

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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MATRI VANI

Transmission of power constitutes initiation. It is this imparting of the Guru's power that is the important factor, whether it occurs in a dream or in the waking-state. If the manifestation of power has actually taken place within, then the need for an external giving does not exist anymore.

* * *

The action of initiation is instantaneous, outwardly as well as inwardly.

* * *

Even where no effect of the initiation is noticeable for a long time, even then the power is undoubtedly working within.

* * *

By regularly offering one's *japa* to the *Ista*, one slowly and gradually comes to realize what the Name is and He, whose Name one repeats; who One is; what self-Realization signifies. When all this is revealed, then the purpose of one's *japa* has been wholly fulfilled. Nobody can foretell at what particular instant this may occur : therefore, ever continue with your *sādhana*.

* * *

As one goes on practising a prescribed amount of *japa* at some moment or other — the fire will be set ablaze. Fire exists everywhere, only one does not know, at what instant the friction will suffice to kindle a flame. Therefore, be ever prepared !

* * *

If one is completely single-minded in his thirst for Enlightenment, it *must* come then and there.

* * *

The ocean is contained in the drop, and the drop in the ocean. What else is the spark, if not a particle of fire — of Him, who is Supreme Knowledge Itself.

* * *

None can foretell at what particular time circumstances will co-operate to bring about the Great Moment for anyone.

* * *

What indeed is a *mantra* ? It represents the Supreme Being Himself in the guise of sound. That is why true Knowledge can supervene at the very utterance of a word of power. How mysterious and intimate is the relation between those words and the immutable *Brahman* !

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

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The revelation of THAT is what is wanted. You will have to make a sustained effort to convince your mind of the fact that *Japa*, meditation and all other spiritual exercises, have for purpose your Awakening.

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On this pilgrimage one must never slacken : effort is what counts ! One should try ever to remain engrossed in this endeavour — if it must be woven into one's very being, one has to be fused with one's self. It is Thou that criest out helplessly in distress, and it is Thou Thyself that art the way and the goal.

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The Infinite is contained in the finite, and the finite in the Infinite; the whole in the part and the part in the whole. This is so when one has entered the Great Stream.

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Having entered that unbroken Stream, it is only natural that *yoga*, the hidden union of the individual with the All, should become *Mahāyoga*.

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Infinite are the *sādhana*s, infinite the spiritual experiences, infinite is manifestation — and yet He is unmanifest. Finally, when Enlightenment occurs, this will be the end, and at that very instant He will be revealed in the midst of endless variety.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH MA ANANDAMAYEE

[Translated from Bengali]

—Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

27th May, 1937

Today at 10 a.m. Ma went to the Dhaka University Hall. I also was taken together with Her. Seats were arranged for all at the Lytton Hall. The boys asked me to put a question to Ma. Pointing to the boys, I said to Ma, "Ma, these are all my students. I would request you to tell them something that would be beneficial to them."

Ma (smiling) : So they are all your students, are they ? Whose student are you ?

I : Yours.

Ma smiled and remained silent; then She said, "I find no words coming. You start talking, I shall take up the thread."

A student : What is the need of religion ? Why should we be particular about religion?

Ma: What do you want to do ?

The student : We want to acquire knowledge through education, earn money, do social service and such other works.

Ma : The knowledge you are acquiring is temporal in nature. It cannot be regarded as real knowledge as it can't answer such fundamental questions as "who are we", "where do we come from", "what are we bound for ?" Besides, it does not enable us even to know what will happen to us one hour — nay, even one minute later. There can be no true knowledge divorced from religion. Religion implies the principle sustaining the world. Only religion leads to real knowledge. But the temporal knowledge can also lead us to real knowledge, if properly acquired and utilized.

"As for the social service you speak of undertaking, what is the certainty of it ? It is all very well for you to think at present that by earning money you would do good to others, but it may well happen that you find it difficult to maintain even your own family, not to speak of helping others. It is also common knowledge that those who earn more are inclined to save instead of spending on charity. A little

thought would convince you that the people often cannot do what they once intended to do. This conflict between one's own will and the Supreme Will Power has been going on for ever. You intend to serve others, but it may well turn out that you can barely make time to serve yourselves, let alone serving others. So I say, who can have the power of serving others unless he knows God and can draw upon His power ?

"There is another thing. From birds and beasts to man upwards, - all long for peace and joy. This is inherent to their nature, for they all have a foretaste of joy. Otherwise, they could not have desired it. Again, man is not satisfied with only finite joy. He desires perfect joy that does not peter out into nothingness. The joy that we derive from worldly objects are finite, It cannot afford us satisfaction. Worldly objects merely maintain us in a state of want. When a man who wants money gets it, he wants more money or something else. Peace eludes him constantly. Only the attainment of God can bring peace and joy to man. It is not so much of attainment either, for everything is within him. You see, all seek truth, for false-hood is repulsive to all. A man can seek truth only because it is present within him. Otherwise, desiring it would have made no sense. It is the same with *chaitanya*. Remember, how you were concerned, when the other day one of you fell down unconscious at the Ashram. You tried to restore him to consciousness, for unconsciousness is not to your liking. You strove for consciousness, because you have within you a perception of *chaitanya*. It is true of joy also. So I say, you have within you truth, consciousness, joy and peace-every thing; only, you cannot realise them.

A student : To acquire religious merit, are rituals such as worship etc. indispensable?

Ma (smiling) : So long you have been calling in question the necessity of religion itself. Now you are doubtful about its rituals. Your doubts have receded from religion and are entrenched at its periphery — rituals. So I was telling you that religion is necessary or there would have been no room for your questioning it. Now, about rituals, my answer is that they are not equally important to all. In the world religion is but one, and people try different methods for its attainment, for without it there is no joy and peace, whether it is worship, repeating the Name or meditation all are different paths to the attainment of religion. Some are naturally inclined to worshipping, some others to meditation. These depend on innate bends of mind that vary from man to man. There is no universal law for them. In this respect you must follow your personal inclinations. In short, your actions, whatever they may be, should be God-oriented. You see, you are staying here in

different rooms, but when you go to bathe, you've only one pond* to go to. The pond is one and the path leading to it is also one. But as you set out from your respective rooms, the path seems different. In the same way, religion is one and the practices for its attainment are also one. But they appear to be different on account of differences in personal inclinations. Some make it through worship of God, Some others through repeating the Name and some others still through meditation. Each of them is a discipline (*sadhana*). So I say, *sadhana* is one. Worship, *japa* etc have all uses of their own.

"Often the parents of children complain before me that their sons have no religious tendency. They do not take part in *sandhyā*, *āhnik* (daily spiritual practices) and other such activities leading to the ultimate objective of life. They are sceptic with respect to everything. It has gone to such length, that a Brahman's son is disinclined to have even the holy thread on him. On hearing their complaint I say that in this matter, the parents are more to blame than their children. They take care only to ensure for their children the money-oriented education and neglect their basic religious training. The parents are not justified in complaining, if their children, with no religious training to guide them, grow up to be atheists and indisciplined, for it is the logical conclusion of their own action. So my advice is that at an early age spiritual training along with secular education should be imparted to children. The effects of such training, imparted at a tender age, are abiding.

A student : What's the significance of investiture with the holy thread ? We believe that the main cause of our backwardness is casteism. Other nations are free from casteism. why should we not also abolish casteism and try to work out an allround development for our country?

Ma : What good will it be to look up to the leaves and fruits of a tree when its root has been chopped off? First the tree itself must be saved. Then alone can the question of its leaves and fruits arise. You want to equalize a Brahmin and a sweeper; but who among you is ready to go in for scavenging ?

While making railway journeys, you seek the help of porters. But you are ashamed at the idea of carrying your own luggages on your head. You all opt for equality, but shy away from adopting each other's vocation. However, it is quite true that you should cherish a feeling of fraternity for all. I too agree with the concept of one caste. But casteism has been in practice from olden days to maintain social order. This casteism has age-old sanction behind it, and if one day it is

* The Dhaka Hall campus encloses a pond. It is surprising though, how Ma came to know of it.

abolished, it would be through the will of God. So long as it continues it is good to abide by it.

The student : The wearing of the holy thread alone does not make a Brahmin. What is the utility of adopting the holy thread ? And what good comes out of performing *sandhyā* and *āhnik* ?

Ma asked the boy his name and when She knew that he was a Brahmin, asked him, "You have cast off your holy thread, haven't you ?" He confessed. Ma laughed aloud and said, "The holy thread is a distinguishing mark of Brahminism, a symbol. Believe it or not, having the holy thread on and performing of *sandhyā* and *āhnik* have their own utility. You may take it from me. Go on performing *sandhyā*, *āhnik* and similar other rituals in the same manner as you are carrying out the other directions from your parents. You may not understand their significance at present, but attend to them as courses enjoined by your parents."

A student : Is it true that those who are human beings at this birth would be human beings at their next birth as well ?

Ma : Rebirth is determined by actions. If born as man, one behaves like a beast, he is not reborn as man. Besides, what a man thinks of at the time of his death is a determining factor in his rebirth. As for example, King *Bharat*, thinking of a deer at death, was reborn as a deer.

A student : Does it hold good for birds and beasts as well ?

Ma : Yes, it does. But there is a difference between man and birds and beasts. What birds and beasts would think of at the time of their death is pre-determined. In the domain of birds and beasts, successive births are predetermined in a hierarchical order. Actions of birds and beasts cannot make an exception to it. But it is given to man to regulate his next birth by his actions. So by man I mean a being, whose mind is alert*. But this should not induce you to think that one can come to good end conjuring up merely by good thoughts in death-bed, after having passed a bad life all throughout. This is because as a man approaches death, he comes to a state when he is no longer capable of voluntary thoughts. His death-time thoughts are determined by the actions during his life and his next birth in its turn is determined by these thoughts.

A student : Can God be seen ?

Ma (smiling) : Yes, God can be seen and talked to in the same way as I am seeing you and talking to you.

The student : How does God look like ? Kindly give a description of His form.

A favourite pun of Ma. *Mānus* [man] = *man* [mind] + *Hush* [alertness].

Ma (smiling, pointing to the assembled students) : All these are forms of God. (A loud laugh from all).

Now the parting time drew near. Ma said to all, "Baba, I am your daughter, am I not ? You must comply with a request of mine. Say you will comply with it." The students said that they would try to the best of their power. Ma said, "I know that you will do as I tell you, but still I insist on your pledging your word. You should devote some time to His work just as you are attending to all your work. An hour, half-an-hour, at least ten minutes should be spent in doing His work. It is but a small demand on your time to set apart just ten minutes for God's work out of a day of 24 hours. I do not ask you to be particular about the spot or require you to be in some definite *asana*. In whatever state you may happen to be, be sure that you repeat His name for at least ten minutes a day. This is my request."

Ma spoke these words smilingly and in such a tone that they melted the hearts of all who heard them. The boys gladly gave their word to Ma that they would try to devote some time every day to God.

A student : But you must come occasionally to encourage us.

Ma : It is up to you to bring me back.

The student : But we cannot even approach you, for you are cordoned off by the ladies. We have observed that you are more indulgent to those of your own group (Laughter from all). Ma (smiling) : You are right. But then everybody in the world is a woman *Prakriti*. God is the only *Purusha* or male. All beings of the world long for God, the Supreme Husband. It is in the nature of *Prakriti* to desire something or other. *Purusha* has nothing to ask for. In this sense, we are all *Prakriti* or women. This being so, my attraction for you all is quite as strong. (Laughter from all).

The student : We are greatly pained to see the women so exacting towards you. Why don't you forbid them ?

Ma : Forbidding is not in my nature. If I had the slightest desire for preserving this body, I could have forbidden them. But I am completely indifferent to whether this body remains or not. This body would continue to be only if you all are intent on preserving it, and it will perish when you cease to care. You have not seen what a mess the women make to put the vermilion marks on me. They besmear me with vermilion on the head, forehead, not sparing even my eyes. The vermilion makes my garments red. When I cleanse my face and hair, a flow of red water seems to run down. Yet I do not prevent them. All cannot understand it. It makes many a man gape with wonder to find that I cannot eat with my own hand. They see that I can do all my work with my hands but when it comes to eating I cannot use my

hand. Many have questioned me about it. I told them that people eat to preserve their life. For a few days I had started eating with my own hand, but then also I put food into somebody else's mouth, instead of my own. Seeing that, they did not allow me to eat with my own hand any longer.

The student : Why do you accept *pranāma* ?

Ma : There was a time when I could not accept *pranāma*.

If somebody bowed down to me, I was restless till I touched his feet and return the *pranāma*. Nobody could get away with bowing down to me without being bowed down to in return. Sometimes it so happened that even if somebody made *pranāma* to me from a distance at my back, my head would bow down of itself, though I could not see him. Now I do not prevent people from offering *pranāma* to me because I think that in bowing down to me, they are really making their obeisance to God.

With these words Ma took leave of the students.

HAVE FAITH IN MOTHER

—Sri Viranchi Kumar

When inclined to be discouraged
 And all hope seems to depart,
 Don't forget that Ma is there,
 And still has you on Her heart.
 When your load seems hard to carry
 And the burden no one shares,
 Though the world seems not to pity
 Just remember, Ma cares.
 When you pass through the waters
 And no earthly help you see,
 Do not lose your faith in Ma for
 She has said, 'I'll be with thee'.
 So, dear heart, fear not, take courage,
 For the word of Ma is true.
 Ma said, 'I'll never leave thee,
 But will guide while passing through.'.

SUPREME WOMAN OF BEING —ANANDAMAYI MA

—Chloe Goodchild

I have a feeling that
my boat has struck
down there, in the depths,
against a great thing.

One morning in the winter of 1987, I was sitting in my bedroom, enjoying the play of the lemon sunlight upon the trees outside, when 'She' arrived. I was not expecting her, not consciously that is. Roger put his head around the door saying, 'Here's something for you.' He slipped a package into my hands, smiled at me, and left for work. Who was sending me a package from Germany? The book had been sent to me by a publisher friend who lived in Berlin.

'She' was a photographic essay of the life of Anandamayi Ma, one of this century's greatest Indian woman saints. I opened the book at random. Within seconds I was weeping like a helpless child, years of tears. Anandamayi's breathtaking beauty shone out at me from every page. It was not simply her physical image that spoke to me, but something far deeper. I felt seen and received in a way that I had never known. Who was this intimate stranger looking at me from these old photographs, images fixed onto paper years before, tracing her life from youth to old age? I did not know in that moment. All I knew was that these photographs arrested my heart, and stilled my restless senses. This woman's seeing made me feel instantly whole. She returned me to the source of myself. As my body softened, my tears subsided. I simply sat there with her for the rest of the day.

The presence of this extraordinary Being before me was the summation of everything that I had ever glimpsed or sensed of the Divine. Until that moment something had always been missing. I had never known such a direct and luminous encounter with the real in the form of a person. Was this what the Mother Abbess and others experienced when they spoke to me of encountering the 'Christ within'? Each photograph was accompanied by some words spoken by Anandamayi Ma. The first words that I read were:

How much more time will you spend at a wayside inn?

Don't you want to go home? How exquisite it all is.....
 One is, in his own Self, the wanderer, the exile,
 the homecoming and the home... oneself is all that there is ...

I turned over the page, and saw myself in its reflection:

Do you want deliverance from the bonds of the world? Then weeping profusely, you will have to cry out from the bottom of your heart: Deliver me, Great Mother of the World, deliver me/... When by the flood of your tears the inner and outer have fused into one, you will find her, whom you sought with such anguish, nearer than the nearest, the very breath of life, the very core of every heart...

I am conditioned as well as unconditioned. I am neither infinite nor confined within limits. I am both at the same time ... I am whatever you conceive, think or say... why don't you take it that this body is the material embodiment of all your thoughts and ideas. You wanted it and you have it now.

It was then that I remembered my dream from the previous summer, the dream of the Great Mother. This was She/ This was She/ Of this there was no doubt. The face of my guardian angel was finally revealed. Anandamayi Ma, or 'Ma' as she was called, had left her body five years before, the year my daughter was born. However, the knowledge of her physical death seemed of little importance. Her invisible presence was undeniable. The book was called, *Matri Darshan*, which means, 'The Grace of The Mother'. Grace it was.

From that morning on, Ma became my indispensable travelling companion. I took her everywhere with me, allowing the photographs and the text to work on me:

The destiny of every human being is to destroy the veil that hides his own Self. To realise this Self means to realise God, and to realise God is to realise one's own Self.

Before long I found myself talking to these images as if to a living person. Then I had more dreams about her. She became an integral and living presence in my life. What was, and is, this connection with someone whom I had never met in the body? My dialogues with her began to filter into my voice and soundwork, and I found myself introducing her teachings into my workshops and meditation retreats.

The previous emphasis of my work on self-actualization through a therapeutic approach to singing changed to a more direct exploration of the creative and

spiritual dimension of the voice, both within performance and other artistic endeavours, such as song-writing and recording. What was she calling me to now? It was at this time that the meaning of the first dream that I had had of Ma, in which Neem Karoli Baba was questioning me about my voice-teaching, began to strike a chord within me. Was my teaching yet another veil, in which I was successfully hiding my own singing development behind the wish to 'help' others? This question hovered about in my mind, while Ma continued to speak to me, patiently and simply.

Essentially there is only one inner Call, but the different religions have devised different methods to make man aware of it. Once a man awakens to it there is no more need to cry out again and again. Truly speaking it is not you who call Him but He who calls you ... when through intense and undivided devotion to Him the hunger of the sense is stilled, His call will find response from your inmost depths and reverberate through your whole being.

Her Being began to influence and inspire the lives of others who came to my workshops, and the demands for the photographic essay on Anandamayi Ma - *Matri Darshan* - increased.

It is by seeking to know oneself that the Great Mother of all can be found.

(*Matri Darshan—Anandamayi Ma*)

Finally I was compelled to travel to India to meet the people and places that had been transformed by her presence. It was with this visit to India that the previously irreconcilable problem of the duality of my existence came to an end.

In January 1990, I arrived in Benares, city of light, the Hindu god Shiva's homeland, and the sacred crematorium ground of India. A seething chaos of humanity squeezed into stalls, rickshaws, ragged old tents, holes in the ground, the old, the young, the rich, the poor, spiritual devotees, officials, wheeler-dealers, the diseased and wanton, all in one place. Life, death and immortality was sandwiched together between the traffic and temples. A cacophony of sounds filled the air - bicycle bells, scooter hooters, screaming and laughing children, sellers and buyers bartering and haggling over prices. Smells of every kind - petrol fumes, spices, incense, urine - intermingled. I was surrounded by thousands of bodies at different stages of living and dying. A lithe young man, naked to the waist, passed by, his head shaved in preparation for the funeral of a relative. A darker older man, making paper kites, sat with his legs folded like two skeletal sticks held together by a thin film of dark shiny flesh. He arose slowly, with difficulty, resignation marked upon

his timeworn face. Three particular images came together in my mind amidst this endless buzz of activity - the exposed pink ribs of raw carcasses, dripping blood, hanging from a rail in one of the market stalls; the remnants of a wrecked vessel on the shores of the Ganges, the hull exposing its ribs like some ancient animal; and the sizzling carcass of a human body, burning to ashes on the funeral pyre at the main 'burning ghat' along the river's edge.

The mighty sacred river Ganges ran slow, serene and silent alongside the city, meandering slowly, expansively, towards infinity. Great buffaloes wandered slowly and aimlessly along the shoreline. Thousands of bathers and pilgrims, old and young, crowded the water's edge, washing, swimming, playing. Some were praying. Life and death followed one another in quick succession — life celebrating death, celebrating life. Two male dancers suddenly performed an erotic dance in front of a shrouded dead body awaiting its turn on the funeral pyre. Drummers thumped their drums furiously in front of the dancers, and a crowd quickly formed around them. Celebration was in the air, and only a few feet away from me was the great fire, consuming the bones of human life. I could just catch the profile of a skull jutting its charcoal face towards the cloudless blue sky. Now, it was no longer possible to distinguish between bones, branches and logs in the fire. A few minutes later, there was nothing but ashes. This was the first time for me that the phrase, 'dust to dust, and ashes to ashes', really meant something - something vivid, powerful and real. Each shrouded body was surrounded by sweets, incense, sometimes prayer flags and flowers. Before each cremation, the bodies would be doused in the sacred river, the final blessing of Great Mother Earth. Close relatives had shaved their heads to honour and remember this moment. Nothing was hidden. There was no emotional paraphernalia, just the simple and inevitable final encounter with death. Bereaved families and friends gazed vacantly into the fire. Just a few sat some paces away, and stared at the ground, the trace of sorrow across their faces. A silverhaired old man leant his tired face against his walking stick. The occasional sadhu graced the scene with his simple presence, then walked on towards no destination.

Who and where was I in the midst of all this ? I was left stunned. I had never felt myself to be in such a foreign land as at the funeral pyre of Benares. I was keenly aware of myself, my whiteness, my squeaky clean preciousness, my separateness, my sense of superiority, maintaining a subtle defence between my western culture and this one. I realised how far removed I had been from the raw wild potency of the elements - fire, earth, water and wind.

A slow boat ride down the Ganges gave me some time to reflect and rest. My experience in Benares had been a sensory assault. Later, I was being driven in an electric-powered, three-wheeler rickshaw through the city at top speed, over pot-holes, and in and out of bicycles, scooters, lorries and taxis, like on a bumper car ride. I felt I was on a life-death roller coaster. Dirty, shoeless children, hair filled with dust, demanded 'rupees, rupees' at every stopping point.

Wandering through the city at night was like travelling into the labyrinthine recesses of the psyche. Candles and gas lamps shed light and shadow across an array of faces, each one intent upon its own particular business, whether that was making bread, sweets or silks, or selling fruit and vegetables. Buffaloes and cows slowed down the mindless speed of the traffic, and brought a touch of humanity into the picture, a kaleidoscope of ever-changing colours of humanity, a whirring rainbow of ceaseless activity. 'Pray without ceasing,' said the sign in the Sindhi restaurant, where we stopped to eat some dahl and some rice. The owner presided over his guests like a chief priest at a ritual feast, his rotund presence bringing a solidity and a stability into the madness of the place. Where was the silence, the ancient under-current of a profound spirituality that I thought I might find here?

My question was answered the next day. I was walking along the Ganges looking for Ma's ashram. I had been told that I would have no trouble finding it. Finally I stopped and asked a local, 'Can you tell me where Anandamayi Ma's Ashram is, please?' To my surprise and delight, he looked behind himself and pointed to a large whitewashed temple building, right there in front of me. I climbed the many steps up to it, and walked into a beautifully kept courtyard overlooking the river. Serenity presided. The confusion and craziness of the outside world fell away. I discovered that this ashram also included a girls' residential school, managed by one of Ma's devotees, Kanti Gurtu, a woman in her sixties. She appeared somewhat austere at first but when she realized the influence which her beloved Guru had had upon me, she started to relax and became more forthcoming. We talked awhile, and finally she mentioned that they had kept Ma's bedroom just as it was when she was alive. I asked if I might visit. Kanti Gurtu nodded with a smile.

As I entered the tiny room, there before me was a simple fourposter bed, upon which was a huge photograph of Ma, propped up against the wall, resting upon the bed. In front of the bed was a footstool covered in yellow silk. Ma's small white sandals were placed upon it. This was incredible. I was overcome by the simplicity and exquisite beauty of this little room. Nothing else was there, except an old wardrobe and two sheaves of corn pressed against purple velvet, held within a

picture frame. I looked down once again, and saw the pair of small white sandals placed upon the stool by the bed. I could not believe that her feet were once protected by these shoes. Could such a giant of a presence have worn such tiny shoes ? I slowly bowed my forehead upon her sandals - this was the closest physical engagement that I had had with Ma. Tears welled up. An incomprehensible deluge of emotion filled me up from head to toe. A chorus of a thousand different birds flooded my bloodstream with their singing. Pins and needles tickled the surface of my skin and raised the hairs at the back of my neck. I knelt and allowed a state of prayerfulness to transmute my tears into equilibrium and inner quiet. I could have stayed there a very long time. I felt the filling of an absence, the response to my longing, a mysterious 'yes' from out of nowhere. As I bowed my head once again, I became aware of the residual resistances of my self-conscious reasoning self, my 'Britishness' dissolving the instant my forehead touched the sandals. For a brief moment, I felt light shining through my body.

When I returned to the city, the crazy bustle of it all felt like a playful dance. I was able to let the people and the noise in without my previous fear of being overwhelmed by it all.

[To be continued]

JAI MA

— **Dhiraj Sapru**

.....in the absence of words lies the divine
secret of the heart-of-communication,
one hallmarked with unbound understanding,
a direct concentrate of "harmony-in-bliss...

.... one also begins to ponder-over as to, how and why, man chooses, more so, willingly, to ignore such a blessing..... no, not that sound should altogether and completely disappear amidst us—that would be quite 'nother thing in its absolution—pray do reflect though on the number of "do-away-with utterances", those, which were manifested through any one mouth, even in a tiny slot as in a day..... the point really though is—What is the message? Do not the brilliant rays light-up, harmonising all "problems" collectively, and yet, focusing on one-single-basic-truth, that, deeply embedded within the very palpitating—flutter of "any" problem itself, lies restfully at peace, it redemptive—solution....

..... On a closer-earnest-sincere-analysis, thus, one would begin to realize, that, for any given "situation", a pair, as though, of a problem and its solution, are ever present in equal proportions—always.....

..... journeying further, the understanding ought to dawn on the lucid-classic-truth, that—good and bad—right and wrong—pleasure and pain—heat and cold—joy and sorrow—far and near—rest and commotion—here and hereafter—are but two sides of the same coin, the difference in them being not in form, but merely degree.....the realization shall also emit strength enough, for one to flip the "coin" high-very high, till both its faces merge into one—devouring duality.....

jai ma

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

[Continued from before]

—Sri P.C. Mehta

Original Jainism:

1. The Jain ontology:

Reality which is uncreated and eternal is defined in the '*Tattvartha-dhigama-Sutra*', as '*Utpāda-vyāya-ḍravya-yuktam Sat*'. That is, Reality is characterized by :

i) Origination *utpāda* ii) Destruction *vyāya* and iii) Permanence *dravya*.

While permanence is the substratum of Reality, origination and destruction are its modes, i.e. *Paryaya*. Thus qualities are not unreal but the modes of the permanent element. This also means that nothing can be affirmed *absolutely* about 'Reality' since all affirmations can be made only under certain conditions and limitations.

Thus the ontological view that Jainism holds, is in between the views held by the Upanisads, that '*Brahman*' alone is Real and the changes of form and state unreal and the Buddhist view, that there are only momentary passing qualities which we should regard as new existences and no unchanging substance behind.

The Jainas believe that it is reality in this sense that is divided into the eternal and independent existence of a) *Jiva* or animate or spirit and b) *Ajiva* or inanimate or matter, with its fivefold variety.

All these six kinds of reality are termed *Dravya* or substance.

By *Jiva* or spirit, they mean the individual self, and not the Supreme Soul as in the Upanishads. They do not believe in any universal spirit or God. They, however, believe that even material entities have their own soul.

2. 'Jiva' or 'Soul':

In Jainism,

i) *Jiva* is conceived of as *Dravya* i.e. an eternal substance, of limited but variable magnitude which exists independently of matter. There are an infinite

number of uncreated and eternal souls which are all alike. Its intrinsic nature is perfection, but during the period of its union with matter, which constitutes *samsāra*, its capabilities are obscured. *Jiva* not only exists but acts and is acted upon. It is both *bhoktā* or experiencer and *kartā* or agent. Birth and death in the material world are not the properties of the souls but *paryāyas* or modifications while they are in *karmic* bondage. Only those souls which are within the bondage of *karma* take bodies. Thus man's personality has a spiritual as well as a material element. These souls are capable of adjusting their sizes to the dimensions of the physical body they occupy. In the other schools of Indian thought *Jiva* or soul is conceived of as either atomic or omnipresent and therefore unalterable, in other words as never changing its size.

ii) The very essence of the *Jiva* or 'soul' is a) sentience as well as b) comprehension and all-knowing.

The sentience and empirical knowledge in diverse forms which human beings show, is a manifestation of the *Jiva's* awareness and comprehension under limitations of *Ajiva* or inanimate nature caused by *karma*. The *Jiva* is imprisoned in *Ajiva* and therefore it can display its prowess only partially, that is through a veil. External conditions such as the organ of sight or light are useful only in so far as the obstacles are partly removed through their aid. *Karma* thus brings about empirical knowledge, just as *Avidyā* does in some other schools of thought. *Jiva* and its several *jnānas* in this sense constitute a unity in difference. Though senses and *manasa* or mind are aids to knowing, from another point of view they are the indications of limitations to which the *jiva* has fallen. The eyes are viewed as a check put upon the absolute sight of the soul. The grades of knowledge in a person leads to the recognition of differences in the extent of enlightenment.

iii) *Jiva's* capacity for *Keval-jnāna*;

The ultimate aim of life is to cast off these limitations completely, by subduing the material element, so that the soul recovers its omniscience or direct awareness of all things. This kind of insight is called *Kevala-jnana*.

iv) *Jiva* attracts *karma* particles and transmigrates. Jainism believes in *karma* and transmigration. But there are three aspects in which it differs from Hinduism:

a) Hindus believe that God allots rewards and punishments according to *karma*. Since the Jainas do not believe in a Supreme God, they believe that *karma* operates by itself. They believe in the all sufficient character of *karma*. We shall come across a similar view also in the Vedic *mimāṃsā*.

b) Hindus take *karma* to be immaterial. The Jainas take them as subtle particles of matter which are *Ajiva* and which find their way into the soul and soil its nature.

c) This also means that the soul consists of parts, otherwise such an intrusion of *karma* particles would be impossible.

v) The souls are divided into —

a) higher and b) lower classes according to the number of sense organs they possess. The lowest of them, possessing only one sense organ of touch, are plants. The highest are men who in addition to the five senses are endowed with *Manas* or 'mind' and are rational.

3. 'Ajiva':

The *Ajiva* is devoid of life and consciousness. It is regarded as fivefold viz;

i) *Pudgala* i.e. Matter. ii) *Kāla* or Time. iii) *Ākāśa* or Space iv) *Dharma* and v) *Adharma*.

i) *Pudgala and the Jaina atomic theory:*

Pudgala or Matter is manifold, the ultimate stage of it is atomic. At the ultimate stage there is no distinction between atoms, called *Paramānus*. It is only the combination of atoms in different ways that become the objects of common experience. The combination of two or more atoms is called *Skandha* The conglomeration of atoms which make the universe is called *Mahā-skandha*. All perceivable objects are *skandhas*.

The atomic theory is foreign to the Vedas, though the term *anu* is found in the Upanisads. It is found in more than one other school of Indian thought. The Jaina form is the earliest. While in the Upanisads, the ultimate stage is the monistic Brahman, in Jainism it is an infinity of atoms, indefinite both qualitatively and quantitatively. It may increase or decrease in volume without addition or loss. When matter is in the subtle state any number of its particles may occupy the space of one gross atom. It is matter in this subtle form that constitutes *karmā*, which by its influx into the *jiva* brings on *Samsāra*.

No difference exists in the primary atoms. It is the combination of atoms which brings about qualitative distinctions. These qualities are—

a) colour b) taste c) smell d) touch and e) sound.

Sound is a *pudgala-parināma* or modification of matter, but only when the matter is in its aggregate or composite form and not in its atomic state. In this sense only it is an attribute of matter.

(Contrast this with the Nyaya-Vaisesika view under which atoms are regarded as differing in their qualitative nature from one another and on that basis they belong to one or other element of earth, air, ether, fire and water).

It is therefore the combinations of atoms which are classifiable as the four elements of—1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire and 4) air

All these atoms or aggregates of them are supposed to harbour souls, so that the whole universe may be said to be throbbing with life.

ii) *Kāla* or time is infinite and all pervasive. All things are in time and all change takes place in time. The universe is conceived of as having had no origin and as not going to have any end, although it is constantly undergoing change.

iii) *Ākāśa* or space is viewed as extending beyond our world, and it is like time, infinite and all-pervasive.

iv) *Dharma* (means motion in the present context)

v) *Adharma* (means rest).

The terms *dharma* and *adharma* here do not stand for moral or religious merit and demerit as in Hinduism, but represent the principles of motion and rest respectively.

According to Jainism the whole of *Ākāśa* or space is divided into two parts;

a) In one part where *dharma* is present, motion is possible. The part where movement is possible is called *lokākāśa*. *Dharma* is thus a condition of motion.

b) In the remaining part where the principle of *adharma* pervades, there is rest. That part of space, is therefore regarded as a condition of rest and called *alokākāśa*. *Adharma* is therefore considered as a condition of rest.

This forms the original basis of Jainism.



I BELONG TO EVERYONE

—Sri Sri Ma

[II]

—Bithika Mukerji

Many of Sri Ma's devotees may know about Sumitra and Seeta Deri of Mangalam Verlaag, the publishing house in Germany. For more than twenty years now they have been publishing Sri Ma's Pictorial Albums, Cassettes and other forms of religious literature and music.

They were kind enough to undertake the publication of the translation into German of my books *Bird on the wing*, *Life and Teachings of Sri Ma Anandamayi*. They invited me to come to Lautersheim (Germany) to attend the launching of the book and to sign autographs for purchasers, if any, and if they should want it done.

At this time I had no thought of going abroad but was persuaded by some other factors. The final draft of my book *My days with Si Ma Anandamayi* was with Richard Lannoy in England, who had very kindly agreed to write the forword for it. Other English friends on learning that I was invited to go to Germany, invited me to come up to London and stay with them for a few days. This would give me the chance of discussing my book with Richard, so I made the trip in the summer of 1995.

Sumitra and his wife received me at Frankfurt Airport and we drove to Lautersheim about 200 milies away, I think. Lautersheim, I saw was a quiet township. The house of the hosts was situated right at the end of a quiet street overlooking a vast valley bordered by mountains on the other side.

The house was built entirely with light coloured wood and it was structured elegantly. We took off our shoes in the entrance lobby. It was a pleasure to walk bare foot on the polished wooden floor. All the rooms were big airy and with minimum furniture. The main room was dominated by a beautiful big picture of Sri Ma. I was fascinated by a cluster of luminous lotus flowers and buds in front of the picture. It looked charming. Sri Ma's portraits were all over the house artistically

positioned in the right places. The house in fact was an ashram occupied by a couple, who were totally given over to a life of sadhana.

After settling me very comfortably they went away to finish their interrupted session of morning meditation. At midday we partook of a very simple meal. They said that they did not waste time cooking. They cooked only when they were hungry. Looking at my startled expression, they laughed and said not to worry. Meals would be prepared regularly while I stayed with them. I was a little ashamed when I found they had bought a tin of tea for me. They themselves did not drink tea or coffee. I of course knew that Sri Ma did not like the tea-habit but I have never thought of giving it up.

Here in Germany I found a couple living totally and sincerely in accordance with Sri Ma's *vani* regarding a life of *samyama*. In the evening I attended the *ārati* and *kirtan* in their puja-room. I seemed transported to any of our ashrams in India. Sumitra played on the *khole* expertly. They sang the kirtans in their true musical rhythms. Their pronunciation is faultless. They have truly created for themselves a place and atmosphere where the presence of Sri Ma is palpable.

Truly Sri Ma is everywhere and belongs to everyone.

[To be continued]

MĀYĀVĀDI VEDĀNTA AND LEELĀVĀDI VEDĀNTA

[II]

—Dr. Bireshwar Ganguly

Brahman and God according to Shankaracharya:—

Brahman is the only ontological reality according to Shankaracharya. It is the supreme, perfect, absolute reality. The existence of *Brahman* or *Ātman* is proved as the self of all beings. Existence, knowledge and bliss are the essential characters (*Svarup lakshana*) of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is the eternally accomplished being, which is not dynamic, but static, inactive and immobile, having no teleological end or purpose to realize.

The Upanishads speak of the higher *Brahman* (*Para Brahman*) and the lower *Brahman* (*Apara Brahman*). *Brahman* conditioned by cosmic nescience (*Māyā*) is *Ishvara* (Lord), who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the temporary empirical world. Thus God is the determinate *Brahman*. He is the personal Lord, who is the Omniscient, Omnipotent creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. Though omnipresent, immanent, God is formless, He assumes various forms of His own accord to favour His worshippers.

The Absolute *Brahman* is the pure, trans-empirical, unconditioned, indeterminate, eternal, subject-objectless consciousness, whereas God (*Ishvara*) is *Brahman* conditioned by cosmic nescience (*Māyā*). He is both reality and appearance. God is the supreme person (*Purushottama*), the Lord of the phenomenal world. He is the intermediate principle between *Brahman* and the empirical world. Apart from the essential characters of absolute existence, Knowledge and bliss of the *Nirguna Brahman*, *Saguna Ishvara* has the incidental characters or powers (*Tatastha lakshana*) of creating, sustaining and annihilating the universe¹.

Bhagavad Gita:

Since the practical Vedanta of *Bhagavad Gita*, the most authentic and most popular

1. Vide; i) *Shankara Bhashya on Brahmasutra*,
ii) *Shankara Bhashya on Bhagavad Gita*,
iii) *Jadunath Sinha, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, Calcutta, 1988, chap Xii.*

Hindu scripture, can be properly understood in the light of Ramanujacharya's *Vishistadvaitavāda* and not Shankaracharya's *Māyāvādi Advaitavāda*, a brief statement of the theory will be appreciated by intellectual aspirants of the middle category, who, I believe, constitute the core group of readers of this essay.

Vishistadvaitavāda:

According to Ramanujacharya's *Vishistadvaitavāda*: *Brahman* is identical with God; He is the supreme person (*Purushottama Paramātmā*); He is infinite and self-luminous; The Supreme *Brahman* is eternal, omnipresent, immanent in the whole universe, omniscient, omnipotent and endowed with many auspicious qualities; He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of *Jagat* (universe), its material cause and efficient cause, and the ground of all; He is the inner guide, and inner self of unconscious *Prakriti* (matter) and conscious *jivas* (souls); He is immanent and transcendent. He is the first cause of all effects (*Sarva Kāranakāranam*).

There is unity in plurality of God or *Brahman*. There is internal difference (*svagata bheda*) in Him, His nature is inconceivable. He can assume infinite forms, He harmonizes all multiplicity, He is perfect and creates the universe out of His fullness as a sport (*leelā*), Matter and souls are attributes, modes or parts of God, The individual soul is identical in the essence of consciousness with God (*Tat Tvam Asi*); The soul presiding over a body is not a mere appearance, but an external reality, an eternal part of God (*Mamaivāṁsho Jivaloke jivabhutah Sanātanaḥ*); God is an organic whole of different souls and the material universe; God is a determinate and synthetic whole; He is the Supreme Being (*Purushottama Paramātmā Ishvara*), and not merely the sum total of finite persons. All *Jivātmās* are co-eternal members within Him like innumerable blood cells within a body or innumerable waves of an ocean; God is the soul, Lord, controller and chief of innumerable souls (*Jivātmās*); Matter and souls are dependent on Him as His inseparable attributes; self-luminosity, consciousness, selfhood and agency are common to *Jivātmās* and *Ishvara* But the *Jivātmās* are atomic or monadic in structure, whereas *Ishvara* is *Vibhu* or infinite; The *Jivātmās* acquire *avidyā* (ignorance), actions, dispositions and desires in connection with unconscious matter. Human freedom and liberation are subject to the will and grace of God²

2. Vide: (i) Ramanujas' *Shribhasya on Brahma Sutra*,
(ii) *Vedantadipu on Brahma Sutra*, *Vedartha samgraha on Brahma Sutra* etc.
(iii) Jadunath Sinha, *op. cit* chap xiv.

Leelāvādi Vedanta of the Bengal School of Vaishnavism:

The *Leelāvādi Vedanta* of the Bengal School of Vaishnavism is based on the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533 A.D.); as recorded in *Chaitanya charitāmrita*, written by Krishnadas Kaviraj (1616 A.D.), and as expounded by Sanatan Goswami and Rupa Goswami in *Bhaktirasāmrita Sindhu* and *Ujjala-Nilmani*, as well as by Sri Jiva Goswami in *Sarvasamvadini*, *Tattasandarbhā*, *Sri Krishna Sandarbha*, *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*, *Paramātmā Sandarbha* and *Bhakti Sandarbha*.³ This philosophy is known as *Chintya bhedābhedā Vāda*, as the simultaneous identity and difference between God and individual souls cannot be fully explained by reason, but to be accepted from the authority of *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhāgavat Puranā*, which are the best commentaries of the Upanishads, according to Vaishnava scholars.

The following two paragraphs on Bengal Vishnavism give a beautiful summary of Sri Chaitanya's concepts of *Ishara* and *Jivātmā*.

"The ultimate reality is Lord *Krishna*. The self is both different and non-different from Lord Krishna, who is the all-inclusive unity of all that is, the halo of whose spiritual person appears as Brahman or the Indeterminate Absolute of the non-dualist Vedanta. The self is one among the innumerable infinitesimal monads into which Lord Krishna, as it were, splits himself through his power of self-fragmentation of *jiva shakti*, otherwise called *tatastha shakti*, that stands on the borderline between His power of illumination and intelligence (*chit shakti*) and His power of materialization and insentience (*Māyā Shakti*). The manifold powers that Lord Krishna exercises are but different forms of his essential power (*svarupa shakti*); the relation between his essence (*svarupa*) and his powers is one of unthinkable difference-in-non-difference. Although the essence (*svarupa*) of Lord Krishna is inherently spirit, it can appear as the insentient material world, and in spite of His being one infinite spiritual reality in essence, His *svarupa shakti* (essential power) can split itself into innumerable limited finite selves or spirits".

"While His essential power or the power of illumination (*chit shakti*) reveals the true nature of Lord Krishna, his power of materialization (*māyā shakti*) reveals Him as the insentient inanimate material world. These two powers are thus opposed to each other as the original and its distorted shadow. Standing between these two powers, the *jiva shakti* of the Lord, which shares His being, consciousness, and joy in a limited form, reveals itself in a dual capacity as spirit and as non-spirit. In

³. Mahanambrata Brahmachari, *Vaishnava Vedanta*, (The Philosophy of Shri Jiva Goswami), S.M.G., W.T., Calcutta 59, 2nd ed. 1994, p. 292.

relation to the *māyā shakti*, the individuals who are but manifestations of the *jīva shakti* are liable to be led astray by *māyā shakti* allurements, yet at the same time, sharing the Lord's assent, they can be released from its trap"⁴.

While Ramanuja and Madhava were more deeply moved by the grandeur and majesty of God, Nimbarka (1056-1165 A.D.) was more impressed by God's grace and sweetness. Ballava considered devotion (*bhakti*) to be superior to action (*karma*) and *jnāna* (knowledge) as a way of approaching God. Chaitanya went a step further and asserted that *sādhana bhakti*, *bhāva bhakti*, and *prema bhakti* are the three successive stages of *uttama bhakti* and that of the five kinds of *prema-bhakti*, viz., *shānta* or *sādhana bhakti* (peaceful love/devotional service), *dāsya* (love of a servant for his master), *sakhya* (love of a friend), *vātsalya* (filial attitude) and *mādhurya* (woman for her lover). *Mādhurya bhakti* is the highest and reciting the name of Hari (God) is the easiest way of getting *uttama bhakti* in the *Kali Yuga* (the present dark age).

4. Sudhindra C. Chakraborti, 'Bengal Vaishnavism', in *Hindu Spirituality* (Post classical and Modern), ed by K.R. Sundararajan & Bithika Mukherji, S.C.M. Press Ltd. London, pp. 47-48.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

—Sri Hari Ram Joshi

The Ashram at Kishenpur Dehradun had expanded considerably during the last few years. Sri S.K. Ghosh, Assistant Income Tax Commissioner, Bengal, a very old devotee of Mataji, purchased eleven bighas of land on Rajpur Road, less than half a mile above the Kishenpur Ashram. It is now a garden full of fruit trees and flowering shrubs and has been named "Kalyānvan" by Mataji. A small shrine for Śiva was consecrated there together with the temples of the main Ashram in 1959 and a temple for Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman in 1964. Six cottages have also been built in Kalyānvan. Sri Haribabaji Maharaj and his party used to stay there almost every summer for about two months.

Sri Haribabaji was not an ordinary *sādhu*. He was a saint of a very high order. He was born in Hoshiarpur on *Phālgun Holi Pūrṇamāsi*, the birthday of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Haribabaji was a great devotee of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and with a group of disciples, used to perform *Kīrtan* regularly three times a day with intense fervour and concentration. About forty years ago, he, without any government help, got a large dam about eighteen miles long constructed in the district of Badaun, to protect the villages of that area from the ravages of the recurring devastating floods. Sri Haribabaji himself would recite *Rāma Nāma* together with the villagers while he and everyone else carried baskets full of earth on their heads for building the dam. This extensive dam was thus constructed by *shrama dāna* (offering of labour) through the whole-hearted efforts of this extraordinary saint. Sri Haribabaji had thousands of disciples both in the U.P. and Punjab. he rarely looked at the face of any woman. During the last twenty-five years of his life*, he spent much time in Mataji's company, mostly in Vrindaban and Dehradun. Mataji often used to adjust Her programme to suit his convenience. His devotion and veneration for Mataji were quite outstanding. Although older than Mataji, he never hesitated to pay respectful homage to Her on every occasion. In December 1955, Haribabaji was dangerously ill and was operated in Dr. Sen's Nursing Home at New Delhi on the advice of Mataji. One day, when his condition was precarious, Mataji came to the Nursing Home. At the door of Sri Haribaba's room his

*. Sri Haribabaji took Mahasamadhi in January 1970 in Varanasi Ashram in Mataji's presence.

Gurudeva appeared before Her and requested Her to save his life. Mataji then entered Sri Haribabaji's room. By Mataji's grace he passed the crisis.

Sri Triveni Puriji Maharaj of Khanna (Punjab), another remarkable sage, had the privilege of Mataji's visit on two occasions. He was intimately known to Haribabaji. Sri Krishnananda Avadhutaji was an ardent devotee of his. Triveni Puriji was a great Vedantist. He once told that all those who would come in contact with Mataji were very fortunate as it was not easy to get an opportunity to meet such a Divine Personality.

At Jullunder (Punjab), there was a great devotee and disciple of Mataji, Sardar Sadhu Singh, a retired teacher. He had four sons whom Mataji named Rama, Lakshman, Bharat and Satrughna. One of them died a few years after meeting Mataji. The eldest son, Rama, a bachelor has retired as teacher, and is now in-charge of a Girl's college established by him in Mataji's name. The second son Lakshman is known as 'Sant Lakshmanji' and has an Ashram at Chandigarh. Before settling there he stayed much in the company of Mataji. In his meditation he sometimes would remain in *bhāva samadhi* for hours together in the presence of Mataji. The third son of Sardar Sadhu Singh is a practising doctor in Jullunder.

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In the year 1943 Mataji visited Lucknow twice on Her way to Varanasi. On the first occasion She stayed in A.P.Sen Road in a newly built bungalow near the Charbagh station, and on the second occasion in a dharamsālā on the bank of the Gomati near the Iron bridge of Daliganj. From there She went to Sitapur where I was then posted. She put up in a newly built room in the compound of Sri Pal Singh, the Secretary of the District Board, in whose bungalow I was living at that time. Many inhabitants of Sitapur became Mataji's devotees on this occasion, specially Sri Prayag Narain Saigal, who is a great philanthropist, yet very unassuming. He maintains "*Sadā Vrata*", a centre for feeding the poor in Naimisharanya Kshetra, about 20 miles from Sitapur.

Naimisharanya, where the sage Vyasa is said to have compiled the eighteen *Purānas* thousands of years ago, is considered one of the most sacred places in India. Recently one of Mataji's devotees from Gujarat, Sri Manubhai Bhimani, has had a *Purāna Mandir* constructed there for the preservation and regular recitation of the original *Purānas*. A cottage has been built there for Mataji and a Satsang Hall also from contributions made by devotees. A temple of *Purāna Purūṣa* has also been consecrated in 1975.

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Dr. Panna Lal, I.C.S., a very senior high official, Adviser to the Governor of U.P., met Mataji for the first time in February 1942. Dr. Panna Lal later on became a great devotee of Mataji and until his death in 1967 tried his level best to pass his old age in the constant remembrance of God. Whenever he came to stay with Mataji, he lived a very simple life and would mostly sleep on the floor. His son as well as his three daughters and their husbands also became greatly attached to Mataji. His eldest son-in-law, Sri Rameshwar Sahai, Chief Conservator of Forests, had settled in Lucknow after retirement, and in his newly-built house had got a room reserved for Mataji's exclusive use. She has stayed there on several occasions for a day or two. His only son had all the makings of a great scientist and was considered a genius. He died suddenly under mysterious circumstances while conducting research in atomic energy in Paris. It is most creditable for Sri Rameshwar Sahai and his wife Leelaji that both of them, by Mataji's grace, could bear the shock of this irreparable loss in such a composed manner.

Dr. Panna Lal was a great devotee of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Once when meeting Mataji in Lucknow in 1943, Dr. Panna Lal became totally engrossed in narrating some story from the life of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. At that moment Mataji in Her *bhāva* told Dr. Panna Lal in a low voice, which I could hear, that he too had been with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, when he had appeared in this world in Nadia. Dr. Panna Lal did not distinctly hear what Mataji had said and so I drew his attention to it. Dr. Panna Lal afterwards requested Mataji to disclose to him his identity. But Mataji only replied that at that moment She had no *kheyāla* to say anything more on the subject. She asked him to see Her early the next morning in Her room when Dr. Panna Lal had a private interview with Her. From what he told me the following day, it appeared that he was greatly satisfied as he had received specific directions for his *sādhana* from Mataji. Dr. Panna Lal got beautiful images of Nityananda and Mahaprabhu sculptured of *ashtadhātu* metal in a temple built at his initiative in Vrindaban Ashram.

While Mataji's birthday was being celebrated in Kanpur in May 1967, Mataji directed Dr. Panna Lal's eldest daughter Leelaji, who had come to Kanpur, to go to Delhi and move her father if convenient from the Nursing Home. Mataji gave her also a garland to be put round Dr. Panna Lal's neck and the great devotee soon breathed his last in the Nursing Home.

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In April 1943, my second son, Hari Mohan, who was then a student of the ninth class, had a severe attack of typhoid. I had planned to go to Dhaka to attend

Mataji's birthday celebrations. It so happened that a week before Mataji's birthday celebrations were to start, his temperature did not go beyond 99° for two days and so I decided to stick to my programme and on the appointed day proceeded to Dacca, where I reached on May 2nd.

The following morning the birthday celebrations commenced in the Ramna Ashram. Bhaiji had often asked me to go with him to Dacca, but unfortunately I could not do so during his life time. Devotees from all parts of India had collected, including Sri Gopal Thakur of Allahabad, who was a great *sādhaka* and whom Mataji liked immensely. Together with him I went to pay my respects to Bhaiji's widow. I tried to persuade Her to go and stay with Mataji for the rest of her life. She welcomed me and Sri Gopal Thakur warmly, but we failed to convince her of the soundness of our advice to live in Mataji's company in order to attain inner peace. Mataji later on related to me how Bhaiji's widow shortly before her death had expressed to Mataji her repentance for having harboured uncharitable ideas about Mataji during the last few years of Bhaiji's life, and she earnestly prayed to Mataji to forgive her for her shortcomings.

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Mataji visited Almora in the middle of April 1944 and stayed at Pataldevi where Her birthday was celebrated in May. Devotees in hundreds assembled from all parts of India to attend Mataji's birthday celebrations. Dr. Panna Lal, Sri Kanti Bhai Munshaw of Ramkrishna Cotton Mills, Ahmedabad, Sri Mukund Madhav Thakore, Principal of the Ahmedabad Law College, Sri Sachi Kanta Ghosh, Assistant Income Tax Commissioner, Bengal, and many others including Pt. Parasuram Dhammi of Dehradun came to Almora on this occasion. They all stayed in tents at Pataldevi as there were no buildings as yet.

The evening before Mataji's *Tithi Pūjā*, Pt. Parasuram was telling us that Baba Neemkaroli Maharaj, who had promised to visit Almora during this function, had not yet turned up. At that very moment Neemkaroli Babaji shouted loudly from the road above that he had come. We were all taken by surprise. Neemkaroli Babaji went back and passed the night in Almora town. The next day he did not arrive at the Ashram at midday as promised, to take his meal prepared by Kanti Bhai Munshaw's wife. The Munshaws felt greatly disappointed and finally reluctantly took their meal late in the evening. No sooner had they finished their dinner, than Babaji appeared at Pataldevi, just as Pt. Govind Prasad Pande was remarking to some devotees that Babaji had not kept his promise. Babaji told Munshaw Bhai that the Gujarati dish specially prepared for him by Srimati Munshaw had really been

quite delicious. Everyone present felt puzzled as Sri Munshaw had said nothing about that particular dish to Babaji or to any of us. He had obviously enjoyed the dish in his subtle body.

On this occasion of Mataji's birthday celebrations, Pt. Parasuram gave me an undertaking that he would bear the estimated cost of building the Pataldevi Ashram, amounting to Rs. 40,000/-. The story of this unassuming devotee is very interesting. It is an example of an ideally selfless person who was born in a very religious family, but not highly educated. He started his career as a motor driver in Dehradun and Saharanpur districts and later owned a fleet of about a dozen motor buses, trucks and station wagons. He became an ardent devotee of Mataji when first meeting Her in 1936, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Kishenpur Ashram. Parasuram Bhai was a very simple and modest person. He never talked to Mataji and always used to sit quietly in front of Her during his visits to the Ashram. He was a great philanthropist. He also got a Śiva temple constructed in the Ashram at Vrindaban to fulfil the special desire of his daughter Mohini, who was living mostly in Mataji's company, having decided not to get married. Parasuram Bhai also spent more than Rs. 15,000/- in constructing a cottage for Mataji in Raipur, at a short distance from the *dharamsālā* attached to the Śiva Mandir where Mataji had stayed in 1932-33 when first coming from Dhaka. This building is now being used by genuine *sādhakas*. Mataji declared that this cottage should be regarded as a memorial for the eldest son of Pt. Parasuram who had died in Dehradun after a very short illness.

In spite of the death of his eldest son, Parasuram Bhai's devotion for Mataji never wavered. His spirit of renunciation was very great. He would not spend any money on his personal comforts and lived on a very simple diet taking only one ordinary meal in the evening. Parasuram Bhai took *Gāyatrī mantra* once again under the direction of Mataji who with Her own hands gave him a new sacred thread and got him initiated at Hardwar just a couple of years before his death.

On one occasion he told me that he only prayed to Mataji in silence that he should be granted to die of heart failure in complete consciousness and in remembrance of Her. It is really noteworthy that while nursing one of his sons who suffered from typhoid, Parasuram Bhai breathed his last due to sudden heart failure within a couple of minutes in the year 1960. By Mataji's grace and on account of Parasuram Bhai's unflinching faith in Her and his spirit of complete self-surrender, he died in peace in full remembrance of Mataji.

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In 1943 a three storied building in Almora town, situated on the main motor-road above the Girl's Intermediate College had been purchased by members of our family for starting the '*Ma Anandamayi Dharamśālā*'. In 1975 this building was disposed of and the proceeds were utilized partly for repairs of the buildings of the Pataldevi Ashram and partly for the construction of an Ashram at Dhaulchina on the 10 acres plot of land given on lease for 30 years by the Forest Department, U.P.

The Durgā Pūjā of 1944 was also performed at the Almora Ashram in Mataji's presence. I was then on leave and stayed with Mataji at Pataldevi. The image of Goddess Durgā was brought from Lucknow. The *pūjā* was a unique success, due largely to the full co-operation of the people of Almora. They had never before witnessed a *pūjā* of this type. Mataji once told Swami Paramananda and Gurupriya Didi that it would be a good idea to instal an *ashtadhātu* image of Ma Durgā at the Pataldevi Ashram.

After the Durgā Pūjā in 1944, Mataji and all of us visited Uttar Vrindaban, sixteen miles from Almora on way to Jageshwar. Mataji was taken in a dandi to both places. She stayed for a night at Uttar Vrindaban, the Ashram of Sri Krishna Prem (formerly Prof. Nixon of Lucknow University) and Haridas (formerly Dr. Alexander) who lived there with their Guru Sri Yashoda Ma, the wife of the late J.N. Chakravarti, I.E.S., Ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Lucknow University, and her daughter, Moti Rani. A very fine temple of Lord Krishna had been built at Uttar Vrindaban. The *ārati* performed by Sri Krishna Prem was quite unique, lasting not less than an hour. The hymns recited by Sri Krishna Prem and Haridas, in both Sanskrit and Bengali, were very elevating.

A couple of years or so after Mataji's visit, Yashoda Ma died at her Ashram and several years later her daughter Moti Rani also passed away. Sri Krishna Prem was a very exalted soul. His devotion to Lord Krishna was exceptional in every respect and he was also a great scholar of the Gita. He was in close contact with Mataji. Sri Haridas had been Principal of the Medical College, Lucknow, and after his retirement from service he spent the rest of his life at Uttar Vrindaban, rendering all possible medical aid to the poor people of that area. Both of them were ideal devotees and had embraced *sannyāsa*. They are no more; but a couple of *sannyāsis* also hailing from foreign countries are still performing *sāadhanā* and *Pujā* at Uttar Vrindaban.

After Uttar Vrindaban, Mataji visited Jageshwar where She also spent a night. Mataji very much liked the quite atmosphere of Jageshwar Mahadeva, a temple located on a river bank in a picturesque dense deodar forest.

MA! YOU ARE HERE

—Mohua Das

The day has grown old
With the dusk fading into night
In its completeness.

I look up and the sky is
An eternal expanse of darkness,
Though bejeweled with the twinkling stars
And a shimmering crescent moon.
I get a faint feeling deep within,
Ma! You are here!

A chorus of devotion fills the air from a distance;
Radhe Krishna Radhe Krishna, Krishna Krishna Radhe Radhe,
Radhe Shyam Radhe Shyam, Shyam Shyam Radhe Radhe,
Effusing a spiritual joy to the silent night.

A streamer stutters past in the river down yonder.
Again I find time growing silent into the night.
The feeling deep within still lingers

I close my eyes and
Ma! You are here!

You are here, engulfing the mysterious darkness all around
You are here in the myriad dark shapes, in spite of the darkness,
You are, embodying the darkness
The Queen of night.

You are here!

The chorus of devotion comes alive
With spiritual ecstasy through the trance.

THOSE MEMORABLE DAYS WITH MOTHER

—Shraddha Davenport

Early in the morning of December twelfth, 1976 we got word that we would have seats in Mother's train for the daytime leg of the journey from Ranchi to Muri. That was a problem because there was really no place to keep our large amount of luggage in second-class. The travel agent told us that when our train arrived at Muri it would connect with another train continuing on to Kanpur. Our chances of getting a sleeping compartment from Muri were very good, he said.

Someone suggested that we go by car to Gaya and try for train accommodation from there. We felt that we should stay in Mother's train and do the best we could with whatever we were given. So we took our seats for the three-hour ride to Muri. A very nice family had this compartment for sleeping, but, during the daytime the upper bunks were fastened to the walls and four people could sit on each side.

As we sat on one side along with Shuddhananda, we were delighted when Nirvananandaji appeared at our door. He had been in a compartment with others of Mother's group and told us that it was very crowded. We extended the invitation to join us and were delighted when he accepted. What a wonderful opportunity for *satsang*.

I asked him, "How can I get more spiritual *jnāna*?" He explained that to become mentally one-pointed would do this. That we must be able to sit in one position without moving for about three hours. I should start by sitting for fifteen minutes and increase by one minute each day until reaching three hours. The mind should be centered on Mother, gradually going from her full form to her face and smile, to Her eyes, then one eye, going into the pupil and....

He said that I should always use the same *asana* and practice at the same time everyday. I asked how japa beads were purified. He told that this was done using a mixture of five things from the cow (*panchagavya*) along with certain mantras to be said over them. It would not be possible for us to do this and he said that we should just use Ganga *jal*.

When Mother travelled by train always wondered if there was anything special done to prepare Her compartment before She entered. It was well known that She did not step inside a householder's residence, so I asked how She could stay in a train compartment where all manners of people had stayed? Nirvananandaji told us that nothing special was done or needed. Of course they cleaned it of dirt as much as possible; but it was not the same as a dwelling. It seemed to have something to do with the fact that it was a moving vehicle.

Then he told this story which Mother had related during *Samyam Saptaha*.

In a peaceful pond a most beautiful lotus had grown. A fish which also lived in that pond had lived for many years around the feet of the lovely blossom. One day, a bee came for the first time to the lotus and asked the fish if the lotus had any honey. The fish felt that it was its lotus but knew nothing of any honey. The bee dove into the lotus and filled itself with honey and then flew away. That fish never knew the nature of the lotus.

I told Nirvananandaji that I believed there were a few smart bees who stayed around Mother as well as many fish.

He then stressed the dangers of doing *mantras* for particular purpose (not *japa*), as not doing them exactly right could cause all kinds of illness and even madness. He said only *bhakti* and *japa* are safe, and of course what Mother says for us to do.

We arrived in Muri and Satya went to see if we could get a sleeping compartment. It took one and a half hour to connect the two trains and I stood on the platform with Nirvananandaji until Satya returned. Satya and Shuddhananda were smiling as they told us that we not only got sleeping accommodations, but that three of us had been given a whole compartment to ourselves. Nirvanananda was amazed to hear the news. I said, "It was all Mother's Grace." He added that it was because we had *satsang* all the way and that Mother often referred to the effect of *satsang* on our lives. We thanked him for the wonderful things he had shared with us and for the boon of his company.

In my bunk that night I smiled at the wonder of India. I loved travelling on her trains and decided to record the sound as we glided and clicked over the silver rails, the wonderful lonely whistle that pierced the quiet night, and the squeal of brakes amid the clamor when arriving at one of the many stations along the way. Secure as we moved through the night, Mother's train rocked me to sleep.

Next morning our breakfast of tea and toast was finished, sleeping beds were rolled up, and all belongings put in order, when the train pulled into Kanpur Station. Porters helped move our things to the entrance where we were delighted to find our friend Mr. Ranjit Basu. He had come to meet Mother. We all watched as Mother was seated in Her car and then driven away.

As we prepared to hire a taxi, a gentleman approached us saying that he had brought transport for Mother's devotees to the J.K. Temple (the magnificent white marble Radha-Krishna temple) and the adjoining ashram which Singhania had built for Mother's use. Our luggage was stored in his jeep and once again we felt the warm embrace of Kanpur as we rode through the familiar streets and into the ashram grounds. There we met Bhaskaranandaji and asked where we should go. We were delighted to find that preparations had been made for us to stay in the side compound. The younger Mr. Singhania himself escorted us to our quarters to see that every thing was in order. After settling in we were called to partake of a delicious meal.

That evening Mother came into the satsang hall about 5:00 p.m. Soon afterward Swami Akhandanandaji also joined Her. Mother was laughing and very playful. They talked about for two hours as we basked in the joy of Her nearness.

The next morning at 10:00 am. we entered the satsang hall just behind Swami Akhandanandaji's house. A few minutes later we were all taken by surprise when Mother came running quickly into the room, trying to reach Her seat before Swamiji stood up to greet Her. When he saw Her and tried to get up from his seat, She ran laughing and saying, "Baba, Baba," trying to keep him from standing. We were all laughing at Her play. Darshan was light and sweet as Mother and Swamiji enthralled everyone with their humor for about an hour.

That evening we hurried back, hungry for those intimate darshans. One lady had brought a few pieces of fruit and offered them to Mother. Mother gave two pieces back to her. After she pronounced, the lady moved near me and stood between Mother and me for a couple of seconds, looking for a place to sit. Behind her, Mother was holding an orange. Trying to get it to me, She would lean to one side and then the other. I also was leaning trying to receive the orange from Mother. Then the lady moved away and Mother threw the orange right into my hands She then sent two guavas through the air to two men and that was not near the front.

Later I found that She had indeed sent a guava to Satya by Dasu. She sat with us for an hour before going to Her room.

After satsang the next morning Mother went to the little pandal on the lawn. We were both taking pictures when Dasu motioned for me to come up in front to photograph Mother. I took fourteen lovely Polaroid photos and Satya got to take wonderful movies as Mother sat before the colorful background of the pandal.

Later, after our lunch was served, Mrs. Singhania came to check on us. She was so charming and had a very good sense of humor. She watched as we all sighed with pleasure over the *gulab jamuns* which were brought for desert. This round brown sweet is served soaked in a thick syrup. Mrs. Singhania told the man who was attending us to bring another serving for each of us. As I expressed my delight, our hostess with an amused twinkle in her eye bade that I be given yet another. We all laughed at her affectionate play.

That evening, as we sat for one hour with Mother, our young friend Babu came seeking solace at Her feet. His father had passed from this earth earlier in the year and the fun-loving boy, we knew, was now a solemn young man. After darshan he came to our room for a brief visit. We did not know that it would be the last time we would see him.

For the next morning's satsang I dressed Gopalji in a beaded silver dress with a peacock design. Before Mother came into the hall I placed Gopal next to and facing Mother's asana. Mother and Swamiji arrived together. After taking their seats, they talked about Gopal. I heard Mother say "Shraddha's Gopal." Then She turned Him around so that He was facing Swamiji.

When satsang ended, Mother took Her lunch. Then She came into the corridor where we were waiting to present a few things to Her. After offering flower garlands and some gifts sent by devotees in America, we presented a small white blanket for her use. We had letters to be read to Mother, but they would have to wait until we could get a longer time with Her.

During the evening darshan Mr. Basu made mental note of a story which Swami Akhandanandaji had told us and related it to us after we had left the hall and sat for our dinner. Swamiji had told of a couple who had gone on an ocean cruise. During the voyage a big storm arose and the ship was being tossed and pounded by the violent wind and waves. Every one on board was worried as how to save the

ship. The husband, however, sat casually at a desk doing some writing. His wife came and asked, "How is it that every one is worried about the fate of the ship but you sit there calmly writing ? Are you not afraid?" The husband took a gun from his side and pointing it at his wife, said, "Now-are you afraid?" Smiling, she replied, "Oh no, I am not afraid. I love you so much and you love me so much, how could I be afraid of my husband?" He put the gun away and said sweetly to his wife, "you see, I have a husband too !" Without Mr. Basu's kindness we would have missed many such divine stories in those days.

After a lovely hour with Mother the next morning, Satya and I strolled over to the majestic Radha-Krishna temple. We admired the mosaics at the entrance, the lotus pond at the side, and had walked to the rear of the temple where a graceful fountain was playing in the centre of a large pool. On the ramp leading up to the open verandah which encircled the temple we suddenly saw Mother's car. She had made an impromptu visit to the mandir accompanied by Swami Paramananda, Bhaskarananda, Nirvanananda, and Udas. Quietly we waited near Her car and pronounced as She was escorted from the temple.

Swami Paramanandaji stepped to where I stood and from beneath his gerua shawl drew a guava and banana prasad from the temple—which he lovingly placed in my hand. He chuckled softly at my surprise in receiving his blessing.

Upon returning to the ashram, we were further blessed to actually receive a little of Mother's *bhoga* (food from her plate). I was wonder-struck by so much grace.

Swami Akhandanandaji spoke in his usual sweet way that evening. Mother sat with Her chin slightly raised and Her eyes closed, in a beautiful mood. I tried to absorb the joy of Her nearness, knowing that She is that *prāna* (life) by which I exist, and also knowing that I can only see that what She allows me to see.

During our evening meal Mr. Basu told us this story which Swami Akhandanandaji had related during satsang :

"There was a great King who had a very wise Prime Minister in his service. To every thing that the King said, the Prime Minister would say, "Very good". When the King chose any course of action, the Prime Minister would invariably say, 'Very good. "One day the King was inspecting his favorite sword and accidentally cut his thumb quite badly. He said, "Oh, See, what I have done.' The Prime Minister said, 'Very good.' This made the King furious. He called for his guards and had

the Prime Minister thrown in prison. After some time, the King had forgotten about the Prime Minister and had gone hunting in the forest. Dacoits (robbers) came upon him there and took him captive. They thought that he would make a splendid sacrifice to Goddess Kali. He was made to bathe and was dressed in the finest silk. When certain rites were concluded, they prepared to behead the King. Suddenly, one of the culprits noticed his damaged and scarred thumb. 'Wait', he said, "he is not perfect and cannot be offered as a sacrifice to the goddess". As he was released by the dacoits, the King looked at his thumb and remembered the Prime Minister's words, 'Very good.' He thought, Oh! how I have misjudged that poor man. He was very wise indeed. It was a very good thing that I cut my thumb that way, otherwise, I would have been killed today and he must have seen this. So the King sent for the Prime Minister and had him restored to his former position. The King was expressing his deep regret at having imprisoned the man for such a long time. The Prime Minister said, 'Oh no! It was very good'. The King was astounded and asked, 'How can you say that being in prison is very good?' The man replied, 'Well, If you had not caused me to be imprisoned, I would have been with you on that hunting trip. And when the dacoits noticed your injured thumb, they would have looked for me to their sacrifice So, it was very good'. We all laughed at this great story, so humorous and so full of meaning.

By Mother's grace Basuji helped us to share in a part of Her *lila* that otherwise would have been completely lost to us. He noted that it was like Mother always said; "*Ja Hoye jaye*" — all happens according to God's will.

The next morning we entered the ashram and found Mother seated in the corridor on a big arm chair. Her little stockinged feet did not reach the floor, Bhaskaranandaji was reading a letter to her and She appeared very playful. She turned Her little toes up and swung Her feet like a small child.

In the evening after satsang we came with Her to that same chair. Her tiny feet were then bare as they dangled above the floor. We were to have a brief private. Sitting on a mat before Her, we asked questions about our sadhana which Mother answered. Then I asked her to bless a few people whose photographs I had brought for that purpose. She held and looked at each one.

As we sat in the hall for the next morning darshan, Mother quietly slipped into the room and hid against the wall, waiting to surprise Swami Akhandanandaji. She

held her finger before her pursed lips, signaling all of us not to give her game away. It was difficult, but Swamiji appeared to be taken unaware and we all laughed at their charming play.

Our time in Kanpur was passing much too fast.

Just outside the ashram gate was a flower and garland vendor. We often purchased flowers there for Mother and for the altar we had in our room. The girl who made the garlands and bouquets was very young. She looked to be about fourteen years old and most days her infant son was with her. He was very quiet and sickly. I took the polaroid picture of the girl with her baby and wished to give it to her as I thought she might never get the chance to have her baby's photo otherwise.

There was a gentleman standing nearby. He introduced himself as Dr. Raj P. Bhasin. He had come for Mother's darshan. We walked with him to the ashram. Mother had just come from taking her food and stood in the courtyard. I took Dr. Raj's photo as he stood beside Mother. After a little time with us She went inside to her room.

This very kind-hearted doctor took time from his busy schedule to see that we got train tickets to Delhi for the next day, put his car and driver at our disposal for shopping, had a lovely meal prepared for us in his home, returned us to the ashram, and arranged for his car to take us to the train station in the morning. He said that he would accompany us to the station if he was able to leave his clinic.

After packing our things that evening we went to see Mother. She was sitting in the corridor as devotees gathered near her chair. Mr. Basu was there and I asked him if he would translate for us. He agreed and we asked for Mother's permission and blessings to go to Delhi on December twenty first (the next day) and then to Hardwar on the twenty-second. Basuji asked so very nicely and Mother responded with many sweet smiles and loving looks. I could not foresee that this was to be our last meeting with our gracious brother Basuji.

On December twenty-first we awoke at 7:15 a.m. After packing our beddings we were ready to leave. We went to pay our respects to the Singhanian family, but they had not yet come to the ashram. Swami Paramanandaji was in the courtyard. We told him that we were leaving and asked for his blessing.

Returning to our room, I wrote a thank-you note to Mr. and Mrs. Singhania. Satya took my note and a small bouquet from the flower girl to the ashram. He left them with Dasu to be given to the Singhania's. We moved our luggage outside to await Dr. Raj's car.

As we stood there we were surprised to see Swami Paramanandaji walking toward our compound. We went to greet him. He asked when we would arrive in Hardwar. We told him the night of the twenty-second. He said Mother would arrive at 6:00 a.m. on the morning of the twenty-third. We said that we would meet Her train. As he started to leave, he took a package from under his shawl and handed it to me saying, "Fruit, for your train trip" I could feel tears sting my eyes to think this great soul would love us so fondly. We stood together watching as he walked away down the dirt road and turned the corner toward the ashram.

Within moments, Swami Akhandanandaji came from around that same corner. He was enroute to his cottage. We rushed to meet him. Pronaming and touching his feet, we asked for his blessing. I told him of our travel program. Swamiji smiled and blessed us. We were told to wait as he went into his quarters. Soon his brahmachari came out with an apple and guava for each of us from Swamiji.

Returning to where our luggage was situated, we saw the little flower girl and another woman (perhaps her mother) walking toward us. With sweet shy smile she gave us each a small bouquet as a fare-well gift.

When Dr. Raj's car arrived we were sorry to learn that he was unable to join us. Our luggage was loaded and we took our seats. As the car slowly moved down the dirt road, people were standing on either side telling us good-bye.

It was as if Kanpur knew that we would never return to her again.

OM KRIM

—Antonio Eduardo Dagnino

Death is the central fact of life,
nothing resists time,
empires, technologies, world systems,
all bound to decay.

Duality is the cause of time,
and time the cause of death,
and death the central cause of fear.

But love melts time in ecstasy,
deep deep love,
love,
all embracing love,
contains life as well as death,
time as well as the supramental stillness of the void.

Being and not being are of time,
but love prevades all,
love apparently contradictory poles
in a living, ever young radiation.
Love unites the seen and the unseen...
In compassion
the fearsome hells and the indescribable heavens
are contained,
and are found to spring from the same source.

Mother,
You dance ecstatic
within the One's bottomless body.
You dance ecstatically
in the depth of infinite space.
You dance ecstatically
within and beyond time,
because you are the jaws of death
and the death of death.
You dance ecstatically
as the central light of consciousness,
as the common light in all souls.

Anandamayi,
pure, unalloyed joy enjoying itself,
all enlightening divine energy
healing, reviving, maturing,
dispelling ignorance,
Killing separateness,
Killing what obstructs your beauty,
your hidden purpose,
the inundation of your grace.....
Anandamayi, nearer than our blood
and laughing beyond the Beyond...

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"The many creeds and sects serve the purpose that He may bestow Himself on Himself along various channels—each has its own beauty — and that He may be discovered as immanent, revealing, Himself in countless ways, in all shapes, and in the formless. The One is present in each sect."

— Sri Ma

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