

# 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

Whatever anyone does belongs to the realm of death of ceaseless change. In the shape of death art Thou, and in the form of desire; Thou art becoming and Thou art being, differentiation as well as identity—for Thou art infinite without end. Thou it is who roamest in the disguise of nature.

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*Japa*, meditation and all other spiritual exercises, have for purpose your Awakening. On this pilgrimage one must never slacken : effort is what counts. One should try ever to remain engrossed in this endeavour—it must be woven into one's very being, one has to be fused with one's Self.

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Whatever ties, bonds or restraints man imposes upon himself, should have for aim the Supreme Goal of life. With untrammelled energy one must forge ahead towards the discovery of one's own Self.

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Whether one takes the path of devotion, where the "I" is lost in the 'Thou', or the path of Self-enquiry, in search of the true 'I' - it is He alone who is found in the 'Thou' as well as in the 'I'.

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Why should one's gaze be fixed, while treading the path ? The gaze is He and the why is also He. Whatever is revealed or hidden anywhere, in any way, is 'Thou', is 'I'. You will be able to grasp this fully only when you find everything within yourself; in other words, in the state where there is nothing but the Self.

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The moment of one's birth conditions the experience of life; but the Supreme Moment that is revealed in the course of *sādhanā* leads to the completion of action, and therefore of one's *Karma*.

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*Vairāgya* can consume and *bhāva*, *bhakti* can melt what is impermanent in human nature. But the moment in which burning and melting are impossible — that Moment is eternal. To try and seize that Moment is all you have to do. In reality that is THAT — everything perceived is THAT — how can *THAT* be apart from anything ?

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The moment that you experience is distorted, whereas the Supreme Moment contains being, becoming— everything. Yet nothing is there, although everything is there.

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Moment means time, but not what you call time. Time (*samaya*), means *svamaya* (permeated by self), the state where everything is seen as the Self alone, where nothing whatsoever can exist beside the self.

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In reality there is nothing but the One Moment all along. Just as one single tree contains numberless trees, innumerable leaves, infinite movement (*gati*) and untold static states (*sthiti*), so does one moment contain an infinite number of moments, and within all these countless moments lies the One Single Moment.

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This body always says, each one of you must seize the time, the moment that will reveal to you the eternal relationship by which you are united to the Infinite; this is the revelation of Supreme Union (*Mahāyoga*). Supreme Union signifies that the whole universe is within you, and you are in it.



## IN ASSOCIATION WITH MA ANANDAMAYEE

[Translated from Bengali]

— Sri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Although I had heard from various people about what had transpired in connection with *diksha* (initiation) on the occasion of the last *Gurupurnima* day, I was most keen to learn of this first hand from Sri Ma's own mouth. Consequently when the reading of the scriptures ended one morning I asked Her directly "Ma, I have not yet had the chance of hearing from your own lips about the events that took place during the recent *Gurupurnima*.

Ma (laughing) : Oh, you refer to all that ? It is nothing very special. One night, two or three days prior to *Gurupurnima*, I noticed that some persons had arrived and were standing behind me. I was conversing with others in front of me, but I was well aware of these new arrivals. One of them was this body's (Ma's) elder paternal cousin. He had died long ago. He used to be a doctor and was very serious-minded. When he married for the second time, this body must have been about eleven or twelve years old. I did not even know him very well. That night he approached this body, saying : "Please, give me something", that is, he meant : "Give me initiation by *mantra*". I told him : "This body does not initiate any body." In reply, he pointed to the people present before me and said : "If any of these persons who are here with you will write a mantra on a bel leaf and will let you touch it, this will be quite sufficient for the purpose." Thus he himself explained of his own accord how exactly this could be accomplished. This body at once uttered the words, "Very well !" Thenceforth this body has been carrying out just what has been described above.

"Someone writes the name of Hari on tulsi leaves then strings a garland out of these leaves to present to this body; this garland is usually given away to someone else. Abani Baba\* also often writes seed mantras on bel leaves and puts them on this body's head or hands; these leaves are then given away by this body to certain people.

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\*. Sri Abani Mohan Sharma, a very old devotee of Ma hailing from Chittagong who stayed in Varanasi ashram for a long period.

"However that may be, I explained everything to Didi and said: "I seem to have committed myself. So you must remember to bring this to my *kheyāla* on *Gurupurnima* day. Also do something else. Write seed mantras of Siva and Sakti with red sandalwood paste on bel leaves and Visnu mantra with white sandalwood paste on tulsi leaves.

"Although I did not specify which particular mantras to write, Didi had previously heard several seed mantras from me so she decided which mantras to write on bel leaves."

"That same day I saw that some bel leaves had been carefully set aside in one place and some tulsi leaves elsewhere; further-more the *kumaris* of the Ashram were preparing sandal paste. Also Didi was writing with red sandalwood paste on bel leaves. Then she got hold of some tulsi leaves, cleaned them carefully but could not make up her mind what to write on them, so she left them as they were and went away. But all this I perceived on a subtle plane, not in the physical.

"On the night before *Gurupurnima* I was lying in bed. I was merely turning from one side to the other; I had no inclination to sleep for the past few nights. My cot had been placed out in the courtyard. I lay there for some time, then went upstairs to lie down on the first floor. Shortly after, I heard the girls sing kirtan, so I understood that it must be early morning.

"It was Didi's desire to dress this body up and do puja on *Gurupurnima* day. But in the morning when I came downstairs, I told her this was not to be. I also entered the newly built Viraja Mandir and told Bishu the same thing and then went upstairs to lie down. When Didi realized her aspiration had no chance of being fulfilled, she arranged for the worshipping of my feet of which prints had been taken some time ago, and then went to the kitchen to cook. Because on that day a considerable number of people had been invited to partake of *prasad*. She thus completely forgot what I had requested her to remind me of (concerning the *diksha* of certain beings).

"Meanwhile I was lying on my bed in the morning, when I noticed that my paternal cousin had arrived. This time his wife was also with him. As soon as I saw them I sent Udas to fetch Didi. The amazing part of the story is that no sooner had I had this *kheyala* then Didi remembered my previous instruction and ran to contact me even before Udas could reach her. Thereafter I went with her to the new mandir.

"Didi quickly wrote with red sandalwood paste a Siva seed mantra and a Sakti seed mantra on two bel leaves. When she had done this, she asked: "What shall I now do with these ?" I also echoed: "Yes, what shall we do with them ?" Didi

remarked : "It will be better to place these leaves on the waters of Ganga." I said : "Yes, this is all right."

Thereafter Didi started cleaning tulsi leaves, but her mind became restless. She was worried that some of the food she had put on the fire for cooking might get charred. Just then someone came to call Didi. She placed the tulsi leaf into Bishu's hands and went away. On receiving the leaf, Bishu asked me what seed mantra he should write on it. I told him : "You worship Narayana, so you may write some such seed mantra on the leaf." He complied and then placed the leaf in my hands. I returned it to him.

"This same Bishu had received three seed mantras from this body six years ago in a dream. He remembered two of the mantras but the third he had entirely forgotten. He used to speak of this to this body from time to time, but as I had no *kheyāla* to reply, I had not explained anything further to him. Once, when he raised the subject again at Vindhyaachal, this body instructed him to continue his japa of the two seed mantras he remembered. Up to date this was what he had been doing. Today when I returned the tulasi leaf to him, he intuitively knew the mantra written on the leaf was identical with the third seed mantra he had dreamt of. He asked me for verification. I confirmed this. His face lit up with inner joy.

"There now remained the two seed mantras written on the two bel leaves. So far this body had no *kheyāla* who should be the recipients of these. But when Bishu had been given the tulsi leaf then this body had the *kheyāla* that Mana baba (Sri Manmohan Ghosh) who had been the architect of the new temple (Viraja Mandir) should be presented with a bel leaf. So he was called and one of the bel leaves was handed over to him. There now remained one more bel leaf. Thereupon emerged another *kheyāla*, namely if any uninitiated person should now approach this temple, it would be allotted to him or her. This may seem to you like a lottery ! (Laughter). At that moment I noticed that Gopal Baba's (Dr. Gopal Das Gupta) wife was standing just outside near a window. I called out to her : "Wouldn't you like to come inside ?" She at once entered the temple and did *pranama* to me. As she was going back, I asked Bishu : "Shall I give the bel leaf to her ?" Bishu replied : "Very well, why don't you ?" Three times I asked him the same question and each time he gave the same reply. So the bel leaf was presented to Gopal Baba's wife. This is what transpired on *Gurupurnima* day."

I : Two days before *Gurupurnima* when your paternal cousin came to you in his subtle body, you had remarked that some other persons in their subtle bodies accompanied him.

Ma : So it was.



I : Were they all deceased ?

Ma : They were not.

I : Then who were they ?

Ma : Why, cannot those that are alive also come in their subtle bodies ?

I : Of course they can. Were they also supplicants for diksha ?

Ma : They were.

I : Were those that later received bel leaves from you in the physical among those that appeared to you then in their subtle bodies ?

Ma : Why else should they obtain the leaves ?

I : Can I then look upon this incident as initiation ?

Ma : Whatever you wish to believe.

I : But what would you say ?

Ma : I can only repeat : "Whatever you choose to believe."

I : Suppose I do consider this as a *diksha*, then from whom did they receive initiation ?

Ma : (laughing) From God.

I : Suppose I maintain they received their diksha from you ? Then ?

Ma : I have just declared : "They received it from God."

Swami Shankaranandaji : This amounts to the same thing !

I : Well, you had said to your paternal cousin : "This body does not initiate any body." Suppose I consider this as your limitation, in other words : *Diksha* is the one thing you cannot perform.

Ma : (Laughing) Even if you hold on to this so-called limitation, you will not be able to keep it up.

I : Why not ? If a certain rule is never broken, surely this is but a form of limitation !

Ma : This body does not give diksha in the manner in which it is usually done amongst you. Nevertheless, certain *mantras* have indeed emanated from these lips and others have accepted them. Therefore in one way or another the *mantra* has indeed been bestowed. Besides, I have often remarked that some persons repeat their *mantras* incorrectly. A few of them approach this body from time to time, saying : "Ma, it does not seem that the way I am performing my japa is correct. Should I then carry out my japa in such and such a manner ?" They thus themselves express the desire to change their way of doing japa which corresponds to this body's *kheyāla*.

I : Ma, you say, you do not give initiation. This assertion has no meaning. For instance, Bholanath and Bhaiji have obtained their *mantras* from your own lips.

Moreover you yourself assert that when you present devotees with flowers, garlands and so on, this amounts to transference of power. Communication of power is called *diksha*. One way to describe *diksha* is transference of power.

Ma : (Laughing) Why only flowers and garlands ? Even when sweets or other things are given to people to eat a similar effect can be obtained.

Narayana Swami : Did your paternal cousin obtain what he asked for ?

Ma : Yes, he did.

I : Did he receive it in the new temple ?

Ma : Yes, not only he; his wife, his younger brother; all of them were recipients.



**"The Supreme *Atman*, the highest *Purusha*, which is Brahman, is nothing but pure consciousness; that one glorious Being is perceived through all the separate phenomena as things seen .....** "

**—Kapil Gita**

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**"You are outside and inside. You are blissful at all times and in all places. Why do you run deluded here and there like a ghost ?"**

**—Avadhuta Gita**

## THE CALL OF KHEORA

—'Shobha'

**Kheora\* calls me back !!**

There in Kheora something has been left unsaid-unheard.

O'Divine Mystic Beauty, the heavenly abode of your *Abhirbhava* beckons me to say it, hear it.

My heart aches and pines to sit one more time on the steps of Your Holy Shrine.

Let the breeze of Your heavenly fragrance blow my mind and heart away to Your celestial domain.

Let me be draped in joy with the treaded soil of Your Lotus Feet.

The narrow path that runs between the lush green fields on the sides; Canopied by the blue azure sky of the month of May.

Hastening to reach your Heavenly Abode that faces the pond that You so often bathed and played.

O' my Beloved Mother Krishna ! Grant me to be your Radha for a day. Play-play that Divine flute of Your's. Laugh, laugh that blissful laughter of Your's.

Let Your music drown the entire surrounding with the nectar of Your Bliss, Joy, Serenity, Your Celestial Form.

O'Immortal One just for once step down from your Heavenly Abode.

Come and play with us in the grounds of Kheora; Your neighbors wait for You !

Restless I am to be in Kheora once again.

Awareness of Your Words keep tapping me:

"Mind is ever restless. It is its nature. It is ever seeking its own treasure—the real object of its love; as long as it fails to achieve it, its restlessness does not calm down."

O' Knower of Knowers aware; Thou are of object that rests within. But my Love says my Beloved Child-Mother awaits for me in Kheora.

Ma, I had sought you in my pain; now in that pain I want to merge within You. O'Mother Divine in your words:

"There are two kinds of pilgrims on life's journey: The one like a tourist, is keen on sight seeing, wandering from place to place, flitting from one experience to another for the fun of it. The other treads the path that is consistent with man's true being and leads to his real home, to self knowledge."

Kheora beckons me, for that is the Real Home !



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\*. Sri Ma's holy birth place, now in Bangladesh.

## SUPREME WOMAN OF BEING

—Chloe Goodchild

### [II]

After several more days in Benares, Roger and I took the train and the bus to Rishikesh, the first town the Ganges passes through on its emergence from the Himalayan foothills onto the plains. We arrived at dusk, amidst more dusty streets and city bedlam. We made our way through the corridors of stall sellers, closing up shop after another day of bartering, scraping a meagre living. In a short while, we managed to get to the other side of the town, where the buzzing and creaking of rickshaws and precariously structured dwellings gave way to trees and quieter, more restful scenery. The rains had been and gone, leaving a freshness in the air. Sprawling trees, undulating rocks and yogins' huts lined the waters' edge of the sacred river Ganges. We made our way downstream to the ashram of Chandra Swami, where we stayed for the following few days.

Chandra Swami's ashram was close to Ma Anandamayi's Maha Samadhi at Haridwar, a 20-minute rickshaw ride away. This small traditional ashram of Chandra Swami's was situated a stone's throw away from the Ganges. Chandra Swami was the archetypal guru, a tall, imposing man in his sixties, whose long silver-grey hair swept away from his noble face and down his back. He was radiant, and his deep-set penetrating eyes and wide-reaching smile bore witness to this. He had not spoken a word for over 20 years. His silence was the presence within which his 15 to 20 devotees lived. His following comprised a large group of French people, who were inspired to meet him after Yvan Amar, a young man from Provence, first discovered him in the jungle. Chandra Swami's silence generated a rare interior force. His body was like a mountain. Like Thich Nhat Hanh, he communicated that living presence which only silence can touch. Every afternoon all his devotees and visitors came and sat or knelt in front of him in silence. This ritual was of the simplest. At a preordained time, usually 3 O'clock in the afternoon, everyone gathered in the main meditation hall on the first floor of the ashram, and awaited Chandra Swami's arrival. After some minutes, he arrived and seated himself in front of the crowd. Chandra Swami embodied a youthful vitality and an ageless compassion, which sang its silent laughter infectiously into the room amidst complete silence. After 20 minutes he rose up. Many of the people bowed before him, as he left the room by a thin door behind him. I wondered how he

managed to get through it. Once he had disappeared, a sigh of satisfaction from the receiving of this deep inner nourishment passed across the room, as everyone slowly departed by a larger door at the opposite end.

The day after we arrived at Chandra Swami's ashram, I found myself in a dialogue with Anandamayi Ma for several hours, appealing to her to give me a stronger insight into our relationship. How was it that her benign influence could galvanize all of my devotion, carrying me through my everyday activities? She had filled an absence in my life, but what did this really mean? On one level, she had responded to an inner psychic wound. On another, she drew me towards a sense of my larger Self. Yet what was all this? Was it just one huge fantasy to keep my mind entertained, about a Being whom I had never met in the flesh and who wasn't even alive anymore? Was I crazy? I had begun to wish that she would actually visit me in the flesh. The 'doubting Thomas' syndrome was successfully gnawing away at me.

One of the central questions that had been knocking on my door ever since that first dream of Neem Karoli Baba and Anandamayi Ma concerned my relationship with my work. How could I, an uninitiated being, work on the theme of the 'inner call' with others, when I had not truly touched the bedrock of my own soul? My life had certainly been blessed with many glimpses of the spirit, and my mystical tendencies had engaged me in endless flirtations with the Presence. Yet I now sought a deeper initiation, a more sustaining and ceaseless way of living and being, arising out of total inner freedom. I still felt myself to be a bundle of inauthenticity, self-consciousness and automaticity. I was in danger of becoming one of those 'spiritual eclectics', who dabble in many possibilities without ever landing anywhere. Somehow I had to discover my own life's myth and way of freedom.

After several days in Chandra Swami's ashram, I began to feel Ma's presence in a new way. Was she taking me deeper into my woundedness? Was there no end to my vulnerability? I had been profoundly restless in the early hours of the morning, and had had difficulty sleeping. On showering, I found myself in tears, and again after the first meditation before breakfast, I found myself weeping helplessly in front of a photographic portrait of Ma. Her eyes were closed. She was in deep samadhi (bliss). I read the accompanying passage through my tears:

Her days were not divided into mornings, evenings and nights

There was only one prolonged period of indescribable bliss

*(Matri Darshan—Ananda Mayi Ma)*

I put the book down and ran out to the Ganges. There I found myself standing aghast, watching a funeral rite taking place at the river's edge. An old woman

sanyasin (renunciate) had died. Her corpse, which for a while had been sitting erect and rigid upon a bench, was lifted and placed in a sack containing rocks and stones. The sack was then sewn up and, amidst chanting and prayers, was placed onto a boat. The boat pulled away from the bank, and floated out into the centre of the river. Two oarsmen rowed it out to the deepest part, where the body was thrown overboard. I discovered later that the bodies of saints, sadhus, sages and young children are not burnt in the normal fashion at one of the funeral ghats, but are disposed of in this simple and very direct way. The sight of the dead body being thrown overboard shocked me and I began to cry uncontrollably. In an instant I heard Ma speaking to me, saying:

Your mother may not display her affection outwardly, yet she is, and always remains, your real mother. Even though you may want to push God, the Mother aside, She will never leave you. Are you not Her offspring? A mother does what is good for her child. She gives to her scion exactly what is needed, not more and not less. Her forgiveness knows no limits, this is why she is called 'mother'... **KEEP IN MIND, SHE IS ALWAYS VERY, VERY NEAR AS THE FORCE THAT GUIDES YOUR LIFE...** with this faith proceed.

Invoke the Great Mother in any way that will make Her respond. When a child absorbed in play weeps, the mother does not come to console him. But if the child cries disconsolately, She will certainly hasten to Her darling's side. At times, even when the child does not cry but leaves his play and stands aside, the mother comes to him. By play is meant the play of life in the world (*samsara*).

You yourself are a barrier to yourself... In order to grasp what I want, you must shake your mind free from pride, from desire for fame and glory, from anger and sorrow, from self-conceit and finally from self-will...

I walked slowly back to my room. Eventually, after my weeping ceased, Ma encouraged me to simply rest awhile, and be gentle with myself. I fell into a deeply restful state of sleep for about three hours, out of which I awoke refreshed and ready to meditate once again. I spoke aloud to her - 'Beloved Ma, the way you reveal yourself to me, is beyond all comprehension! Continue to lead me and to show me your way, beloved Mother. I am in your hands. You fill me with such Joy... who are you ? You are all that is. A thousand thank you's !'

At Chandra Swami's ashram I was told of a Frenchman in his eighties, who had spent most his life with Ma and still lived at Ma Anandamayi's ashram at Haridwar. Vijayananda (Victory-Bliss) was his name. Roger and I visited him early one afternoon. The sun was still warm on our backs as we got down from the rickshaw in front of the gate of the ashram. The male renunciates' quarters were situated next door to the main ashram grounds. Roger went in search of Vijayananda,

as women were not allowed in the men's building. I took off my shoes and wandered around the ashram courtyard. I was greeted by a radiant young Indian girl, who beamed at me from ear to ear, and offered me a garland of dark pink roses to place in the temple at Ma's tomb. I was delighted by this sweet and simple gesture. The ashram was bustling with activity and aliveness. Everything was painted white, the white of spirit, from the floor to the walls and ceilings. The courtyard was glistening bright white in the midday sun. I scorched my feet on the white-hot stone if I stood in one place too long. There was a small bookshop in one corner, which sold books, postcards and a wide range of photographs of Ma, pictured both alone and in the midst of various activities, from festivals to meals and meetings. This was a feast for my eyes, drawing me closer into the spirit of this place of prayer. In between the bookshop and the temple was a sitting area with small trees, flowering shrubs and plants, all meticulously cared for and watered.

On entering the temple, I was stunned to see, arranged along the walls, a series of paintings, following the life and activities of Anandamayi Ma from birth to old age. Some showed her sitting among the sages, sadhus and governmental dignitaries who used to come and receive her counsel and 'darshan'. The paintings presented a detailed account of the life of this remarkable woman, a Christ-like figure, healing the sick, performing miracles and taming wild animals.

After absorbing this, I finally turned round to face the inner sanctum of the temple and the imposing white marble presence of Sri Anandamayi Ma's tomb. My heart stopped. Everything stopped while I caught my breath, and knelt to the ground in awe. Behind the tomb itself was a huge marble statue of Sri Anandamayi Ma, seated in her middle years and adorned with brightly coloured flowers, roses, nasturtiums and chrysanthemums. Incense sticks and lamps surrounded her. Her form communicated something ancient, far older and more authentic for me than the Protestant and Victorian depictions of the Virgin Mary with which I grew up. She embraced both the light and dark aspects of the Godhead, divine purity shot through with the all-pervading absolute wisdom of the ages. One of the guardians of the sanctuary walked towards me to receive my flower garland, which lay in my arms like a sleeping child. Trance-like, I offered it up, a symbolic sacrifice of my devotion and gratitude. Roger entered the temple, and signalled to me that Vijayananda had arrived. I arose and went out to greet him.

Vijayananda was a wizard of a man, with striking features. His high forehead, protruding Roman nose, elfin eyes and angular jawline were framed within a mass of hair and a long grey beard which was strewn across his chest. His voice was sonorous and happy, and he spoke broken English with a delicious French accent.

He talked at top speed, gesticulating with his hands to clarify his statements. He looked like the alchemical gnome or trickster out of some fairy tale. His whole manner was thoroughly welcoming, and he greeted us like long-lost friends. He invited us to sit down with him near the beautiful young flower girl in the courtyard. After we had exchanged more smiles with her, I began to ask Vijayananda about Ma's relationship to traditional Hinduism. He replied that while Ma embraced all religions, she remained rooted in Hinduism. 'What was her influence upon people from other religions generally?' I asked.

Vijayananda's hands began to dance as he spoke.

'People often said that when they met Ma, they became religious again. That is to say religious in their tradition. She used to awaken religious feeling. People returned to their religious roots. It happened to me also. I am Jewish. You see I started reading the Bible. I was already religious, so it was not such a big thing for me. But it was for people who had never had religious feeling. The American people are very attached to Hinduism. But most French people who are very devoted to Ma, they return to their own traditions.

I told Vijayananda that while finding that Ma had revived my own original religious roots, I could not return to the traditional Christian form and worship as I used to know it. 'It's as if Ma is just asking me to sing and to be silent. It seems as simple as that,' I said.

Vijayananda was silent for a moment. Then he said, 'You know the real religious spirit is common to all religions. Now if you have some need of devotion, you can return to the religious form of worship with which you are most familiar. But, if you have transcended all religions, you find yourself resting upon the ground which is common to all religions. She gives you that common ground. She enables you to catch what is inside of you. If you come from a Christian background, you will take hold of that. She herself did not really belong to any religion. She did not do *pranayama*, nor prostrate before idols. She didn't do anything.'

'Except when she suddenly found herself moving into specific yogic postures?' I asked. Vijayananda replied, 'Yes, but that was in the beginning. Then she made what she called "the play of *sadhana*" [spiritual practice]. In this play, she could enact all forms of *sadhana*. From the outside it appeared as if she was a *sadhaka* (spiritual practitioner). She only played in this way to give guidance to people when necessary.'



'What does it matter whether Ma is in the body or not?' asked Roger. 'After all, her influence seems to be as strong on some people as it ever was when she was alive.'

'There's more power when she's in her body', Vijayananda replied. 'There's a difference. Just to see her you see ... some eight hundred or a thousand people would sit here with her, just to receive her *darshan*.'

I asked Vijayananda what it was like to hear of Ma's death.

'It was terrible,' he sighed. 'You see when I went to see her, three weeks before her death, she already had swollen feet. But I had seen her many times before on the point of death. She would suddenly make a miraculous recovery and get up saying. "Right, now let us go." So we all thought she would make another recovery. So when I saw her this time, I went into her room. I thought she could not talk. So I did not want to talk either, to tire her. She used to give me fruit you see. She counted four fruits, and gave them to me. Three is not auspicious. Then before I left, I went to the door to look at her, and she looked at me for so long that I felt an inner peace, and I thought that was a sign to let me know that she was alright and would get better. I took it as a message. In Dehradun, for the last three days before her death, Ma was in agony. They hid this knowledge. She wanted it to be a secret. Then someone phoned us one night, and told us that Ma had left her body. The next day, they brought her body here, and laid her body here for hours for people to see. It was terrible for me. But by and by I could overcome it.'

'But did she not teach you detachment from all things ? Or was she your greatest challenge in learning detachment? Detachment from her I mean ?' I was thinking of my own bond with Ma.

'At her death, I was like two persons,' Vijayananda replied, 'One who had terrible grief, and the other who was calm and quiet, simply beholding the Beloved.'

'Did you feel let down by her ?' Roger asked, 'that she left you?' 'No. I was already self-supporting', said Vijayananda gently, with a subtle smile on his face. 'The inner guru was already established. I didn't need her as a guru. But as regards the personal relationship, I missed her very much. It's like losing someone you love very very much, someone for whom you would tear out your heart. But that was only on the vital level. On the conscious level, I was calm and quiet. Do you understand that ?'

'Yes,' I replied, thinking of my own experience. 'In fact in the last few days, I have begun to see how she brings that "twosomeness" about, because sometimes I can dwell on her image and sometimes there is no image, and she seems to arise out of nothing and also return to nothing.'

[To continue]

# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

—Sri P.C. Mehta

[Continued from before]

## Knowledge; *Pratyaksa* & *Paroksa*:

'*Jnana*' or insight pertains to the '*Jiva*' or 'Soul' and is self-luminous. It therefore shows to the soul or self, not only objects but also itself. It is not conceived here as an unalterable entity, but as capable of modifying its magnitude. It can also undergo changes of form, retaining its magnitude. Knowledge, which leads to the revelation of objects is one such mode of the self, i.e. it brings about change of form in the soul without altering its magnitude.

The Jainas divide knowledge into;

1) *Pratyaksa* or Immediate and 2) *Paroksa* or 'Mediate'.

This classification applies only to the way in which objects are made known.

1) *Pratyaksa* or immediate knowledge:

In Jainism, immediate or *pratyaksa* knowledge is also called '*visada*' or 'vivid knowledge'. It means detailed or particularized apprehension of the object revealing the details of its color, disposition of its parts etc. In many other systems this is defined as what arises from contact of senses with their respective objects.

In Jainism *pratyaksha* knowledge is divided into two parts :

- i) *Samvyavahārika-Pratyaksa* i.e. 'common perception;' which may be either,
  - a) through the senses, e.g. seeing a table which is before us, is direct perception and is knowledge which is acquired through the senses, or
  - b) through the mind i.e. experiences of the inner states of the mind e.g. when we realize that we are happy is direct knowledge which is obtained through the mind.
- ii) *Mukhya-pratyaksa* i.e. 'Primary perception', which is extra-sensory .

We have seen that according to Jainism, the Self can by its very nature know all things directly. It therefore need not depend on any agent i.e. mind or the senses, for comprehension. As for example, *Kevala-Jnāna* is direct and immediate knowledge, not dependent on either of them.

Knowledge which the self acquires in its pristine form, that is directly or intuitively is termed *mukhya-pratyaksa* i.e. 'primary perception' In 'Tattvartha-

dhigama-Sutra of Umasvati, we find it defined as *Sarva-dravya-paryāyesu kevalasya*, 'Comprehending all things and all phases of them'.

This kind of knowledge is immediate or *pratyaksa*. The possessor of this kind of knowledge is 'an *Arhant* The worthy one', or a *Siddha* - 'The perfected one'.

Experience or knowledge is only a state of the self and therefore in both cases it is *pratyaksa*.

## 2) *Paroksa* or 'Mediate' knowledge:

This includes various indirect modes of knowing such as,

### i) Inference

Fire, which is inferred from smoke is *paroksha* or mediate knowledge, and is an example of inferential knowledge.

### ii) Sensory perception.

Some hold that sensory perception is also mediate knowledge on the ground that it needs the assistance of sense organs (see 'Tattvarthadhigama-Sutra,' i, II)

### iii) Verbal testimony

### iv) *Pratyabhijnā* i.e. recognition :

We shall refer to this indirect mode of knowing viz *pratyabhijnā* i.e. recognition, because in Jainism its conception is rather unique.

What is recognition ? You meet a person in the street and you recognize him.

How does this happen ?

Recognizing a person means that a) firstly, he is before us now and we perceive him; b) secondly, when noticed, his presence calls back to us the memory of our having seen him before.

Thus the common explanation of this mode of knowledge in the Indian systems is that it is a) perception aided by b) memory.

Jainism maintains that perception and memory only gives an idea of similarity.

### c) *Sadrsya*

A further factor which brings about a belief in the *ekatva* or 'identity of objects i.e. the recognition of the objects because of the presence of the component which endures through change is responsible in recognition and this they call *sadrsya*.

In recognizing a person, one gets the knowledge of their '*ekatva*' or identity, which means that a thing experienced in the past is expressly identified with what is being experienced in the present. Neither perception nor memory, by itself, is competent to reveal this identity, because a thing experienced in the past can never be what is being experienced in the present. Such knowledge of identity, presupposes a belief in objects which though changing, endure.

Hence to the Jainas, this knowledge is a new type of knowledge. Jainism extends this reasoning to cover all cases where perception and recollection are involved and the resulting knowledge is unitary.

Thus the knowledge that A is like B is considered as an instance of it, though it points to resemblance and not to identity between A and B.

Similarly, 'A is different from B' and 'A is greater than B', 'The apple is a fruit' etc. are all cases of 'recognition' in this sense. In every one of them, what is perceived is different from what is recalled; but the two are similar in some respect or other.

The similarity is explicit in the first of the examples, viz. A is like B; but it is implicit in the rest, for they involve comparison and classification which cannot refer to absolutely distinct things.

This similarity or *Sadrasya* is a second type of fact revealed through 'recognition' as explained here.

It will be seen that Buddhism takes similarity alone as the true object of recognition and regards identity, which common sense associates with it, as false or illusory.

### **Stages of Knowledge leading to *Kevala-Jnāna*:**

Jiva passes through five different stages of awareness to come to *Kevala-Jnana* that is omniscience or direct comprehension. They are *Mati*, *Sruti*, *Avadhi*, *Manah-paryāya* and *Kevala*.

'*Mati*' is normal life cognition, which includes knowledge derived from sense perception, memory and inference. Such knowledge is dependent on senses and the ordinary operation of the mind. It is *Paroksha-jnana* i.e. indirect knowledge. Western Psychology regards knowledge obtained from senses as direct.

*Sruti*, is revelation of the scriptures. Since these are not revelations to us, knowledge derived there from is also *Paroksha* or indirect.

*Avadhi* is knowledge derived from occult means or psychic powers of clairvoyance or clairaudience etc. Since this knowledge is not dependent on senses, it is *Pratyaksha* or direct or immediate.

*Manah-paryāya* is direct knowledge of other's mind.

*Kevala-Jnana* is the omniscience or direct comprehension without the agency of the senses or the mind and is gained only when one is totally illumined through freedom from ignorance. It is the state of awakening that the Upanisads and Buddhism speak of.

## The Jaina ontology

Jainism regards reality as what changes almost perpetually or is dynamic and yet is permanent in its identity i.e. keeps its identity throughout; in other words, reality maintains its identity and permanence through the process of continuous change.

The origination and destruction relate to the *paryaya* i.e. modes of reality, while permanence to its substratum.

We saw that the Upanisadic concept of Reality, is of two kinds;

i) One which takes change as actual and ii) the other takes change as unreal.

Jainism regards Reality as a) complex or multiple and b) change as actual.

In reality substance and qualities cannot be separated. There is no substance without quality and no quality without substance, though they can be separately thought about.

## *Sāmānya* & *Viśeṣa* in complex Reality :

Complex reality may be regarded as having two characteristics of *Sāmānya* & *Viśeṣa* : a) *Sāmānya* i.e. 'General or Universal' aspect, as well as b) *Viśeṣa* i.e. 'particular' aspect.

(a) *Sāmānya* :

Thus a cow is characterized by cowness, which it has common with other cows. This is its '*Sāmānya*' meaning.

The *Sāmānya* or 'universal' features are of two kinds : i) *Tiryak-Sāmānya* i.e. 'Crosswise-Universal' and ii) '*Urdhvata-Sāmānya*' i.e. 'Lengthwise-Universal'.

These may be compared to what is known in western philosophy as abstract and concrete universals.

i) *Tiryak-Sāmānya*. 'Tiryak' literally means 'extending horizontally'.

An example of this is in the cowness of a cow, which is presented simultaneously in several cows. This notion is like the cowness spreading horizontally.

ii) *Urdhvata-Sāmānya*. 'Urdhvata' literally means 'extending vertically'.

Here the notion is of the universal manifesting successively in time; e.g. cotton as the material of single yarns, thread and cloth.

It may be noted that these notions are based respectively upon similarity and identity, which are known through '*pratyabhijna*' or recognition.

Two or more cows which exhibit the same cowness are similar, the cotton which appears in the yarn and the cloth is identical.

iii) *Paryāya* or 'modes' of reality or of the object.

When we say that A is a cow and that B also is a cow, it is the predicative element of cowness which is common to both, but when we say that X was a boy and that he is a youth now, it is the subject element that is common. Both sets of features, whether they be constant like cowness or changing like boyhood and youth are described here as *Paryāya* i.e. 'modes' or 'forms' of the substance to which they belong.

iv) Impermanence of the universal aspect :

We can easily see that the universal aspect of *Urdhvata-Sāmānya* as in boyhood and youth is impermanent. According to Jainism the universal aspect of cowness in cow which is *Tiryak-Sāmānya* is also impermanent. In short both are impermanent.

Both the universal aspects are considered only special dispositions of the substance in which they appear and as such they are to be regarded as different in different particulars. They regard universals as configurations characterizing the particulars.

For example, the cowness of one cow is not numerically the same as the cowness of another, (because the other cow is cow number 2)

b) *Visesa* : or particular aspects :

It has also certain special characteristics, such as color or size etc. by which we distinguish it from other cows. These are its *Visesa* aspects.

Some thinkers view these universals and particulars as being separately real. Jainas do not accept this view and maintain that the two taken together constitute reality. As such, things, whether spiritual or material, are necessarily complex according to them.

***Bhedābheda* or 'identity-in-difference'.**

The particular or general taken by itself is a pure abstraction. They are noticeable as separate only in the mind, they are not so in fact. The relation between these two aspects of an object is called *bhedābheda* that is 'identity-in-difference'. That is, the particular and the general as such are different, but as phases of the same *dravya* or substance, they are also one.

In the case of a cow, for instance, these two, viz. cowness and the specific color or size as such are distinct; but they are not absolutely so, for they belong to or characterize one and the same object and have no being apart from it.

To the objection that the contradictory features of identity and difference cannot, like heat and cold, be predicated for the same object, the Jainas reply that our sole warrant for speaking about reality is experience and that when experience vouches for such a character, it must be admitted to be so.

The so-called contradictions may themselves be the ultimate truth about reality. Thought must follow the nature of reality in grasping it and should not attempt to determine or limit it.

### **Dravya or 'Substance' :**

We have seen that the definition of Reality given in the system is *Utpāda-vyaya-dhravya-yuktam Sat.* (See '*Tattvarthadhigama-Sutra*,' V, 29).

Thus, we saw that reality is characterized by origination, destruction and permanence. The origination and destruction relate to the *pariyāya* i.e. modes of reality, while permanence to its substratum.

It is reality in this sense that is divided into *jiva* and *ajiva* with its five fold variety of i) *Pudgala* or matter ii) *Kāla* or Time iii) *Ākāśa* or Space iv) *Dharma* and v) *Adharma*.

Thus there are these six kinds of uncreated and eternal realities which are termed *Dravya* or substances which constitute the body or creation.

Pujyapada in his commentary on '*Tattvarthadhigama-Sutra*' says, '*Guna-pariyāyavat dravyam*' i.e. that *Dravya* consists of— a) *Guna* i.e. qualities and b) *Pariyāya* i.e. modes.

One view regarding the distinction between qualities and modes is that *Gunas* are essential or permanent attributes like touch or taste of matter, while *Pariyāyas* are its passing phases.

The distinction is not clear even to eminent scholars and it is suggested that the recognition of *Guna* may be due to the influence of doctrines other than Jainism.

### **Asti-kāyā :**

Of these six substances, all except time are not only real but also *Asti-kāyā* i.e. extended or capable of spatial relations. They are called *Pancastikayas*. Time is real, but has only one dimension. It has no spatial extension and therefore is not extended.

[To continue]

## DIVINE GRACE

— Dhiraj Sapru

**jai ma**

.....verily, just Her mere thought spells joy-unutterable-for it drenches the mind-saturating it with pearls of contentment..... and the mind—the mind, soaked in selflessness with such a sumptuously-divine-feast at hand, truly an heavenly-treasure, is light, light as a flowery dream-rising far and quick—catching up with the clouds-Oh yes, the very loftiest ones—ascending, expanding, soaring, yet further on—for freedom in itself is a testimony of its existence, for, bonds-chains-limits, nay, it knows none..... Yes, the mind, beyond itself, as-it-were, losing its fathomable-limited-identity, rises yet further—to a point of being 'no-mind' disintegrating-dissolving-mingling into the ever-expansive boundless ether, which (in Her formless grandeur) is nothing but She Herself.....

.....and yet, thought-Her thought, is conceivably-inconceivable, without but Her all-merciful-generous-will.....know this to be "Grace"-Her Divine-Grace....

how is one to invoke such fullness?- a question of questions...by pleading-nay; praying-nay; begging-imploing-beseeching, nay-nay; how then....

know this, in its en masse-abolition, that, She is; and that, you are; She is—for you are; you are-for She is; that's that; that's all.... "Son" is but a word, in relation to what though.....would it hold 'any' gist, any-at-all, in the absence of "Mother", nay, none-at-all; and Mother-would mean not a whit in the absence of a son.....there ain't else left to say.....

a son lives, nay, dwells in Her; no more-no less, than She dwells in him.....you are, She is; life is one-She though is the giver of it, the very cause, untouched-spontaneous-and wilfully redeemed....know this to be "Grace"..... Her-Divine-Grace.....

.....what then ought-one-to-do, in relation to life.....what can one do? ..... nothing, i'd say, nothing at all ... make it (life) longer—healthier—happier; you can't— however can you? .... the real understanding though should dawn forth by asking—why even try? —for entangling oneself in such juvenile—grapple is worth not half-a-penny ... to relish and enjoy the ice-cream bar at hand is delight, is



freedom; to trap the mind in hankering-thoughts about all the various flavours in the vendor's box is strife, is slavery; freedom and slavery-both are within ..... slavery binds you to yourself—freedom takes you to Her. ....

Ma and I—that is all there is ..... absolute and complete self-surrender at Her feet is the doorway to true and perfect redemption..... but that ain't happening—no not till She wills it ..... know Her will to be "Grace"—Her-Divine-Grace..

Jai Ma

## JAI MA

— Antonio Eduardo Dagnino

O compassion...

waves of endless coming,

intelligence of love.

A drop of pure light that grows like a seed,

like a whirling *swastika*.....,

O worlds !

O mightly spaces of molten light

in your ever beloved eyes !

O radiation .....

that takes into itself

the matrix of thought-forms, sounds and genes

between *pralayas* !

O source, sea, flood

of unknown fire burning my limitations

and giving wings to the soul !

... Space, no limits to space,

no limits to breed energy,

no limits to being,

consciousness.....

rapture.....

## RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

—Sri Hari Ram Joshi

### [ II ]

In the second fortnight of December, 1944 Mataji with me and others descended from Almora. We went to Varanasi where arrangements had been made for the construction of an Ashram there. A building of imposing size has thereafter been constructed at Bhadaini on a plot obtained from the Court of Wards, U.P. This ghat is now known as Ma Anandamayee Ghat and is located between Harischandra Ghat and Assi Ghat, just at the spot where the holy Ganga starts flowing northwards permanently (*uttaravāhinī*). After the setting up of the Varanasi Ashram, Gurupriya Didiji established there the *Kanyapeeth* which is imparting education to girls upto the *Śāstrī* and *Āchārya* standards. The brahmacharinis do not attend any other Government or private school, but are mostly taught by qualified lady teachers, who are unmarried and have dedicated their lives to Mataji's service. A good number of highly educated, unmarried women belonging to the best families of almost all parts of India, such as Bengal, Gujarat, Bombay, U.P., Kashmir and the Punjab, who have dedicated their lives to the search after Truth, are staying in Mataji's Ashrams and practising their *sādhanā* in the manner prescribed by Her. They are also discharging such duties as are assigned to them by Mataji from time to time.

The Anandamayee Ghat was badly damaged by the high flood of 1948. Mataji's devotees contributed about hundred fifty thousand rupees towards the repairs of this ghat. An equal amount was spent by the U.P. Government when Pandit G.B. Pant was the Chief Minister. However, the ghat could not be properly reconstructed by the local authorities and was washed away soon after. A part of the Ashram building had also to be dismantled. The Government later reconstructed that ghat in several phases.

A temple of Ma Annapurna was built in this Ashram to accommodate the images brought from Dhaka just before the partition. A large block for girl's residence was also constructed on a plot purchased out of funds offered by the Rajmata of Tehri. An extensive charitable hospital is still under construction. The outdoor department was opened several years ago. The main wing of the hospital has been completed and the hospital has started functioning. Its opening ceremony was performed by Srimati Indira Gandhi in December, 1968, in Mataji's presence. A big temple of

Gopalji with an adjoining *satsang* hall costing about six lakhs has also been built recently. The temple of Gopalji is considered to be unique in its architecture. It was designed and executed by Sri P.L. Varma, Chief Engineer, Punjab a staunch devotee of Mataji, in consultation with the internationally renowned French architect, Le Corbusier. Before its consecration the image of Bal Gopalji was taken out in procession by Sri Gourinath Shastri, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Sanskrit University. Mataji and all the sadhus who had assembled on that occasion joined the procession.

In 1946 Durgā pūjā was performed at Solan at the invitation of Raja Durga Singh and his wife, who made all arrangements. This Durga puja was a grand success. Devotees from all parts of India attended. A new bungalow had been built for Mataji on the tennis court just below the palace, and was inaugurated on this occasion.

Mataji subsequently stayed in that beautiful ashram several times during the summer months. In 1955 Her birthday was celebrated there and Mataji remained for Gurupūrṇimā as well. She also stayed in Simla in 1952 in a cottage specially built for Her, adjoining Raja Durga Singh's house on Jacko Hill.

In 1948, just before the integration of the State with Himachal Pradesh, Raja Durga Singh's wife died. She was a sister of the late Narendra Shah, Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal. Though very much pressed by all his relations and friends, Raja Durga Singh \* did not agree to marry a second time. Mataji gave him the name of 'Yogibhai' as he leads a most unassuming, simple life and passes a considerable portion of his time in *dhyāna*, *japa*, *pūjā* and *svadhyāya* (recitation of scriptures). After the death of his wife, Yogibhaiji had a Śiva temple and a *dharamśālā* built at Kharkhari, Hardwar, in memory of his father. The consecration of the Śiva temple was performed in Mataji's presence and under Her direction. A portion of the *dharamśālā* is reserved for Mataji and Her party. It includes a spacious *kīrtana* hall. In 1953 Mataji's birthday was celebrated there and Mataji remained in Hardwar for a month on this occasion.

The *Sāvitrī Mahā Yajña* at Varanasi, about the performance of which Mataji had given some indication soon after the Kālī Pūjā of 1926, was celebrated with the same sacrificial holy fire which had been preserved ever since at Dhaka and Vindhyachal Ashrams. This *Mahāyajña* continued for three years (1947-50). One crore (10 million) *ahutis* (oblations) with *Gāyatrī mantra* were offered in this *havan*

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\* . Raja Durga Singh passed away on March 30th (*Vijaya Dasami day*) 1977 in Solan at the age of 75.

by about a dozen brahmacharis, under the supervision of Brahmachari Nepalda. After the completion of this *yajña*, Nepalda embraced *sanyāsa* and is now known as Swami Narayanananda Tirtha or Narayan Swami. He has been a brahmachari all his life and is one of the most ardent devotees of Mataji.

Extreme care was taken in everything connected with this *yajña*. The brahmacharis engaged in its performance had to observe very strict rules of purity and lived on a special diet. For the oblations only pure cow's ghee was used which was supplied regularly for three years by the devotees of Ahmedabad, who for this purpose maintained a farm with a large herd of high milk yielding cows. For a whole month before the *pūrṇāhuti*, daily feasts for three to four hundred people were arranged in the Varanasi Ashram, under the supervision of Swami Paramanandaji. *Sanyāsīs* from all *akhārās* in Varanasi, as also *brahmins*, *daridra Nārāyaṇas* (poor people), lepers, etc., were entertained with delicious dishes. It is estimated that at least ten thousand brahmins were served meals during that month, not including thousands of persons who had collected from all over India on the occasion of the *pūrṇāhuti*, and daily took *prasāda*. Mataji presented to everybody who had come to attend this *yajña* some cloth that had been sent to the Varanasi Ashram by devotees from Ahmedabad, Bombay, Kanpur, etc.

In 1950 the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha with its headquarters at Bhadaini, Varanasi, was organized by some of the foremost devotees of Mataji for the control and management of the various ashrams, temples, and institutions which had gradually been established in Varanasi, Vindhyachal, Rajgir, Calcutta, Puri, Chandod and many others that were to come into existence later. The Ashrams at Dehradun and Almora were then under the management of the Ma Anandamayee Trust, Kishenpur, Dehradun, which had been registered in 1940. The said Anandamayi Trust, Kishenpur was subsequently dissolved and all the properties merged in the Sangha in 1960.

Before the registration of the Sangha, Sri Kamal Brahmachari, who is now known as Sri Virajananda, was in charge of the Varanasi Ashram. Sri Ashutosh Bhattacharya, Reader in English at the University of Lucknow, was the first Secretary of the Sangha.<sup>1</sup> and Sri Kamalda was the Jt. Secretary. Kamalda was several years later replaced by Sri Panuda, who later on became the first Asstt. Gen. Secretary and then as General Secretary till 1972.

1. Sri Ashutosh Bhattacharya passed away on May 11th, 1979, (Buddha Pūṇimā) at the age of 78.

Virajanandaji had come in contact with Mataji in Dhaka as a young man. He then married the sister of Abhay Brahmachari. After leading a householder's life for a few years, he left his wife and children in the care of his father-in-law in Calcutta and joined the Ashram. He worked hard for about eight years to establish the institution on a sound footing, and is now devoting all his time to *sāadhanā* trying to follow scrupulously Mataji's instructions.

Swami Paramanandaji, who after finishing his education in Bengal, went and stayed in Uttarkashi for about a dozen years to do *tapasyā*, is an ideal person in every respect. Swami Devigiriji Maharaj of Uttarkashi was the renowned saint under whom Swami Paramananda studied Yoga Vasistha and Vedanta thoroughly during his long stay at Uttarkashi. Devigiriji Maharaji had seen Mataji first when She visited Uttarkashi in 1933 and again in 1935 when the Kālī Temple was consecrated. Devigiriji Maharaj was in very close contact with Her. He was so much impressed by Her Divine Personality that in spite of his hoary age, he agreed to undertake the long journey from Uttarkashi to Varanasi in January, 1950 to attend the completion of the *Sāvitrī Mahā Yajña*. He died at the age of about 100 years soon after returning to Uttarkashi.

Swami Paramanandaji came to Mataji at Dehradun in 1937 after Bhaiji's death. Ever since he joined her, he has been supervising the construction work of all the Ashrams, big or small, which have sprung up so far in more than a dozen places scattered throughout North India. Swamiji is now nearly 80 years old. For the last over 40 years he had been constantly busy with the activities organized by Mataji's devotees at various places. All the big functions like *Samyam Mahavrata*, Mataji's Birthday celebrations, *Durgā pūjā*, *Bhāgavata Saptaha*, etc. are invariably in overall charge of Swamiji, because of his great organizing capacity and devotion to Mataji. He has very little ego and has an unassuming nature. He is not only a *sanyāsi* but also an expert cook, a born engineer and possesses extraordinary managing capacity. He moreover has an astounding memory and accomplishes all tasks most efficiently and economically and always with a smiling face. Swamiji does not wear any warm clothing even in the winter months and sleeps on *kushāsana* blanket. He mostly lives on one meal a day and for about a dozen years he abstained altogether from salt and sugar.

Sri Abhay Brahmachari met Mataji first in 1938. For many years he travelled constantly with Her. His *kīrtana* used to be most attractive. He composed many good prayers and songs in Bengali and also wrote a number of books about Mataji in Bengali.

Sri B. K. Shah, Managing Director of the New India Assurance Company Ltd., is a devotee of a high order. He is unassuming and so is his wife, Lilabehn. When I met him for the first time in 1948 in Bombay, it seemed to me that he was a deeply religious person and I thought if he could come in touch with Mataji, he might become one of Her ardent devotees. It was three or four years later that Sri B. K. Shah came in close contact with Mataji. Sri B. K. Shah got a small cottage constructed for Mataji within the compound of his bungalow at Vile Parle, Bombay. He and his wife are the foremost devotees in Bombay, along with Sri Sopory, Vasudeva Bhai, Muljibhai Patel and a few others who have been mainly responsible for successfully organising various religious functions such as the *Samyam Saptah*, Mataji's birthday celebrations, etc., in Bombay.

In March, 1953, the Ashram at Vrindaban was inaugurated. It is spacious and magnificent in every respect. Its main building contains three beautiful temples which open out into a hall of imposing size, called "Bhāgavat Bhavan". A temple of Lord Śiva with five *lingas* is on the right side, a temple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with the life-size *vigrahas* of Gauranga and Nityananda on the left, and in the centre an exquisite temple of Krishna Chheliya with two sets of images of Radha-Krishna; one set presented by Raja Durga Singh, and the statue of Sri Chheliya as well as the *ashtadhātu* one of Radha, a gift of the Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia of Gwalior, who was also deeply attached to Mataji. The Ashram also comprises a '*Gītā Bhavan*' with an adjoining guest-house, beautiful cottage for Mataji built by the Raja of Mandi, and several other large and small buildings, including some cottages amidst extensive garden erected by devotees for their own use.

In April, 1954, on *Vaisakhi* day, the installation ceremony of a Śiva linga over the Samādhi of Bhairavi was performed at Pataldevi, Almora, in Mataji's presence and under her guidance. I had been called to attend the ceremony and Yogibhaiji was also present. Mataji named the linga "Yogeshwar Mahadeva". By Mataji's order no one is allowed to talk inside this temple. *Sādhakas* are permitted to enter only for meditation, *japa* or *pūjā*.

In May, 1954, Mataji's birthday was to be celebrated in Shillong. But the devotees who had undertaken to make all arrangements were obliged to leave Shillong suddenly and so, to our great joy, the birthday was celebrated at Almora. People flocked in hundreds from all over North India. Hari Babaji Maharaj, Swami Krishnanandaji Avadhuta, and a *Rāsālīla* party of Vrindaban were present. Mataji and Sri Hari Babaji stayed on until June 30th.

In the winter of 1960 Mataji allowed me to go to Dehradun for Her *darśana* and from there to Delhi in January, 1961 to stay with my son Hari Mohan for four

months. During that period, Pandit G. B. Pant got an attack of paralysis about a fortnight before the Holi festival. Mataji was then staying in Her Ashram at Kalkaji, New Delhi, and I used to inform Her daily about the condition of Pantji, which became extremely serious on the eve of *Holi Pūrṇimā*. Didiji told that throughout the previous night Pantji in his subtle body had been in the presence of Mataji in great agony, as disclosed by Her. Pantji's Secretary however told that, according to their observations, Pantji had passed a peaceful night. In the evening Mataji, visited the Lakshmi Narayan temple, known as Birla Mandir, for an hour's kīrtana arranged by Sri J. K. Birla. I went there for Her *darśana*. She repeated to me how during the whole of the previous night Pantji in his subtle body had appeared before her in great agony. She then gave me a garland of roses to be put round Pantji's neck, whose condition, She said, had again become very critical. She gave me another garland for Pantji's wife and two more garlands for his son, Sri K. C. Pant, and his daughter-in-law. Mataji told me to hire a taxi and go straight to Pantji's residence. When I reached there at about 8.45 P. M., I found Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, also present at that late hour. The attending doctors had lost all hope of Pantji's recovery and he was at that moment groaning as is usual with dying people. I delivered all the garlands as directed, and the garland meant for Pantji was given to his son to be put round Pantji's neck or just over his pillow. Pantji somehow passed the crisis that night, but died two days later.

On June 7th, 1964, Mataji visited the Dhaulchina Ashram in Almora and stayed there for a night to the great delight of Sri Vijayananda (Adolphe Weintrob), a quiet devotee of Mataji who hails from France, where he was a good practising doctor about thirty years ago. The Ashram is situated at the top of the Nilgiri Hill facing almost on three sides the snow covered Himalayan range. No ordinary *sādhaka* can live in that solitary place which is surrounded by thick forests. Vijayanandaji is an ideal *sādhaka* and passes most of his time in meditation, *japa* and the study of scriptures. His daily diet is very simple, consisting of half a litre of cow's milk, 50gms of rice, 25 gms of pulses, 100gms of wheat flour and a few nuts. Fruits are not available at Dhaulchina and vegetables only occasionally<sup>2</sup>.

Vijayanandaji came to India about thirty years ago. He first stayed for a little while in the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi (South India) and then in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry and in other Ashrams, seeking guidance in his *sādhanā*. He then visited Varanasi a few days before he was to leave by air for

2' He has now shifted to Kankhal.

France. At Varanasi he went to the Ma Anandamayi Ashram and had his first *darsana* of Mataji in 1951. He was powerfully attracted by Mataji's Divine Personality and started shedding tears. Mataji sent for him and called him to Her presence. After having a private interview with Mataji he asked Her permission to remain in Her company and cancelled his return passage. He followed Mataji wherever She went for about three years. Since then he stayed in Mataji's various ashrams Mataji gave him the name of Vijayananda.

In the spring of 1964, I understand, that Sri Jawaharlalji expressed to Indiraji his keen desire to meet Mataji. Mataji agreed to go to his residence. Jawaharlalji asked Her what She would advise him to do in his state of indifferent health. It is understood that Mataji indicated to him to go to Rajgir where the Lord Buddha, whom he revered so much, had lived for years and that he should take complete rest for at least a couple of months to recoup his health. But Jawaharlalji could not act as per Her advice and passed away on May 28th, 1964, within three months of his last meeting with Mataji.

During the last few years our country has been passing through a critical period, highlighted by rising prices, increasing unemployment, student indiscipline and political defections and deceit. The country can never progress on a sound basis unless the characters of our youth are built on moral and spiritual foundations. It appears that the vision of the leaders of our country is blinded by the glamour of the material advancement of the west. The noble principles of Gandhiji seem to be altogether sacrificed, though the country is celebrating his centenary.

In this critical condition the only hope for our emancipation is to earnestly pray to the Divinity Incarnate to change the minds of our leaders for giving the youth proper guidance to build their characters on a moral basis and to set an example by following themselves the path of Truth, Non-violence and Non-possession, the noble principles of Bapuji which have come to be altogether ignored during the last few years of Independence. Gandhiji advised his followers to lead a simple life and a life of true renunciation.

If we are really anxious to establish a new order of society, we must shake off our egoism entirely and try to perceive the one Brahman pervading everywhere. So long as the spirit of duality is not abandoned completely, there cannot be real peace in this country and all over the world. This is the mission of Mataji as conceived by Bhajji.

Various ashrams have been established in different parts of this country so that seekers after Truth might live in a suitable environment and have the opportunity of being guided and inspired by the Divine Universal Mother, Sri Anandamayi Ma.





# MĀYĀVĀDI VEDANTA AND LEELĀVĀDI VEDANTA

—Dr. Bireswar Ganguly

[III]

## Sri Ramakrishna Deva's *Leelāvāda* :

I find that though both Sri Rama Krishna Paramahansa Deva of the nineteenth century and Sri Ma Anandamayee of the twentieth century are undisputed *Brahmajnanis*, their life and teachings can best be understood in the light of qualified Monism. Sri Ramakrishna's views on *Māyāvāda* versus *Leelāvāda* can be understood in a nutshell from the following two foot notes of Romain Rolland's *The Life of Ramakrishna* :

"The *Jnani* rejects *Māyā*. *Māyā* is like a veil (which he dispels). Look when I hold this handkerchief in front of the lamp, you can no longer see its light. Then the Master held the handkerchief between him and the disciples and said, 'Now you can no longer behold my face.' The *Bhakta* does not reject *Māyā*. He worships *Mahāmāyā* (the Great Illusion). He gives himself to Her and prays, 'Mother, get out of my way! only so can I hope to realise *Brahman*.' The *Jnani* denies the three states the waking state, the dream, and the deep sleep; the *Bhakta* accepts all three.' So Ramakrishna's tenderness, his natural preference, was for those who accepted everything, even illusion, who affirmed and loved everything, who denied nothing, since evil and illusion are of God.'

'It is not good to say from the very first, 'I see the Impersonal God'. Everything I see—men, women, animals, flowers, trees is God'."<sup>1</sup>

"Two days before his death in answer to Naren's unspoken desire to drag from him the avowal he was so loth to make, Ramakrishna said, 'He who was Rama and who was Krishna is now Ramakrishna in the body lying here! But he added, 'Not in your Vedantic sense.' (That is to say, not merely in the sense of identity with the Absolute, but in the sense of Incarnation.).....At an other time when a faithful follower (in 1884) said to him, 'when I see you I see God', he rebuked him, 'Never say that. The wave is part of the Ganga, the Ganga is not part of the wave.'" (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, II, p. 181) cf. 'The Avatars are to Brahman what the waves are to the ocean.' (*Sri Ramakrishnas Teachings*, par. 362) 'A Divine

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1. *The Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 209, fn. 14.

Incarnation is hard to comprehend - it is the play of the Infinite on the finite. (Ibid. 369)".<sup>2</sup>

### **The Integral Vedantic Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda :**

Swami Vivekananda, the greatest disciple of Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna and the first great preacher of Vedanta to the Western world in the 19th century, was of the firm opinion that Hinduism is based on the philosophy of Vedanta as found in the *Upanishads* and specially in their best commentary, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Vivekananda affirms that in the *Upanishads*, we have both *Dvaitavāda* and *Advaitavāda*. In his words : "Shankaracharya committed the mistake in supposing that the whole of the *Upanishads* taught one thing, which was Advaitism, and nothing else; and wherever a passage bearing distinctly the *Dvaita* idea occurred, he twisted and tortured the meaning to make it support his own theory. So also with Ramanuja and Madhvacharya, when pure Advaitic texts occurred."<sup>3</sup>

In his lecture on Vedantism, delivered at Khetri on 20th December, 1897 he reconciled the dualistic qualified monistic and Advaitic theories by saying that "each one of these was like a step by which one passed before the other was reached; the final evolution to Advaitism was the natural outcome, and the last step was '*Tattvamasi*' "<sup>4</sup>,

Thus we see that Vivekananda was supporter of all the three varieties of Vedanta, as he admitted a variety in religious experiences, as found in the life and teachings of Chaitanya, Tulsidas, Nanaka, Kabir and Sri Ramakrishna, which are termed as 'Vernacular Vedanta' by Dr. R.K. Das Gupta<sup>5</sup>. Vivekananda said "Shankara, with his great intellect, had not as great a heart. Ramanuja's heart was greater..... He opened the door for the highest spiritual worship from the Brahmin to the Pariah. That was Ramanuja's work."

In his lecture delivered at Calcutta on 'The Vedanta in all its phases', he said, "whether you are a dualist, or a qualified monist, an *Advaitist*, or *Vishishtādvaitist*, a *Shuddhādvaitist* or any other *Advaitist* or *Dvaitist*, or whatever you may call yourself, there stand behind you as authority, your *Shashtras*, your scriptures, the *Upanishads*"<sup>6</sup>.

2. Ibid, p. 213, f.n. 21.

3. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati Memorial ed., Vol. III, P. 439, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, 1989.

4. Ibid., p. p. 438-439.

5. *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture*, Kolkata 29, April, 2003, p-171.

6. *Complete Works*, Vol. III, P. 323.

Next in authority to the *Upanishads* and *Vyasa Sutras*, Vivekananda mentions the Bhagavad Gita : "Next in authority is the celebrated Gita. The great glory of Shankaracharya was his preaching of the Gita. It is one of the greatest works that this great man did among the many noble works of his noble life—the preaching of the Gita and writing the most beautiful commentary upon it. And he has been followed by all founders of the orthodox sects in India, each of whom has written a commentary on the *Gita*".<sup>7</sup>

With regard to the qualified monism or *Leelāvādi* Vedanta of Ramanuja, Vivekananda asserts : "Dualism is the natural idea of the senses; as long as we are bound by the senses, we are bound to see a God who is only personal, and nothing but personal, we are bound to see the world as it is. Says Ramanuja, 'So long as you think you are body, and think you are a mind, and you think you are a *jiva*, every act of perception will give you the three—soul and nature and something as causing both."<sup>8</sup>

Dr. R.K. Das Gupta is of the opinion that Swami Vivekananda shared Ramanuja's view of Nature as something real and that a *Karmayogi* Vedantist is necessarily a follower of Ramanujacharya<sup>9</sup>. Hence though Vivekananda was officially a *Māyāvādi* Vedantist, in practical life he was a *Leelāvādi* Vedantist.

### Ma Anandamayee's Theistic Monism, based on *Leelāvādi* Vedanta :

I had the proud privilege of studying intimately the life and teachings of Ma Anandamayee (1896-1982), an un-disputed *Brahmajnani* (realized soul) of the twentieth century from 1951, the year of my first initiation, to 1982, the year of Her *Mahāparinirvāna* at Kankhal.

It was revealed to me in course of my long (31 years) association with Her that though Mother was definitely well-established in the supreme plane of non-duality, yet for the sake of the overwhelming majority of Her house-holder devotees, She displayed in Her behaviour and sermons, a definite bias towards qualified monistic devotion (*bhakti*) conspicuous in the Gaudiya (Bengal) School of Vaishnavism, and Ramanujacharya's qualified monism<sup>10</sup>.

7. *Ibid.*, P 328.

8. *Ibid.*, P. 349

9. R.K. Das Gupta, *Swami Vivekananda's Vedantic Socialism*, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata 29, 1995, p. 152.

10. For a further detail vide i) Acharya Bireshwar Gangopadhyay, *Practical Vedanta from Shri Krishna to Ma Anandamayee*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2003 .

## WITH SRI MA AT KANKHAL

— Shraddha Davenport

Our train from Kanpur, the Assam Mail, was three hours late, which made for a very long day. By 7:00 p.m. we arrived, tired and dirty, at our hotel in Delhi. After hot showers, dinner in our room, and a good night's sleep we were ready for a busy day in beautiful Delhi.

The sunrise filled the sky with gerua as I stood on the hotel balcony overlooking a cluster of small houses. I had seen this same sight many times before and was drawn by its charm. I felt very much at home.

We did some shopping, then took a taxi to Mother's Kalkaji Ashram. Brahmachari Nirmalanandaji was in charge of that peaceful haven and greeted us warmly. Very few people were there, so we were able to have a nice visit with him. Our friend Bhakti had made arrangements to have a special murti of Lord Shivaji kept for her at this ashram. We had promised to bring the murti back to California for her. Brahmachari Nirmalananda took us to where the glorious Lord sat in meditative pose. Made in Madrasi style, he was perfect in every way. Thanking Nirmalananda we carefully carried Lord Shiva with us back to the hotel.

After dinner we went to Ajmere Gate where we hired a private taxi for our journey to Hardwar that evening. It was close to midnight when we reached Hardwar and got a room at the Tourist Bungalow guest house. There was not much time to rest as Mother's train was due about 6:30 a.m. we were told, so we would have to get up by 5:30 a.m. to meet Her at the station.

It was very cold and windy when we set out in the total darkness that morning in search of a rickshaw. It had also been dark upon our arrival the night before, so we were unaware of the construction being done on the east road when starting out that way. Soon our torches (flashing) revealed a miniature lake in the road and we went to the right of it, up an incline. The freezing wind tore at my wool shawl and the small blanket I had wrapped around me. I stumbled along, following Satya, when suddenly, at the top of the incline, we found that the road had not been completed. Our choices were to trudge back the way we had come or go down a steep sand hill to the other side of the road lake. We chose the hill. Sinking in the loose sand up to our calves, we staggered down to the bottom. There the workers

had made camp. They must have all been awakened by the barking dogs that followed on our heels as we hurried by the bridge road.

On the bridge, which spans the Ganges, we met a kind gentleman who showed us the road to the train station. I smiled to myself, wondering what he must have thought of those two bedraggled Westerners he had encountered that morning. After walking three or four more blocks, we found a rickshaw which took us to the station. It was 6:30 a.m. There we learned that Mother's train was not due until 9:30 a.m. The whirlwind that we had been riding all morning suddenly stopped.

A hot cup of tea drew us into a little South Indian restaurant near the depot. There we relaxed, ate breakfast, and waited until time for Mother's arrival. Back at the station we saw an older gentleman holding flowers in his hands and softly singing to Mother as he walked across the platform. Seeing that we also had flowers, he asked if we were waiting for Mother. We told him that we were and introduced ourselves. His name was Mahendra. I looked at his eyes. They had such a wide blue band around the brown iris that the brown looked almost like it was the pupil. After some time, he said, "You are brother and sister." We laughed and I said "Husband and wife, but brother and sister." He said, "You used to be husband and wife, now you are brother and sister." I told him, "That is right" Then he asked, "How is it that I have just met you for the first time, but I can see this? It is because Mother has graced you. "Such a beautiful soul, a devotee of Mother since 1936. He later said, "We should only talk of Her. All other talk is useless."

As we waited other devotees, including Mr. and Mrs. Ram Panjwani, also came to meet Mother. Soon Her train arrived and we gathered around Her as She stepped out on to the platform. Mother stood with us for a short time, as we offered our garlands to Her. Then She was escorted to an awaiting car where She sat, her door open as devotees pronounced and gazed at Her beautiful smiling face.

When the door was closed, I stood by Her window until the car started moving. We followed by taxi as She was taken to the Kankhal Ashram. Mahendra and Swami Virajanandaji rode with us. At the ashram Mother went to the front of the Shiva mandir and sat, receiving pronams from the devotees waiting there, among whom were Atmanandaji, Gadadhar and Ram.

Across the street that ran in front of the ashram was the site of a large new satsang hall. The construction of several other buildings had been started adjacent to that hall. all of this was an extension of the ashram and we had not seen any of it before.

After sitting for few minutes, Mother stood and we all followed when She walked across the street to inspect the new buildings. As She stepped toward the

satsang hall She took notice of Her knitted knee warmers which started slipping down around Her ankles. Udasji hurried to take care of them before they could interfere with Mother's walk. She looked through the double doors into the hall, then proceeded through the gate towards the future temple of the Sacred Flame. All of the work was inspected by Mother before She came back across the street.

Mother smiled at all of us as we stood in the courtyard, then She went inside and upstairs to Her room. Bhaskaranandaji told us that there would be only one darshan a day at 6:00 p.m. as Mother's health was not good.

When we returned at 6:00 p.m. Mother was in Didima's mandir and we saw her briefly before She again went to Her room upstairs. Devotees were standing in the little courtyard and I had a nice visit with Atmananda. As we spoke Mother came to Her window, pulled back the curtain and looked down at us. That was one of those rare sweet moments when Her being engulfed me and I knew Her love. It was so intensely beautiful that it seemed my heart would cry. When She walked away someone closed the curtain and I saw that all of us standing there had felt Her touch.

A moment later Mother again opened the curtain, just as I was brushing something from my forehead. It turned out to be a wasp or a bee, and as Mother looked it stung me. Then She left the window. Atmananda said to rub the spot with a lemon for ten or fifteen minutes. Gadadhar ran to his room and returned with a piece of lemon. In only a few seconds the sting was completely gone. Ram commented that it was interesting how that happened as Mother watched-as though to satisfy some *karma* of a hundred years or something. It well may have been so, as She does things in seemingly ordinary ways like that. Whatever it may have been, I was certainly blessed.

It was a long and wonderful day!

At 10:00 a.m. the next morning we came to the ashram in hopes of a brief darshan. Bhaskaranandaji said that Mother was not well, but was a little better than yesterday. He told us that we could see Her through the window. She sat by that window for a while then walked to another where *bhoga* was offered to Her. Later She came to the roof terrace in the front of the building and was seated upon a chair. Some devotees went up the stairs to pronam but we stood below gazing at her. It sounds strange, but at times like that I felt very protective of Her and wished not to cause the least burden to Her seemingly delicate health. At the same time, I was in complete awe of Her irresistible power and strength which could, in a flash, produce such energy that not a living soul could keep pace with Her. So She plays!

After every one had been sent down from the roof, Dr. Triguna Sen had a private with Mother, then he called my name. I thought he was calling someone else, but

when I pointed to myself he nodded yes. We hurried up the stairs and Dasu opened the gate so that we could enter and pronam to Mother. I said, "Ma," as I bowed and She smiled tenderly at us. Dr. Sen told us that Mother had asked him if there was anyone who had not been up. He replied, "The couple from America." Thus we were brought to Her feet for that special blessing.

In four days Mother was scheduled to leave Hardwar and proceed to Varanasi on the Doon Express. Satya went to the train station and got reservation and tickets for our passage on the same train. We were fortunate to get a coupe which afforded us privacy for the long trip.

At 5:30 p.m. we again stood beneath Mother's window as She sat upon Her bed. About an hour later we were all given permission to go up to Her room. I had fashioned new eyes for our little Gopalji-big brown Indian eyes which looked to me more like a baby's eyes. After I had done that I began to wonder if I had erred doing so and was quite anxious to ask Mother about it. Atmanandaji translated my concern to Mother and as light was quite dim Satya held his flashlight so that it shone upon Gopalji's little face. Mother gazed at Him saying that it was "Thik" (all right) and He looked "very beautiful." I was greatly relieved. Dasu commented that He was a very special Gopal.

The next day was December twenty-fifth, Christmas. Some of the westerners there wanted to present gifts to Mother on that day. We were happy for the opportunity to have darshan and bought a large basket of fruits for Mother so that She could distribute it if She chose. By 10:30 a.m. we were once again in the courtyard below Her window. Mother sent for us to come up and I got a few nice photos. Satya took movies but later was sad to learn that no film had been in his camera. After the gifts were offered we pronamed, went downstairs, then returned to the Bungalow where a special feast had been prepared.

The dining room employees had decorated the table with flowers and leaves in a very artistic way. The napkins had been folded to look like birds and were nested in the glasses at each place setting. The menu was varied and so nicely prepared. There was rice with raisins and spice, *paneer* with curry and mustard sauce, a vegetable souffle, a curd dish, puris, fruit salad cream (my favorite), vegetable salad, tomato soup, rasgullas, and gulab jamuns. Also a cake made of "barfi" with "Happy Christmas" printed on top of it. There were seven of us at that table and we all ate until we were unable to move. It was grand!

The beautiful Shivamurti, waiting in our room, was scheduled to be shown to Mother today, We wanted to ask Her to bless Him for Bhakti, First we carried the Lord's murti down the steps of the ghat to the great Ganges River as it swept past

the Tourist Bungalow. There, as the water lapped upon the lower steps, I placed the murti in that sacred stream and bathed Him in the very same waters which had blessed as first they came to this earth.

According to the Puranas, when those scared waters flowed from the toe of Lord Vishnu toward the earth, the force and power was so strong that the earth could not have withstood it. The merciful Lord Shiva moved beneath the flow and caught its force upon His brow and matted locks from which it harmlessly fell on the lofty Himalyas, and carries the blessing of His compassion down and across this ancient land to Calcutta where it becomes the sea. It is said that all of the water on this earth originated with the Ganges.

After His bath I wrapped Lord Shiva in His asana, placed Him in a basket, and we carried Him to the ashram. Brahmachari Nirvanananda, who had procured the Shiva murti for Bhakti, was to accompany us to Mother's room and translate. We waited about two hours, then Nirvananandaji sent for us to join him in Mother's room. Atmananda came with us. There we saw that the Mahant of Nirvani Akhada and his brahmachari were sitting near Mother. He was waiting for private time with Her.

Nirvanananda told Mother about the Shivaji and I gave a garland to Mother as an offering from Bhakti. Mother placed the garland around Lord Shiva. She commented that He was Madrasi style. Satya held Him so that Mother could see His hair in back and then turned Him to face Her. The Mahantji was impressed with the beauty and grace of the murti. Before covering Him in plastic, I asked Mother to bless him so that She would be the last to touch Him. I wished to tell Mother that He had been bathed in the Ganges and was able to use one of the words which I had learned from Hemantbhai. I said, "Ma, Shivaji Ganga *snān*"-not phrased properly I'm sure, but the idea was conveyed and every one laughed, especially the Mahant who repeated "*Ganga snān*" as he laughed. Mother caressed Shivaji with Her little hands, touching the entire murti front and back, then touched Her hands to Her forehead. Her loving kindness filled us as we pronamed and reluctantly left.

A light rain fell that evening as Satya went to fill two large jugs with Ganga *jal*. We would take them with us when returning to America. Hoping to take a photo of Mother with the Shiva murti, I came in the morning with my camera. Gadadhar had kept Shivaji in his kutir for us and went to get Him. Atmanand told us that the others who were there had been to Mother's room for pronam earlier. When Mother saw us, we were told to come up.

Some people from another ashram were in the room with Mother. We did not know them. One large elder lady sat just in front of Mother. Her head had been



shaved and her sari was covering it. When I went to pronam to Mother I saw that the lady was holding Mother's hand in hers, looking at it and stroking it. She turned Mother's hand over, with the palm up, talking all the while to Mother. Then the lady placed Mother's hand upon her shaved head. I was watching Mother, who looked at me and softly laughed.

Satya pronamed, and then we sat near the door with the camera ready, waiting for Gadadhar to bring Lord Shiva's murti. The person whom I had asked to translate for me declined and said that I should ask a certain lady there. I did not know her, and when I started to ask she interrupted me very curtly and said that Mother had asked her to tell us to go downstairs. It was like a slap in the face to me. Gathering the camera and other things we went downstairs. Now I realize how foolish I was to accept that Mother had turned me away when only a few minutes before She had called us to come to Her. How easily the ego is wounded—how small my faith.

That evening's darshan was cancelled and we stood in the courtyard talking with Swami Virajanandaji. I asked him if he thought Varanasi would be better, with more access to Mother. He said that it would most likely be crowded there as Mother's program had been announced in advance. Then he offered these words of Mother's about such conditions, "If you want to take a dip in the ocean but you want to wait until all the waves have stopped, it is not possible. It will never happen. If you want to go in, you must plunge in as it is." He went on to say, "If life were as I would wish it, it would not be as someone else would wish it. But it is as it is and we must accept it."

The next morning I awoke with a miserable stomach ache, and most of that day I spent in bed sorry for myself. Satya stayed with me. Our friends came to our room that evening to see why we had missed the lovely darshan.

Our train trip was set for the following day. By Mother's grace someone gave me a new medication which enabled me to get up, pack our luggage late in the evening, and be ready to travel to Varanasi with Ma.

[ To continue ]

## MATRI-SMRITI MUSEUM

—Sri Priyabrata Bhattacharjee

Of course from the spiritual perspective, Ma Anandamayee is an eternal personality. Theologically, Ma Anandamayee, is the Mother, as is stated in Rig-Veda by the name of Aditi<sup>1</sup>. Ma Anandamayee the Supreme Self is completely transcendental, and She exists beyond time and space. As far as Her manifest leela in the material world, Ma as we know appeared some 108 years ago and she was worshipped as the supreme personality of Godhead in her own time. A good number of celebrated Sadhus and Mahatmas proclaim this of her. Sri Omkarnath Sitaramdas, Ramthakur, Swami Vishnupuriji, Mahanamabrata Brahmachari and Balananda Brahmachari all attested to Mother's Godship unequivocally. We are living in an age when compassion, truth and love from Ma shine with increasing brightness on devotees of the globe. She may have left our physical world, but her flavour of spiritual knowledge; teaching and preaching remain as the source of self-realisation forever.

It is scarcely necessary to emphasize the common task of preserving the articles of daily use of Ma and handing them intact to our posterity. The Museum will serve as a center of spiritual love and will be looked upon with pride and admiration for future generation. The setting up of the Matrismruti Museum of primarily antiquarian interest at Kankhal, under the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, has indeed great importance. On the one hand, it has opened up a vital scope for diffusing Ma Anandamayee's spiritual vibration in the world, while on the other; it has introduced the provision for preservation of our ancient cultural heritage among the masses of the globe. Besides, the aim of setting up of this Museum is to preserve the cultural remains of Ma which is diminishing due to the impact of modernization. Matrismruti Museum has undertaken painstaking effort to preserve the used and unused objects of Mother along with photographs and manuscripts. It also preserves all memories of Mother in the form of books, audio-visual aids, letters, used utensils, hand writings of Mother, textiles, metal objects, cooking apparatus and other objects and articles associated with Mother's personal use, and religious paraphernalia etc. of different items which project a vivid picture of the cultural heritage of our Mother. Here, in this Museum, various articles relating to Mother's contribution to our spiritual and cultural heritage are kept, primarily, for the purpose

of preservation and secondarily, for doing researches on them, and thereby increasing the horizon of our knowledge.

Museum is a temple of learning for the benefit of mankind. From the museological point of view, this Museum will serve, by extension, the purpose of imparting knowledge of self-realisation through love, compassion and tolerance. It will also uphold the traditional Vedic values, ancient Indian culture, message of the Vedanta, and Sacchidananda consciousness among the devotees and visitors.

Museum has been the center of non-formal education since the earliest times. The term 'Museum' is derived from the Greek word 'Muses<sup>2</sup>' and refers to nine sisters or Greek Goddesses of learning, equivalent to Indian counterpart of Saraswati. It is an institution, which store and exhibits objects of history, art, science, industry and other more specialized categories<sup>3</sup>.

In India, we find that some rulers of the ancient period had great collections of paintings, which were preserved in a special building. The Indian ruler Bimbisara maintained a royal gallery<sup>4</sup>. Kalidasa, in his 'Malavikagnimitra', 'Raghuvamsa' and 'Meghaduta' mentioned about 'Chitrashala', both royal and public<sup>5</sup>. The most renowned temples of India like Somnath, Brihadisvara, Kailashnath, Ramesvara etc were repositories of art objects. The donations of rich patrons and devotees of all classes have enriched these temples which store gold, silver, jewels, ornaments, dresses, metal and stone wares, ritual utensils, musical instruments, palanquins, wooden or brass chariots etc, not to speak of priceless specimens of sculptures and paintings. In fact, the habit of collection was continued also in the medieval India. Firoz Tughlak showed keen interest in Ashokan Pillar and he had placed an Ashokan pillar on the roof of his fortress palace<sup>6</sup>. The Moghul rulers Akbar, Jehangir and Humayun were also great patrons and collectors of paintings<sup>7</sup>.

The temples of Bengal in the late medieval period were the treasure houses of terracotta art. They were, in fact, the rural museums of different icons and deities, the wonderful repositories of Indian mythology and wisdom. They pictured Ramayana, Mahabhārata Bhagavata and often-documented social history<sup>8</sup>.

Museum development in India, in modern sense, is merely two hundred years old. The establishment of the Asiatic Society at the initiative of Sir William Jones<sup>9</sup> had evoked an unprecedented enthusiasm and genuine interest among men of letters in both India and abroad in the matter of India's golden past. The collections of the Asiatic Society formed the nucleus of Indian Museum, Calcutta, which was opened to public in 1814. Similarly, the materials and spiritual remains housed in the Matri Smriti Museum will create a unique spiritual awakening for thousands of years.

In the wake of such popular enthusiasm of enquiry into Mother's personality and her Divine *lila*, will also provide spiritual inspiration and advancement of mankind. The idea of establishing this Museum to 'promote and diffuse knowledge of the methods of the highest spiritual realisation' has been translated into reality now.

As there are no archaeological findings at Kankhal collection of Museum objects have been confined to religio-cultural objects and socio-cultural objects only. This Museum with different rare objects of spiritual value has already drawn the attention of general devotees and sadhus far and wide. It has so far been able to collect a good number of items from the different Ashrams under Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha.

The basic task of any museum is preservation or care of objects by chemical treatment to check the deterioration of precious exhibits. Objects of daily use, utensils, textiles and paper etc are subject to natural aging and decay. Therefore, conservation is necessary for the maintenance of the originality without any alteration. In fact, conservation is the action taken to prevent aging and decay. It embraces all acts that prolong the life of cultural, national and international heritage. Conservation actually means all the processes of looking after objects so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to circumstances includes preservation, restoration and adaptation; and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these. Here, preservation deals directly with cultural property. Its object is to keep an object in its existing state. Repair may be carried out when necessary to prevent further decay. In this connection it may be said that the word conservation is defined for the maintenance of ancient cultural heritage with certain fundamentals and the term conservation has been used by the foreigners and preservation has been used by us in India.

New method of preservation work of cultural objects can control the deteriorating agencies. Control of climate and environmental conditions like humidity, temperature and lightning in the museum can check the decaying factors of objects.

It may be noticed here that the custodian of Museum should know the deteriorating quality of microclimate. It is desired that in the microclimate the objects of museum may not be allowed to dry quickly. Climate may be controlled through airconditioning. Besides, a new type of Silica gel has been developed which has the capacity to absorb or desorb more water vapour per unit of its weight than the normal gel. It is marketed under the trade name of 'Art-sorb'<sup>10</sup>. Nikka pellets<sup>11</sup> may be used in the showcases as a humidity-buffering agent. Small humidifiers<sup>12</sup> may be used in the bottom part of showcase to control the environment in the

gallery. Exhaust fans may be applied to balance the variation. It is also necessary to keep the temperature and relative humidity uniform. The temperature and relative humidity of 22-24°C (72-75°F) and 45-55% respectively are most suitable for a museum.

Light, natural and artificial creates a danger to certain categories of objects. It may not be out of place to say that all objects of organic materials are more or less affected by it. The damaging effects of light on museum objects depend on the intensity of light, duration of exposure, special characteristic, i.e. photo-chemically active wave-length and nature of the materials. These effects of light in museum should be controlled by minimizing the intensity of light falling on the objects, exposing the objects to the light for a minimum period of time and active radiation from the light.

Fire may destroy the museum and turn the objects into ashes. Therefore, precaution must be taken against fire. Fixing of fire detectors in the museum is ideal as a protection against fire. If there be any smoke in the museum area, it will be indicated through detectors. Immediately arrangements can be made to extinguish the fire. It is said that the Laser beam<sup>13</sup> detectors are very sensitive and may sense fire from a distance of as much as 100 meters. Fire extinguishers containing Carbon dioxide gas should also be fixed outside the museum.<sup>14</sup> A good number of special types of fire extinguishers are available. Some extinguishers should be arranged in the museum and it is necessary that regular training may be given to the staff of the museum as to how the fire fighting equipment is operated.

We are all very well aware that dampness and stagnant air is harmful for the museum as they create favourable conditions for the growth of mildew, silverfish and other insects. Biological causes can be controlled by two main methods of treatment of cultural objects with insecticides: fumigation and application in the form of a solution. Fumigation is very effective method of control of insects. Use of insecticides in the galleries is most effective measures to check the micro-organisms and biological activities on the Museum objects. Besides, there should be some guidelines of controlling agencies up the museum objects, regular cleaning and periodic inspections. Cleanliness of the museum and of the objects is necessary for the control of fungus. Proper care should be taken against dust and the museum must have the dust removing equipment. Vacuum cleaner having a hosepipe and brush fitting, gives satisfactory service. It is also desired that proper care should be taken in handling the objects. All attempts of preservation will be vain if care in handling the objects is not observed.

Conservation of objects is the most fundamental task of the museum. It is said that most objects are deteriorated due to lack of care or due to improper storage and neglect. Primarily, the objects need proper treatment of defects already present in

them and secondarily, protection from further damage and maintenance of their conditions.

There are a lot of problems in a museum to preserve the objects and the real problem has been posed by inadequacy of the existing facilities.<sup>15</sup> Due to the recent developments in science and technology, new methods of preservation of art and cultural objects and scientific study of their character, composition, structure, fabrication etc can control the deteriorating agencies.

Of course, unfolding greater awareness for the traditional values and culture, the preservation of Matri Smriti Museum is needed. The spiritual and cultural heritage of this museum shall play a unique role to the advancement of knowledge and education. In fact, the responsibility of their preservation is a compulsory task for us, because these precious evidences of Mother's contribution towards the world thought and culture may pave the glorious way to human destiny.

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## References

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