mortal image of God—Sri Anandamayee Ma.

The greatest teaching of Ma Anandamayee is to strive towards perfection in whatever we do and the most perfect thing to do on earth is to strive towards our true self. The second aspect is unconditional submission to the beloved sweet Lord and to have everything as per His Divine Will to pursue our own path of religious order and to reach the same destination. The fountain of ecstasy, Anandamayee as a perfect model of a spiritual master or '*Sad Guru*' does not say that what you see around is all falsehood. God is the greatest truth and her call to humanity is —"Come Back Home", come back to your true self and get illuminated and god-conscious. She imposes great stress on the fact that she is not at all interested in constructing ashrams, but to make every individual dwelling in ashrams with religious restrictions and daily prayers and other Vedic rites of the householders.

One must make himself a living institution of spirituality This is where *SRI SRI MA ANANDAMAYEE STANDS UNIQUE*. She says one's selfless prayer is also a service to the suffering humanity and if a service is made, that should be devoid of pride and must be done with the same regards as a worship of Narayana (God) is done, unless this ideal of service is there, it is of no use.

The dynamic dimensions, if one reads an authentic biography of Mother and it will reveal unto the reader that Sri Sri Ma's life is not a journey, but a pilgrimage. Sri Sri Ma is the Pilgrim of the Eternity. Ma is Divine Love personified. Sri Chaitanya healed all with love, so did Sri Anandamayee. India is the land of eternity and Bengal the land of devotion and many a times it is also referred to as the epicentre of all national Revolutions. Sri Anandamayee's appearance was on the lap of chained Mother India, but after Her divine appearance if we look at the Indian history we will see that things started changing. her close interaction with the top figures of Indian National movement no doubt shows the cosmic impact, Sri Anandamayee is no doubt a national figure of great importance. She stands to be the divine *MOTHER OF THE NATION* at the period of great crisis, her incarnation has great historical importance. But above all and every thing her life is a Divine Romance of Love, Love & unquestioned love. Bengal has presented a galaxy of spiritual mystics - Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ma Anandamayee and a few others who are no mere saints, but God incarnate,

MY MEETING WITH SRI BASUMATI MA

—Sri Arun Sen Gupta

It was a memorable day of the third week of the month of January, 1970. I was calling on Sri Basumati Ma in Benares. Basumati Ma was the cousin sister of Sri Ramakrishna. She was popularly known as "Basumati Ma" because she was the wife of Sri Upendra Nath Mukherjee, the founder and editor of the 'Basumati' paper.

It was 2. P.M. I was sitting just in front of Sri Ma in the open verandah. Basumati Ma asked me—"What do you want ? Why you have come to me ?" I replied, "Ma, you were in close touch with Sri Ramakrishna for a long time. Please tell me about Thakur . "Basumati Ma was astonished and told, "Is it possible to tell about Sri Thakur, who is *Purna Brahma Sanātan*, in a very short time ?" I answered, "You have spent with him day after day, you have seen his activities in your own eyes, so I am very eager to hear something about him".

Hearing my words, Mother was very happy. She told, "My mother was the aunt of Sri Thakur. One day he came to our house. He asked my mother, what is the name of your child, indicating me. My mother told that she had only a nick name and that was, 'Habi' ! Thakur laughed to hear the name and told, 'Habi', what a great fun, is it a name ?' My mother requested him to suggest a name. Thakur declared that the name of your child should be 'Bhabatarini, the same name of the goddess Kali of Dakshineswar". Basumati Ma continued, 'Thakur very often came to our house and took me on his lap. I was also initiated by Sri Thakur'.

I asked mother, "I heard that Thakur had arranged your marriage ceremony". Basumati Ma replied. "Yes, you have heard right. My husband used to sell 'Basumati' newspaper in front of Sealdah station. Thakur was pleased to come to my mother-in-law's house, because Narayana was daily worshipped. Thakur told my husband to see the girl. My husband and Narendranath (Swami ji) came to see me. But they did not select, because my complexion was black. Thakur came to know that I was not selected by them. Thakur told my husband, if you get married with that girl, one day you would be the owner of the newspaper and the main gate of your own newspaper house would be so big that even an elephant could pass easily".

Basumati Ma asked me, "Have you ever been to Basumati office ?" I replied, "Yes, the main gate is so big that even an elephant can pass easily." Basumati Ma

told, "the words of Thakur were always correct. My husband who was once selling the newspaper, he became the owner of the same Basumati Patrika. Thakur was Narayana in the form of a man. But then very few people could recognise him. He passed thirty years at Dakshineswar. Thakur was suffering from cancer. According to the advice of the doctor he was transferred to Shyampukur and at last to Cossipore. He did not listen to the advice of the doctor. The doctor Mahendra lal Sarkar advised him to talk less. But everyday the devotees in large numbers came to see and hear his valuable saying".

Thus I spent about three hours with Basumati Ma.

MAHĀ SHAKTI

—Antonio Eduardo Dagnino

Self effulgent wisdom,
 compassion,
 Infinite-eyed Consciousness
 expanding from its central stillness
 faster than light,
 creating, maintaining and destroying
 planetary systems and celestial spheres,
 realms of pure sound and pure colour,
 where chaste beings live in joy.

Mahā Kundalini,
 essential sacred,
 active in all energies,
 Perfection in dwelling in the heart of imperfection.
 Perfection moulding matter into life,
 and life into the freedom of Eternity.
 Power of the One.

I adore you.
 I exalt you.
 I place this flower at your sacred feet.

SRI MA ANANDAMAYEE AND THE COSMOS

—Sri S.K. Bose

We had many occasions to listen to Ma Anandamayee responding to questions raised by renowned educationists, scholars and even scientists. Her utterings were mostly short & beyond our capacity to understand. On several occasions we were puzzled to discover in her, a facial expression with imaginative thoughts. It appeared as if her senses are fixed on happenings at far distant galaxies and stars in the universe where even light takes million years to reach. All these super-natural faculties are observed microscopically, examined and ascertained by actual experiences gained by those who are performing *sadhana* for self-realization. But scientists do not have faith upon these so-called *rituals*. They rather prefer to conduct experiments on the earth to justify the existence of any thing, divine consciousness, even the existence of God. For these are mere superstition and ignorance and not to be believed upon. I personally disagree to their views and have tried to establish the theological expression of Sri Ma with cosmogony, the subject of supreme importance for advanced study and research.

According to sacred Hindu scriptures entire universe and its beings are created by an uncreated creator. "It is He and He only is responsible for the creation, duration and dissolution of the world" (1,2,3). This never-ending cycle remains in existence forever to the point of singularity(4)

Once it so happened, a devotee known as Amulya dada came in contact with a person who while performing *sadhana* used to hear divine sound of cymbals, gong and conches. On questioning about the source from where the sound is generated, he was unable to reply (5). Sri Amulya Dutta Gupta wanted to know about it from Sri Sri Ma. On hearing this she replied—"Whatever the person experiences are true and can be sensed when *Kundalini* power is gradually awakened together with loosening of *granthis* at the navel source. One cannot discover the source of this cryptic phenomenon by partial conquering of *granthis*. It is because of this babaji was not knowing from where the sound is initiated. Once all the *granthis* are loosened he will be in a position to realize about the source of creation, duration and dissolution of the universe, which is responsible to generate *Cosmic sound and noise*"

The process of creation and destruction is now evidenced by light signals generated by cataclysmic explosion spotted on 14th December, 1997 by a Dutch-Italian satellite. The event actually took place at the outer reaches of the cosmos about fifteen billion years ago, at least eight billion years before the existence of this earth. The explosion was as luminous as that of ten billion trillion stars in the universe combined, NASA reported (6). Something more interesting turned up at the same spot in the sky was the appearance of a faint galaxy creating a myriad of new stars.

Sri Sri Ma probably meant the after effect of such powerful explosions in producing sound and light all the time due to creation and destruction of stars and galaxies. Cosmic disturbances such generated can only be heard and experienced when one is deep in meditation and his bundle of senses are completely at rest. Philosophers even scientists wondered how Sri Sri Ma could refer about the evolution of the universe due to cataclysmic explosion taking place at outer space.

The universe according to astrophysical concept is defined to be the totality of all that exists, the totality of reality. Thus by definition if God exists he/she is also a part or whole of it for there cannot be more 'beings' than 'all beings' and this 'being' has all the traditional divine attributes. This has been realized by Sri Ma since the entire history of past, present and future events are stored in her at omega point and could unfold at any moment because of being Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. Whereas sensing parameters of Astro-Physicists of events in space time are seeing, hearing, feeling and tasting, followed by thinking to give a final expression of what is actually happening in the outer space.

Consider for instance the 'Seeing mode' of Sensing. It is possible to see another contemporary person by means of light rays that left her a fraction of second ago, but cannot see one who lived two centuries before. Because the light signals from the said person or event have long ago left the solar system. In a similar way light rays reflected from Sri Ma before twenty years from now have left the Solar system and is nearing say the star Vega at the outer space at a distance 20 light years from the earth. The events about the existence of Sri Ma is therefore experienced now as present happenings at Vega although it has become a past universal history for us. Such astrophysical concept (7) helps us to understand sometime the expressions of Sri Ma about the universe (*Brahmānda*). For instance once during Durga Puja at Varanasi in the year 1951 a devotee wanted to know whether *Chandi lila* actually took place on this earth? In response Sri Ma emphatically expressed—"It actually happened, happening and will happen" (8). Her answer according to cosmological concept is true (9) because light signals

reflected about 5000 years ago from the events of *Chandi lila* are probably reaching distant galaxies at the outer space, 5000 light years from the earth. Thus according to cosmological concept the past events of *Chandi lila* may even presently be detected and experienced there and will continue to be sensed at further distance away as future events (9) provided suitable sensing mode is developed.

On many occasions Sri Ma in superconscious state gave particular kinds of instructions about building sacred shrines and temples without disclosing reasons behind. The establishment of her first ashram at Siddheswari (Dhaka) may be considered as an outcome of her such divine mood (*bhāva*) Though the events which comprise the building of the altar (*vedi*) at Siddheswari with subsequent performance of rituals are published in various journals (10,11) but were never realized from the point of view of her '*Kheyal*' towards unfolding her existence on the earth in coherent association with the universe (*Brahmānda*). It was Mr. Richard Lannoy (12) who first made an attempt to interpret those cryptic events with the creation of a mini symbolic world, the cosmogony. The significance of the red liquid welled up from the hole is an emblem of a highly condensed primordial matter soup entrapped in the cosmic egg. The stars, galaxies, planets, including earth were formed due to cataclysmic explosion of the cosmic egg resembling with what Sri Ma expressed 'just out of a seed you have potentially received an infinite number of trees'. Physicists call such a point of creation a 'Singularity' from where both time and space actually came into existence. Prior to this, events have no consequences. No time, space, universe, earth, no observers, no object to be observed. Even no physical laws were in existence known as timeless state (13). It is a mystery to astrophysicists how out of nothing fundamental particles of ultra high energy have come into existence which are primarily responsible for the cataclysmic explosion in creating earth, planets, galaxies and the atmosphere. Sri Ma had perfect realization of "Timelessness" state, which was revealed by her in uniquely distinctive language—"I exist before there was any creation, duration and dissolution !" (14)

Today scientists are more concerned in investigation, how cosmogony came about, how the universe has come into existence, rather than trying to put ourselves into proper relation with it. Whereas Sri Ma by her physical entrance into the hollow *vedi* demonstrated creation of the earth from a non-conditioned amorphous to that which has form together with her 'oneness' with the source. Persons who have achieved some level of consciousness and discovered the eternal secrets of life, death, happiness and sorrow may be in a better position to appreciate her

untold language about an act of going back to the state of chaos before the commencement of creation actually progressed. (13)

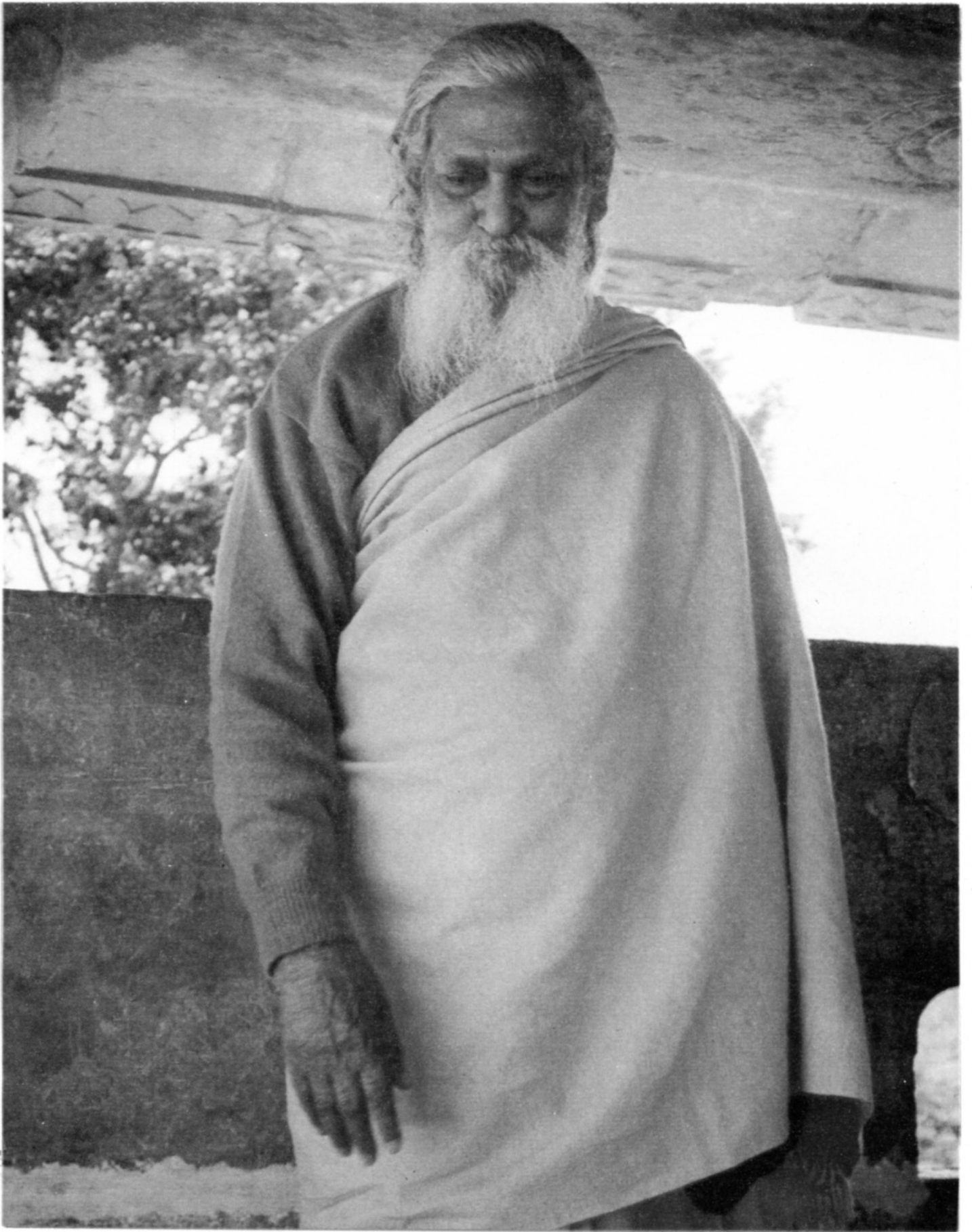
Acknowledgement

The author is thankful to Mr. Richard Lannoy, who has brought out in his book some untold events of Sri Ma in a very simple language. The events recorded has given an inspiration in corroborating with astrophysical cosmogony. Sri Ma was in fact all the time absorbed coherently with the universe as a whole, the Supreme Reality.

Jai Ma.

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Swami Swarupananda Giriji
1919-2002

IN MEMORIAM

Swami Swarupananda Girijee

(1919-2002)

Born to a very wealthy and respected zamindar family of Bengal in the year 1919. Father used to practice stringent sadhana, while his mother was a very religious lady. Swamijee was spiritually inclined from very childhood.

After the death of his mother Swamijee renounced all the wealth and comfort of his family in quest of spiritual satisfaction.

Being dissatisfied after meeting various sages and saints and experimenting with various paths including Tantra, Swamijee reached Varanasi in the fifties. While at the Sankatmochan temple, Swamijee heard the name of Ma Anandamayee from some Devotees. Although it was late in the evening and the ashram at that time was rather far from the city center, Swamijee was inspired to have Ma's darshan immediately. He reached the Ashram between 8.45 pm and 9.00 pm, which is traditionally the 'Maun' time at all the Ma's Ashrams. Swamijee along with his very close friend who later on became Swami Prakashanadajee had the darshan of Sri Ma only for a few minutes and returned even before the 'Maun' was over. Swamijee could immediately fathom that this was the 'Universal Mother' and his search was finally over.

The very next morning Swamijee came to Ma and sought her permission to stay in the Ashram. It was within the first few days of his stay that Ma permitted him to take *Sanyāsa Diksha*. This was very rare as normally new entrants have to stay in the ashram for several years before they qualify for sanyas.

Under the instructions of Sri Ma, Swamijee practiced stringent sadhana for several years at Uttar Kashi and also on the bank of the holy Narmada. Swamijee was also deputed as the 'Sadhu-in charge' of several important ashrams of the Sangha. Ashrams in Delhi Vrindavan. Agarpara developed tremendously under Swamijee's magnetic personality and control. He attracted hundreds of devotees everywhere and spreading message of Sri Ma.

Swamijee was selected as the General Secretary of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, the all- India organisation, in the year 1984 and held this position till the very end.

The 'Ananda Jyoti Mandir', the 'Vidyapeeth', the 'Matri Smriti Museum' and the 'Sarvadharm Granthagar' at Kankhal are only some of his many achievements.

Swamijee who had not been keeping good health for some time past was diagnosed as suffering from advanced stage of throat cancer. He was admitted to a hospital in Delhi for treatment and attained '*Mahasamadhi*' on the evening of 14th September, '02 The day happened to be the very auspicious day of 'Sri Radha Asthami'. **It is very significant to note that exactly twenty years ago Sri Ma also attained '*Mahasamadhi*' on the very same day and almost at about the same time.**

Although hospitalized and in intense pain, Swamijee appeared to be in a state of constant meditation for a few days before his *mahasamadhi*. The serenity and the

peace on his face was noticed by all the devotees and visitors. Even the doctors, nurses and attendants serving Swamijee had become his admirers in a very short time.

His last moments were very peaceful. He was constantly reciting his 'mantra', which was perceptible by the frail and regular movement of his lips. He was given Sri Ma's '*charanamrit*' and breathed his last among the recitation of 'Sri Ma Jai Ma, Jai Jai Ma' by the devotees present.

After midnight Swamiji's body was taken to Hardwar in a special convoy of cars wrapped in saffron clothes and seated in the '*Padmāsana*'. With *Bhasma* applied on his forehead, Swamiji looked divine.

At Kankhal, eager and anxious devotees were awaiting the arrival of Swamiji's holy remains. The convoy arrived just around sunrise at Kankhal ashram where he was received by devotees, sadhus and ashramites,

Among the recitation of the Veda mantras, Swamijee was bathed with the holy water of the Ganga and *Panchāmrit* in the presence of Mahants from different ashrams. The whole ceremony was conducted by Mahant Shree Girdhar Narain Puriji Maharaj of the *Mahanirvani Akhada* as has been the tradition in Ma's ashram.

After the holy bath Swamiji was wrapped in a new set of saffron robes, worn by Swami Muktananda Girij (Didima), from whom he had received *mantra diksha*. Swamijee was then seated in front of his room in the main verandah of the ashram. Young boys of the Vidyapeeth were continuously singing 'Shree Ma Jai Ma Jai Jai Ma' while in another corner of the verandah 'Geeta Path' was being done by the female ascetics of the ashram. A group of poor people who had been regularly receiving alms from the Sree Annapurna sthal had come of their own and were singing *Ram Dhun* out of their respect and affection for Swamijee. The long verandah of the ashram was full with devotees, sadhus and mahants from various akhadas. A roop, a longtime devotee of Ma, rushed all the way from Mumbai to pay his last respects to Swamijee and was just in time.

Around 2 pm Swamijee's body was placed in a covered truck, left open from the rear for the last glimpse of Swamijee. The procession started from the Kankhal ashram. All the sadhus and devotees accompanied the procession on foot singing Ma Dhun. After about an hour the procession reached Nildhara of the holy river Ganga. A number of devotees had already gathered there to have darshan of Swamijee. Swamijee's body was then placed on a *kushāsan* inside an wooden box. The ritual *arati* was performed by Swami Jyotirmayanandjee of the ashram. With the sun still shining in the foreground, Swamijee was given *Jal samadhi* at about 3 pm.

With the *Mahasamadhi* of Swami Swarupanandaji Maharaj a long and eventful chapter in the history of the Sangha has come to an end. He will always be remembered with great respect and affection by devotees of Ma as a *Karmayogi* of high order and a saint full of compassion and love for one and all.

OM SHANTI, OM SHANTI, OM SHANTI.

FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

'Kirpal'

17th May, 1960 — Dehradun Ashram

Sree Ma — The offerings to the Divine Lord when partaken by the devotees, which have been the hallowed *prasāda*, give them supreme happiness and they become purified. Where there has existed a state of un-happiness that is then transformed into Divine happiness. By partaking of the *prasada* that which is impure within us is transformed into Divine happiness.

"After the worship of the Lord is done the invocation to the glory of the Lord — Jai Sri Krishna, Jai Sri Rama. They are eternally glorified. It is all for you — yourself who are not glorified — the mind and the senses being obsessed with greed and attachment to worldly objects. God Himself gives everything.

"God Himself is the sacred offering. He Himself is the one who prepares the offering and it is also He Himself who partakes of the offering. Nothing exists apart from God — no other.

"You the Lord reveal yourself within me as the glorified entity. Those who are not glorified and unhappy will attain external happiness through offerings to the Divine Lord and by partaking of that *prasād*. That which is eternally blissful-deep within you — will then be revealed.

"What does He accept? — only that offering which is offered with innermost faith and with prescribed invocations.

18th May, 1960

Sree Ma — As a small child questions why his father has beaten him, why? In anger the child tears his books, howls and cries. When the child becomes a father, he will also beat his son. Whatever God does that is correct. There is a reason behind it. On the path to God realization the orders of the Guru have to be obeyed.

Question — If there is no taste for religious matters ?

Sree Ma — As you proceed on the path, your doubts will be cleared.

19th May, 1960

Sree Ma — There are four prescribed stages — ashramas. If you enter the *grihastha ashram* (the life of the householder) — the worldly life, there the *bal Gopal* (boy child), *Kumari* (the girl), *Luxmi* (the wife), *Param Pati* (the husband). If you enter the worldly life, with this frame of mind — all the duties are performed as in an ashram. Ashram means where is no *shram* (stress) and whatever you do as *seva* (service) to the Lord Himself — to be performed in true spirit with the remembrance of God in all forms.

In Memory of My Beloved

Father—Sri Suresh Mahindra

*"Speak the Truth and
fear no-one."*

—Anjali Mehra
New Delhi