

# **MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA**

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

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**Ma standing in the Varanasi 'ashram compound in early fifties.**

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## MATRI VANI

All this, which is His creation is under His dispensation and in His presence and it is He.

In whatever state He keeps any one at a time --- it is all for the best, for verily everything is ordained by Him, is of Him.

Relative happiness, that is happiness depending on anything, must end in grief. It is man's duty to meditate on God—Who is Peace Itself. Without giving heed to that which aids the remembrance of God there can be no peace. Have you not seen what the world is? The One to be loved is God. In Him is everything — Him you must try to find.

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Divine discontent arises spontaneously ---- it is the Divine that awakens it.

To lose all is to gain all. He is merciful and compassionate. Whatever He does at any time is all for the best, though certainly painful at the moment. When He manifests Himself as all-loss, there is hope that He may also manifest Himself as all gain. To pine for the One who helps towards the light of Truth is salutary, for it kindles the awareness of Truth.

Verily, He is everywhere at all times.

The endeavour, to awaken his real nature is man's duty as man.

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Human birth — does it not ordinarily mean experiencing desire, passion, grief, suffering, old age, disease, happiness, pain and so on ? Yet, it is man's duty to bear in mind that he exists for God alone — for His service and for His realisation.

To say, "I don't know, I don't understand", is but ignorance. It is this veil that causes agony and misfortune.

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In the field of his play there is both getting and losing. This is but the nature of its movement. Think of Him, who cannot be lost. Meditate on Him alone, on Him, the Fountain-of-goodness. Pray to Him; depend on Him. Try to give more time to His name and to His contemplation. Surrender your mind at His Feet. Endeavour to sustain japa and meditation without a break.

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All the 24 hours are to be spent in Quest of God (*Sāadhan-Bhajan*). The desire to find God has to be specially fostered. To be a human being means to place first and foremost the desire for Self-realisation. Except for the little time necessary for the service of the family, all the rest must be devoted to japa, meditation, the reading of scriptures, worship, prayer and self-dedication. Yearn and cry for Him for His own sake. If opportunity arises seek *Satsang*. Whenever this is not possible strive to keep *sadbhāvā* enshrined in your heart.

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How can one be a human being without fortitude? To attain to Truth one has to endure all difficulties, ever abiding in patience. It is the obstacles that call forth patience.

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Speak the truth to all. Secrecy, slyness and deception amount to cheating. They only taint the mind and set one floating on a sea of misery.

A truthful, pure and holy life tends towards joy and happiness supreme.

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Ever to seek refuge at the Feet of the Lord is man's one and only duty. Try to engage in worship, the reading of sacred books, japa and meditation in the form that appeals to you most.

When the time is ripe God provides for everything. Try to be aware of Him in your heart.

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Work with your hands and keep the name of your Lord (*Ishta*) in your mind. This will improve your work and it may also do good to your family.

To lead family life disregarding religious duty is to embark on an ocean of misery. If family life is sought, it must always be based on the dictates of religion and righteousness.



## IN ASSOCIATION WITH MA ANANDAMAYEE

[ Translated from Bengali ]

—Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Dhaka ashram, 17th August, 1939

Pramatha Babu : Ma, I want to ask you something ; Besides our mother who gave us birth, we are told to have another Mother who understands our joys and sorrows, to whom we can submit our unreasonable grievances, who puts up with our egotism and helps us in times of danger and distress -- does such a Mother really exist or not ?

Mataji : She does.

Pramatha: Then why is this Mother so unattached and devoid of affection ?

Mataji : In what way ?

Pramatha : Just now you were comforting someone with the remark that in family life one has to endure sorrow and bereavement. If someone lives among thorns he is bound to be scratched. What kind of a Mother is she who cannot save us from the scratches ?

Mataji : Don't you know ? You are also the parents of children. You let your children play games because you know this is good for them. While playing they sometimes hurt themselves falling down, or get covered with mud and dirt. But when you scrub and clean them they start crying loudly. Similarly when in your family life you suffer pain and sorrow, remember this is nothing else but your Mother cleaning you of dirt.

Pramatha : But do we understand this ? When the mother beats her children they know it is their mother who is beating them. This is why, even when they weep they are crying "Ma!"

Mataji : No, this is not correct. When children cry while being cleaned they resent the discomfort of it. Later they come to understand that their mother has given them trouble in order to rid them of dirt.

Having started on the simile of children's education, I can also point out that the mother does not entrust all things to her children in spite of loving them. She carefully puts away articles that are of value, otherwise they might be spoiled by her children. When the time is ripe the mother entrusts those things to her sons and

daughters. So there is no cause for despair. Continue to perform your work. If you do not see quick results, remember your labour is not wasted. The Mother is preserving everything and at the right moment will hand it over to you.

Pramatha: So we can rely on the Mother?

Mataji: I assure, you can be entirely free from all anxiety. Just go on practising your japa or whatever other spiritual exercise you may have chosen.

Rajkumar: Why do you insist on *nama japa* or similar practices? Our worldly mother does not insist on anything for ensuring the well-being of her children.

Mataji : This Mother is somewhat different from your worldly mother. This Mother wants Her sons and daughters to develop all virtues. They should become endowed with Her qualities and become like Her. This is why She tells Her children to resort to the Name. Besides you can observe that the worldly mother also prevails on her children to take the trouble of studying well so that after education they may be able to look after their parents properly. But that Mother wants to mould Her children in her own image. She wishes to inculcate into Her children all Her virtues and qualities, so that these may be revealed to them by their own experience. For these reasons this Mother is somewhat different from the worldly mother."

At these words of confident assurance from Sri Ma everyone present appeared to be very much relieved. There was a look of joy in their eyes and faces. But how long would this wonderful feeling last ? We are not even aware of when the clouds of doubt and disbelief arise and darken our dimly lit horizon.

The time of our departure had come. Sri Ma said to Rajkumar : "Your way is now clear. With single-minded determination continue to tread this path".

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

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

On listening to these words of Ma I recalled something that Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj\* had told me. One day he was explaining to me the difference between

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\*. *Mahamahopadhyaya* Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj, M.A. D.Litt., the renowned scholar-cum-Saint of Varanasi, a great *Sādhaka*

keeping company with someone beyond the range of the three *gunas* (*gunātita*) and a *mahatma* endowed with all the nobler qualities (*sattwa*). He pointed out that in associating with such *mahatmas* one could get considerable help in one's *sadhana*, because by their *sāttvic* influence, one's evil tendencies are temporarily subdued, so much so that they don't seem to exist anymore. At that time it looks as if close proximity to these *mahatmas* has brought much success in one's *sadhana*. But these undesirable qualities have not been completely uprooted, though temporarily subdued, and in due course, given the opportunity, they will awaken once more. Whereas association with Sri Ma, who is beyond the three *gunas* has not at all this effect. The company of such an exalted Being does not stimulate the nobler or baser tendencies at all, because such a Being is completely beyond the attributes (*gunas*) of matter and so does not influence anyone by the qualities of *sattva* (luminosity, harmony) or *rajas* (ceaseless activity and movement). Quite often it even appears as if there were not only no progress but rather retrogression. This is due to the fact that association with a being beyond the qualities or attributes (*gunas*) of matter brings to light and may even temporarily enhance suppressed tendencies and inclinations. They rise up with full force only to be destroyed for ever and by their annihilation noble qualities and inclinations are awakened and established for good. But at the early stage a dreadful experience has to be gone through by the *sadhaku*.

The above-mentioned words of Sri Sri Ma seemed to vindicate the substantive truth of Sri Gopinath Kaviraj's philosophy.

### **Dhaka, August 20th, 1939**

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

Ma : What shall I say ?

Pramatha Babu : Whatever you have in mind.

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

I : Whatever you feel inclined to.

Ma : Here, there is no inclination or disinclination.

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

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



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

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

Ma : Why do you study ?

I : To acquire knowledge.

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

I : When Sri Ram Thakur's disciples complained to him in their disappointment: "Baba, we are unable to repeat the Name properly, so what is to be done?" Thakur would reply: "Can the Name be repeated deliberately ? The Name comes about spontaneously. Even though you may not be doing anything, the Name is there automatically. If this were not so, what did I bestow on you ?" What is the purport of these words of Ram Thakur ? What precisely does the Guru give through *diksha* Even though we have no experience of it, yet a certain action is taking place within us. How is this possible?

Ma : What do you understand by *diksha* ?

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

Ma: All this is very true, completely true.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ma : This is why it is said that it is the Guru who out of His Grace leads to that Goal. It is impossible to achieve merely by one's own actions.

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

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

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

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

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

Ma : Leave aside the question of this body.

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

Ma : I do not ask you to leave aside the question of this body. You can even ask this body "to go to hell". (Everybody bursts into loud laughter). Do you not frequently call someone an "idiot"? You can ignore this body as an idiot. (Again loud laughter).

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

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

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

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

Pramatha : I do not relish all these questions.

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

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

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

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

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

[ To continue ]

## THE FIRST MEETING.....

—A European devotee

It was in 1971, and I was living at Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvennamalai. One day I was visiting the room of an American couple I knew and they said they had been to Calcutta and had met a lady saint who had impressed them much. They showed me a photo of an elderly lady — but it looked to me just that — a photo of an elderly lady. The thought of a lady saint was a strange one at that time and I was not interested.

Then some months later we got the news that Ma Anandamayi, who was the lady they had met, was coming south to Madras for the first time in 20 years — as generally she was always travelling in the North of India. I then thought that if I should meet her I should at least find out something about her. Accordingly, I called on Mrs. Talyarkhan, a Parsi lady who lived near the ashram and was a devotee of her, as I was informed. She showed me a slim picture album about the lady, and I took it back to my room to study it. I was perusing this booklet when I found as I looked at it that one of the photos became alive, as it were. One could feel such a living energy emanating from it — and this affected me deeply. I had never seen a photo that had this effect before.

From that time I could hardly wait for her to come. Everyday I was counting the days of her arrival - 58, 57, 56 ..... If the reader has ever been sent off to boarding school then they may know how the young children count the days until they can be home again. It was inexplicably like that.

Finally the day in January came. There was a group of foreigners staying at Sri Ramanashram and may be a dozen of us set off by bus for Madras. Anandamayi Ma was staying for 3 days in a little-purpose-built cottage in the grounds of the large house of Smt. M. S. Subhalakshmi and her husband Sri. Sadasivan. When we reached the place a crowd had already gathered. We walked down a slope towards the people, all in white, and I wondered if Ma would stand out in any way. Even at a distance my eyes were drawn to a figure sitting on a couch, dressed in white, with black hair. As we approached I could see she was sitting sideways

looking to the left of the crowd, motionless. She did not appear to be looking at anybody there, she was just looking ahead of her. After a short while I found myself moving round to the side of the people so I could see directly towards her face. I found my body to start shaking for no reason. Luckily there was a railing on the side of the building, and I held onto it, shaking. It was all a mystery to me. After some time the darshan was over and Ma retired from sight.

Our group left for our hotels. But that night I could not sleep at all. I was just lying in a completely peaceful alert state. The next day we returned to the cottage and had a place right in the front near Ma's couch. Being January it was cool with a brilliant blue sky and the sun was glinting on the ponds of the palm trees. Pushpadi and some other ashram girls were singing such beautiful kirtan, it was like a paradise.

After some time Sri Ma came out and took her place. The kirtan went on and waves of emotion were coming from within me, from where I did not know, nor why — but it was hard to contain. After the darshan was over because we were known to Mrs. Talyarkhan, and because she was organising Ma's tour, she arranged for our group to meet Ma privately afterwards. Ma was sitting in a pandal at the back of the cottage and one by one we could do our pranams to her. Having been familiar with Ramana Maharshi's way of looking into one's eye I was hoping such a thing might happen. I looked at Ma as I knelt at her feet but her eyes were looking here, there .... then gradually she brought them down and our eyes just met, touched and hers were away again.

After the *darshan* we were given lunch in the palatial mansion of M.S. Subhalakshmi and her husband.

I forget all the details of the following satsangs while Ma was in Madras, but what sticks in my memory is that Ma was in *Mauna*. She would write on her or another's hand palm to indicate what she wanted to say. M. S. Subhalakshmi and her daughter Radha sang several times - and those who know of her and her devotion can imagine how beautiful her renditions were as she sat at Sri Ma's feet. Ma herself sang, notably - "*Hey Bhagavan*", possibly, I thought through the unseen influence of the many devotees of Ramana Maharshi, who were there.

The following day, I think, it was time for Ma to take the train to Trivandrum, where she was to attend the function at the request of the Travancore Maharaja. We

gathered at the station to see her off. It was so touching to see M. S. Subhalakshmi press her hands to her heart and then towards Ma, and Ma (in *mauna* ) responding in the same way. Ma was sitting cross legged on her seat and as the train picked up speed I ran with it and saw her tiny feet as she put them on the ground with the people gone.

The effects of this visit to see Ma took some time to digest, as it had brought on me a considerable inner upheaval. But already I was planning, when could I next see her .... ?

*"If you engage yourself in ceaseless, uninterrupted service directed to Him, then only by His mercy the waters of the Ganga of Knowledge will wash away all your desires and doubts and only then will you "be at peace."*

## CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI VIJAYANANDA

[Three]

Q. What is the influence of food on *sadhana* ?

A. The way we eat has a long influence on our mind (*jaisa anna taisa mann*) what we eat and how we eat, it can be of help (if *sattvic*) or an obstacle to *sadhana* (like meat). In this field like in many others, it is good to find a balance. Both asceticism and excess are to be avoided. Moderation is the ideal. One should treat the body with respect, but without identifying oneself to it, like a horserider treats his horse.

It happens to many *sadhakas* to look for some pleasure in food, since they do not allow themselves any other worldly pleasure. That might go on until the *sadhaka* finds real joy in meditation; then he will feel no attraction towards such external and transient pleasures. While trying to keep a balance with *sattvic* food taken in moderate quantity, (giving the body what it needs, not less and not more), one should remember that what someone eats is not as important as how much sincere compassion and love this person gives !

Q.- What do you mean when you speak about the ability to control one's own mind ?

A.- It is the ability to stop one's thoughts at will, to keep the mind silent when it is not necessary to use it. It enables one to dominate desires, fears, instincts and impulses; then reason controls passion. This discipline of self-control makes the difference between any strong person and weak person, and it enables a *sadhaka* to make rapid progress. When the mind is under control, we see that no problem really exists. Problems are only in the mind ! We don't have problems when we are in deep dreamless sleep; in that state the world doesn't exist. In a similar way, when we control our thoughts and emotions, we become free from the illusions and negative beliefs that veil reality, and we get in touch with our real nature, which is the Divine itself.

This is why spiritual practice consists of acquiring control over the mind and purifying it, so that our real Self can be unveiled and shine.



Q.- How should we deal with *Kundalini* ?

A. The main rule about *Kundalini* is never to force anything, in any way. An awakening of this force should happen only with the close supervision of a *Satguru* (a fully realised Sage). Any opening of the *nadis* (first step to the awakening of the *Kundalini*) should happen only when the *sadhaka* has an excellent self-control (mainly over sexual desire and anger). The *Satguru* puts the disciple to the test to see if he (or she) can resist under the pressure of the enormous - and dangerous - intensity that comes with *Kundalini*. So one should never *do* anything about it, just let the *Satguru* take care of it, while getting ready by leading a pure life (including strict celibacy) and learning to control the mind. Before reaching that stage or before having a close relationship with a *Satguru*, the way of *karmayoga* is the best, since it can be practised anywhere and under any circumstances.

Q.- What is *karmayoga* exactly ?

A. It has to be distinguished from *seva*, which is unselfish service and can be a preparation to *karmayoga*. Real *karmayoga* is a mental attitude to be kept in all circumstances, in every activity. Ego's root is the wrong belief that "I am the doer and I enjoy the fruit of my actions", so ego loses its power if you keep aware that you really are just an instrument for the Divine, and if you simply do your own duty without caring for the results. If success comes it is fine, and in case of failure it is fine as well.

Little by little, you get a clear perception of the fact that you really are a tool for the work of the *Absolute*, and everything happens in a spontaneous way. You have less and less expectations and attachments.

Body, mind and emotions are a whole. There are no thoughts without emotion or without at least some kind of attraction or repulsion. A sage like Ma Anandamoyi has no thought and no emotion, being pure compassion and pure awareness, and identifying with people in order to communicate with them in a "normal" way.

Q.- What is it like to be Self-realized ?

A. No "I" is there anymore, only pure Consciousness-Bliss.

In order to describe the ultimate stage to enlightenment - called *sahaja samadhi*, which he had reached, Ramdas used to say about himself that he is like the Ganga: although he had reached the Ocean (the Absolute), he went on flowing towards the Ocean (living in the world), while being

always aware simultaneously of both levels and of their Unity. A perfect Sage cannot be said to be "be happy", since he is Supreme Happiness. He sees that the waves of duality (the world) are made of the same salty water as the perfectly still water of deep Ocean (Bliss of Unity). The only difference is the movement. The perfect Sage sees that everything is Consciousness, beyond all the pairs of opposite like good and evil, praise and blame, pain and pleasure etc.

He sees that movement also is divine, and he knows that the movement will take everything away, so he does not try to keep anything nor anybody. He is without attachment or expectations; in this freedom genuine Love can be.

Q.- Would you please explain more about these two levels (duality of the world and Bliss of Unity) ?

A. - The Divine Supreme is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, meaning Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, and it is also the essence of each person. In the world we see its reflection as *Asti-Bhati-Priyo*, which means, it is-it shines-it is attractive. This reflection (the sense pleasures etc.) is only an illusion, but it seems real because it is based on the Absolute. It has its force, that is why it is so difficult to resist its temptations ! The key is discrimination, which means to see that real Bliss is inside of ourselves, and the objects outside are disappointing and do not bring real joy, being only the result of a mirror effect.

Q.- Why do we lie so much to ourselves and consequently also to others ?

A.- One of the laws of the creation, like also physics laws as gravity etc., is the law of harmony (called *Rita* ). *Rita* is such that people cannot do anything "bad" without being in some way convinced that it is the right thing to do. That is why the mind finds all kinds of excuses, rationalizations and justifications when we go out of the way of *Dharma*. Thus, thinking that it is the right action, we can commit evil deeds while feeling in harmony with ourselves. The inner Self (the Divine) gives the choice between listening to the voice of *Dharma* or to the lying mind; but after a "bad action" the voice of the inner Self will manifest itself with remorse and a bad conscience, so that we can repair what can be repaired, and avoid making the same mistake again.

*Rita* is the law that explains why it is not possible for evil forces to win in the end: the final victory necessarily belongs to good forces; just like in the World Wars.

Q.- What are the main mistakes that can lead a *sadhaka* to lose the spiritual power gained in meditation ?

A.- The first main temptation to use this spiritual power in a way that will not allow any more spiritual progress is using the power to heal. Instead of it, one should only use compassion or repeat a mantra to help people who suffer, but one should never do anything voluntarily in order to heal anybody (apart from taking him to the doctor !). The second one is yielding to the desire to use spiritual power (and the charisma that often comes with regular meditation) in order to gain power over people, to gain money, or wasting the spiritual energy in sexual relationships.

The third one is the temptation to become famous or to be a *guru*. It is dangerous, because before achieving complete self-realization a *guru* is like a blind man leading another blind man: both might fall ... And after liberation the sage does not have any desire to become-a *guru*; his mere presence and his example make him naturally a *Sadguru*.

When confronted with these temptations, the *sadhaka* should just be indifferent, not interested in nor afraid of these worldly uses of spiritual power. So he can go on his path, and when he will attain the Goal he will have spontaneously a positive, healing and purifying influence on the people around him.

Q.- How should I deal with the "*sattvic ego*", the part of ego that is so proud of following a spiritual discipline, and often thinks to be more advanced and pure than most other people ?

A.- First of all, remember that it is precisely this *sattvic* ego that does the *sadhana*, and that we need it, because he is the one who makes the efforts towards Self-realization ! So let it be, but keep aware of it, and be careful about excessive pride that could lead to a fall. Later, when you are ready, the *Sadguru* only will be able to eliminate this *sattvic* ego (which is only illusion !). That is the message of the story about the bandits' chief that becomes chief of the police: he will arrest all bandits except for himself.....so at that point the intervention of a *Sadguru* is necessary.

Ego is like the driver of a car, the car being the body and mind. When self-realization occurs, there is no need for a driver anymore, one becomes a pure canal for the Divine.

[To continue]

## JAI MA

—Dhiraj Sapru

... know this entire 'existence', my dear, in it's totality, or should we say. "The very "Concept - of - Existence", when viewed from, nay, through the 'mundane-eye', to be but relative existence....

tell me, my dear, what is "THAT" which is dearest to man ? - in the absence of "WHICH" he ceases to function in his optimum-potentiality ? - for "WHICH" he is willing to walk to the very end of the universe ? - "WHICH" for, he will readily kill, nay, die ?

Tell me - tell me, mate ..... meditate on it though first .... calmly....

..... it is "FREEDOM" that is dearest to mankind, nay, sentient beings ....

yet again, when viewed through the 'mundane-eye', freedom, or should we say, "The very "Concept-of-Freedom", is but mere relative freedom.....

..... you have the freedom to buy yourself a lovely ashram today—for you have the money ... however, your money much as you may have-will last not forever ...

.. you have the freedom to compose and sing the most heart-touching love song today-for joy brims your very being .... however, your joy - pure as it may be-will last not (constantly) forever ....

... you have the freedom to swim in a beautiful, clean-clear-calm lake, on a superb summer morn-for it is your will...however, your will-strong as it may pose up front today - will last not forever, (in-as-much-as it shall unquestionably shrink-frozen on a astoundingly crisp 'n' fresh winter morn)....

... you have the freedom to jam-your-toast to munch away-for it is your taste-and of course jam-toast-hunger are prerequisites.... however, your taste (for jam-toast) will last not forever, (and for that matter, neither jam; toast; nor hunger, will)....

... you have the freedom to think - write - speak, "this" or "that" in accordance with your mood ... however, my dearest, moods last not-they're fluxing - away - forever ....

... yet, away and above all such  
relative - limited - freedom,

there exists

Supreme - Unbound- Freedom

*a state-of perfect-stillness...*

*a state of*

*'no doubt' - 'no becoming'*

*'no coming' - 'no going'*

*'no grasping' - 'no averting'*

*'no being' - 'no ceasing'*

*... however, O fair one, "IT" cannot be spoken about - for IT flees the grip of words (as an absolute testimony of IT's nature); "IT" cannot be explained- for IT halts thought; "IT" most certainly cannot be understood- for it transcends all understanding; "IT" cannot be conceptualized -for IT aint no concept ...*

*all one can say about "IT", is that, "IT IS"*

*realize it ...*

*jai ma*

## **MA'S MAHASAMADHI**

**—Antonio Eduardo Dagnino**

*By that mystic circle where Sati - unburnt - continues to sing to her-husband;*

*At the very spot where Shiva forgot himself*

*Like any mad, heartbroken, adoring human being;*

*Next to the Ganga's purifying, fertilizing swing*

*Out of the turquoise foot-hills and the royal blue peaks....*

*I know a tomb that speaks:*

*There, superconscious, free, fully at ease*

*In a subtle body formed of awareness and peace*

*Anandamayi, the Mother of Delight,*

*Dispenses her deep silence, her sweet light*

*And her profound insight.*

*Secretly, sublimely, covertly,*

*Furtively, beautifully, lovingly,*

*She understands, comprehends, elucidates,*

*Reciprocates, infuses, communicates,*

*Emanates, mutates and emancipates !*

# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

[ Continued from before ]

—Sri P. C. Mehta

## The primitive stage of Hinayana Buddhism:

The main features of primitive Buddhism are summarized hereunder:

### 'Atman' and 'Siddha Paramesthin' during Buddha's time:

We have seen that '*Brahman*' means the eternal principle behind the universe as a whole and '*Atman*' is the inmost essence of one's own self. Passages descriptive of *Brahman* alone or *Atman* alone occur frequently in the earlier literature as well as in the Upanishads. The essential teaching of the Upanishads is the identification of *Atman* with *Brahman*.

It is claimed that in the early Vedic period, man was regarded as distinct from the permanent divine principle which was his substratum. Upanishads transformed this view by identifying this permanent divine principle called *Atman* as the real man and identifying it with *Brahman*.

We have seen that the original Vedic view held out the attainment of heavenly happiness (without the possibility of rebirth), as the final goal of man's earthly life. '*Mukti*' was supposed to come gradually after death. This was called '*Kramamukti*' i.e. the progressive realization of release or '*Moksa*'. During life, man's actions had to be in conformity with '*dharma*' so that they could lead him to heaven on death.

The way to this was by following the path of '*Dharma*', which includes the following: i) living a strictly moral life, ii) leading the '*pravritti*' i. e. activist way of life as taught in the Brahmanas, iii) worshipping the gods, thus emphasizing the rituals.

We have also noted that the Upanishads on the other hand declare that 'liberation in the final sense while still alive', was possible.

It is claimed that Buddha being brought up in the environment of early Vedic period, did not start by thinking in terms of total identification of '*Atman*' with '*Brahman*' and therefore needing nothing more than being awakened in his true identity. As we saw, Jainism is an old religion while the Jaina Tirthankara Vardhaman Mahavira was contemporary of Buddha. Without believing in a creator,

Jainism believes in the divinity of every soul and every soul's capacity to become '*Siddha Paramesthin*' i.e. to come to enlightenment.

As such in Buddha's spiritual unfolding, the Jaina influence could have played some part also. Thus Buddha regarded '*Atman*' as the God-in-man, (which was neither body, emotions nor mind, but spirit or Self of man) which was hidden under the layers of *karma*, desires and '*Tanha-Jal*' i.e. the network of cravings or graspings.

This meant that to come to enlightenment, man had to remove either positively or negatively, the veils covering his true identity, symbolized in the '*Mani-Padma-hum*' or 'I am the Jewel in the Lotus'. In later *Mahayana Buddhism*, in the two schools of '*Vijnānavāda*' and '*Madhyamika*', a major role is played by the difference in the concepts, whether for enlightenment one has to remove the coverings on the 'Spirit' (either positively or negatively); or one has to be awakened to his true identity.

These coverings with which man has identified himself, constitute the lower-self or personality of man, through which he acts or responds to the challenges of life. The tendencies of this lower-self which hides the 'Spirit', persists here as well as hereafter, and transmigrates.

There is an innate urge in man to realize his real Self. His foremost task in life accordingly is to extinguish or 'waning out' of his lower-self and thereby realize his real Self, which being ineffable is described as '*Sunya*'. When Buddha talks about extinguishing the self to reach '*Nibbana*', he is talking about putting an end to the lower self.

Early Buddhism is thus a doctrine of mature wisdom, as it points out a way to end suffering and gain abiding peace and happiness.

### **'Maya' in Primitive Buddhism :**

Dealing with Vedic philosophy, we saw that '*Maya*' is the power or the principle that conceals from us the true character of reality. Buddhism agrees with this view.

The ignorance may be regarded as a) negative, that is merely a lack of insight: or it may be looked upon as b) positive, in the sense that it gives rise to a misapprehension, making us see diversity where there is only the unity of Brahman.

### **The goal of life in Primitive Buddhism :**

The goal of life, as conceived in the Upanishads and which, though couched in different terms, is the same in Buddhism. It is to overcome this congenital ignorance, by attaining full enlightenment or '*Jnana*'. Thereby, the Upanisads claim that one realizes the unity of *Atman* with *Brahman*, while Buddhism asserts that thereby one extinguishes the lower self and reaches '*Nibbana*'.

The enlightened state is called release or '*Nibbana*' ('*Moksa*' in Hinduism), which is release from the empirical state of '*Sansāra*'. Buddha states thus '*Bhava-nirodha-nibbanam*' i.e. that which puts an end to the recurrent round of birth, death and rebirth is '*Nibbana*'. It is reaching the abiding state behind flux which is attaining one's true selfhood in *Brahman* or *Nibbana*.

This enlightenment is not an intellectual apprehension, but actual realization of that unity. The attainment of it involves discipline of the right kind with impeccable moral life. Buddhism holds the same view.

The lower-self which is the ignorance covering the ineffable '*Sunya*', has to be extinguished or removed either positively or negatively.

### **The positive way :**

- i) to come to enlightenment, man has to positively remove the layers concealing his true identity or
- ii) the 'Spirit', which is self-evolving, and which is in the form of a bud with a teleological urge to grow into self-awareness, aids the process through positive action.

In either case the result is achieved through Yogic course of discipline, the steps for which are the same as mentioned under Upanisadic and Yogic practices.

### **The negative way :**

To come to enlightenment, man has not to do any positive act for eliminating the ego, but to let go the lower self and thereby drop the veil of ignorance which prevents discovering one's identity, because it is the individual will which keeps it held together.

Therefore, the way does not lie in effort at removal of the coverings, but in dropping the desires, graspings and cravings or letting go the mischief maker which is '*Tanha*'. The moment this is done, man naturally arrives at his own true Self.

### **Liberation as per Upanisads and Primitive Buddhism :**

As regards the means to liberation, the teachings of the Upanisads and Buddhism are nearly the same. Both have within them the positive as well as the



negative approach. In their unfolding the positive and the negative schools, develop divergent methodologies.

### **Positive approach during primitive Buddhism :**

For primitive Buddhism, the positive approach is more relevant. The positive approach is more directed towards the right exercise of the will to eradicate '*Avijja*'.

It means eradicating the undersirable coverings from the 'Spirit' or helping the self-evolving spiritual bud to grow into a morally perfect entity. In either view, this is possible through complete development of the higher qualities which would overcome the tyranny of the lower. It is the province of yoga, along with *dharma* or '*sila*' meaning moral rectitude, leading to '*samadhi*'.

Buddha places great emphasis, on *dharma* in its ethical sense. It is described as 'The lamp of life' and signifies perfect conduct or godly living. A person who succeeds in breaking through this circle of '*sansāra*', it is claimed, can attain '*Nirvana*' in the present life.

### **Negative approach :**

By the time of the systems, the negative approach came to prevail in Buddhism. It is claimed that as a result Buddhism became thoroughly monastic in character.

### **Buddhism and the Upanisadic Doctrine :**

Early Buddhism differs from the Upanisadic doctrines on the following points.

i) We have seen that the Upanisadic doctrine was intended for the select few. Buddha's teachings were intensely practical being limited only to what was necessary for overcoming evil. For this reason his philosophy is called pragmatic. It deals with the hard facts of life. It is not theoretical. In so far as it excludes whatever was not positively known, it is positivistic. As such his teachings were open to all, thus giving rise to a general uplift of great consequence. However his teachings did have an esoteric counterpart. Buddha knew more as is clear from the following episode. Once when sitting under a simsupa tree, Buddha took a few of its leaves on his hand and asked his disciples that had assembled there to tell him whether they were all the leaves or whether there were more on the tree. When they replied that there were surely many more, he said : 'As surely do I know more than what I have told you'. He did not dwell upon all that he knew, since he saw no practical utility in doing so. 'philosophy purifies none, he said, 'peace alone does'.

Madam Blavatsky, in her '*Secret Doctrine*' says, 'Not to divulge to the unworthy the Sacred Esoteric Literature, Gautam Buddha who was a Hindu reformer limited his public teachings to the purely moral and physiological aspect of the Wisdom-Religion, to Ethics and Man alone.

'Buddhism has the same esoteric teachings as those of the Brahmins. Buddha being a *kshatriya* Hindu and a disciple of Brahmins, his secret doctrine did not differ from the teachings of the initiated Brahmins of his day. The whole Buddhist reform consisted of nothing more than giving out a portion of that secret teachings which was available only to the temple-initiates and ascetics. Though his philosophy was built upon the true esoteric knowledge, because of his pledges, He gave to the world its outward material body and kept its soul for the Elect. -----.'

'Things' unseen and incorporeal', the mystery of Being outside our terrestrial sphere, he left entirely untouched in his public lectures, reserving the hidden Truths for a select circle of his Arhats. The latter received their initiation at the famous Saptaparna cave (the Sattapanni of Mahavamsa) near Mount Baibhar (the Vihara of Pali Mss). This cave was in Rajagriha, the ancient capital of Magadha and was the Cheta cave of Fa-hian, as rightly suspected by some archaeologists. It was first discovered by Mr. Beglor who was the chief engineer and archaeologist at Bodh Gaya.'

ii) While a part of Brahmanism relied on the instruction or help of others, such as a preceptor or grace of God, Buddhism laid stress on self-reliance and self-effort. This adage points to the further fact that all the help may not come to fruition till man acquires, not mediate, but immediate understanding. In the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* it is said, 'Therefore, O Ananda, be ye a lamp unto yourself. Be ye a refuge to yourself. Betake yourself to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the Truth..... Then it continues and says that whosoever shall be a lamp unto himself holding fast to the Truth, without taking external refuge, shall reach the summit.

iii) The Upanisads maintain that because the Self is eternal, it is blissful. The important postulate of Buddhism is that what is temporal or changing is sorrow. *Chandogya Upanisad* says, 'Happiness lies only in the infinite : there is no happiness in the finite.' In one of the dialogues recorded in the *Majjhima Nikaya* (iii. 19), Buddha says, 'And that which is ephemeral, O monks, is it painful or pleasant ? Painful'. To Buddha's outcry—'Sarvam dukkham' i.e. all is suffering. 'Oldenberg says, 'All the waters of all the seas are not to be compared with the flood of tears which has flowed since the universe first was'. Thus Buddha's philosophy though pessimistic, is not a creed of despair, because it admits of the possibility of attaining peace here and now.'

iv) The Upanisads considered that there was a permanent essence of man which they called '*Atman*' which is identical with '*Brahman*', the fundamental substratum of all creation. Early Pali scriptures hold that neither a permanent essence of man

nor an enduring principle behind phenomena can be found. Everything was changing phenomena and therefore sorrow and therefore non-self. Hence the ontological view of Buddhism in contrast to that of the Upanisads is that there are only momentary passing qualities which we should regard as new existences and no unchanging substance behind.

Buddhistic doctrine denies soul or self as a stable entity appearing amidst changing conditions, but it recognizes a 'fluid-self' which because of its very fluidity cannot be regarded as having altogether distinct states. But in so saying, the Buddhist has admitted a self transcending the experience of the moment. In the very act of analyzing the self and dismissing it as but a series of momentary states, he is passing beyond these states and positing an enduring self which is able to view them together, because a series as such can never become aware of itself. Some say that the belief in such a permanent self is in Buddhism and its negation was introduced by later followers.

v) In the Upanisads, the word '*Avidyā*' means ignorance about the *Atman* being identical with *Brahman*. In Buddhism belief in self-identity is the chief '*Avijja*' and the source of all evil. This '*Avijja*' boils down to the ignorance of the four noble truths called '*Arya-Satya*', which are ignorance about sorrow, its cause, its extinction and its means of extinction.

vi) In the Upanisads the object to be attained is '*Moksa*', meaning 'release' from the empirical state of '*Samsāra*' or the recurrent round of birth, death and rebirth, whereby one realizes the unity of *Atman* with *Brahman*. With Buddhism, it is '*Nibbana*', which means 'blowing out', which is the 'blowing out' of the lower self. Much is made about the difference between the two states. Some claim that this ideal amounts to annihilation of the individual. However, there is no doubt that this state is ineffable, and amounts to freedom from suffering. Also '*Nibbana*' does represent a condition which results after reaching perfection, while the individual continues to live. This would correspond to '*Jivan-mukti*'. It is a state when the person leads a life of complete peace and equanimity. He then is an '*Arhant*'.

[ To continue ]

**THE INIMITABLE LIFE STORY**  
**OF**  
**SRI YOGESH BRAHMACHARI**

[TWO]

—Mrs. R. Rattan Singh

After the Kumbh, Yogeshda decided to proceed ahead on his travels. He had heard of Rishikesh, but did not know how to get there. Again a small boy looking very much like a sadhu, came up and said it was 13 miles distance on the road, indicating across the river.

Yogeshda walked for some time till there was habitation around. Then some sadhus directed him to a place where other sadhus lived. But there it was very crowded. He was not a member of the sect. He was given food, but where to spend the night ? The only place he found was under the tin projection of a house. There he settled for the night. His small bundle of a few odds he placed under his head. At dusk he felt someone tugging at it. He discovered a large monkey trying to pull out the bundle. He got up and spent the night sitting huddled up to prevent another attack.

The next day he continued his walk to Rishikesh. Someone warned him not to go too far as the area was all jungle and wild animals prowled about. After halting for the night at some place, he reached Rishikesh.

Again a small boy directed him to go to the Kali Kamli Kshetra. It was meal distribution time. There were many sadhus going to get their food. He was asked to join them. Sadhus usually had piece of cloth tied around their necks, the ends of which were held out, spread wide, to hold the food. Yogeshda had no such cloth, nor did he have a begging bowl. So had to put every thing in his lota, and it was hard to dish out the food from the narrow opening. But he managed somehow. His manners and ways were so unlike those of sadhus. One person while serving him asked how long he had been a sadhu. He felt shy and embarrassed. It was too obvious that he was a beginner. He could not accept uncooked food as he had nothing to cook it in, nor a place to stay. In order to live at the "Kshetra" he had to become a member of the sect. This he could not do.

He could not go to Badrinath as the trip did not materialize. He remembered that he had a friend who worked in the Forest Department at Dehradun. He sent a note

to him and the next day he got a reply. His friend, Rameshwar Banerji would be happy to see him.

He was awed by the sight of the tall trees and the thickness of the jungle growth. Never in his life had he known fear, but these sky-reaching trees, that seemed to engulf him from all sides frightened him.

Soon he found himself at Doiwala with government servants saluting all officers and also him. Later he went to Dehradun with his friend. This was his first visit to the Doon Valley, where later on he spent many many years.

His friend was going on leave to Kashmir. He invited Yogeshda also to join him. But Yogeshda had to go on foot. So they planned to meet at Srinagar. It took almost a month for him to reach there.

As he trekked on the road to Srinagar, cars would pass by. When they hooted driving up the meandering path he could edge the direction of the route and he often took short cuts to the point from where the horn sounded. In this way the journey was considerably shortened. An English man seeing him trudge along, asked where he was going. "Srinagar", was the reply and he was asked to jump into the car. At Srinagar Yogeshda thanked him and proceeded on his way.

A cooli rushed up and asked where he wished to go. He said "Ashram." He was led to a wooden building. Naga sadhus lived there. A few were busy mixing *bhang* in a large utensil. He was permitted to stay, but was directed to the other part of the Ashram for meals. He was given dry ingredients and should cook for himself. This could not do. So the task allotted to him was to distribute food to the sadhus. About eight or ten would come to eat at every meal.

One day he distributed the rice as usual. He did not know that the head sadhu would be coming. When he came there was not enough rice for him. The other sadhus all put the blame on Yogeshda, accusing him of having eaten the food himself as he was in charge of it. After this Yogeshda left the place.

He proceeded to Pahalgam from the bus stop. Coolies took him to another ashram. At night sadhus would come to eat at this "Kshetra". Among them was a Bangali sadhu, who recognized him as one from his homeland. They would go for long walks and sing *Bhajans*. Impressed by his melodious voice the sadhu went and told one Swami Sivananda about Yogeshda. He was invited to the Swami's ashram where other sadhus also lived and was asked to sing a bhajan. He sang a verse by Swami Vivekananda in praise of lord Shiva. The sweet voice and the moving melody expressed the deep devotional feeling of the singer. The Swami was charmed beyond words. The pleasant meetings were then often repeated.

As Yogeshda narrated this event to me, I sat spell bound. When remembering each incident, each moment, all the feelings of the past were revived. When he sang the verse again, his cracking voice was suddenly soft and melodious and his face brightened up as perhaps past memories emerged. His eyes sparkled with a fervor of devotion, strong and vigorous inspite of old age and he gazed with a firm and unshaken gleam of faith that removes the doubt of a disbeliever. I looked earnestly at the face, listening intensively and trying to discern the meaning of some words. He would stop and repeat those words and explain their meaning. He was visibly moved.

Yogeshda stayed a few days at Pahalgam, when plans were made to go to the fair at Kheer Bhawani, the Holy site visited annually by many devotees. It was a few day's journey by ponies and all arrangements were made for food, conveyance and stay. Just as they were leaving, a messenger from his friend, the forest officer, came running, "Ah, we have found you at last". They had looked for him in all the ashrams but could not find him. His friend was waiting for him. But Yogeshda could not meet him as he was committed to visit Kheer Bhawani, and did not like to change his programme.

After attending the fair, he joined his friend and together they went to the Amarnath cave. Darshan is usually during Sravan Purnima day. But they had to make the trip a month ahead as his friend's leave was expiring.

The climb was in three stages. The third stop was in a tent pitched in a cave covered with snow. Above 10,000 ft. there were no trees, only some shrubby growth and snow. Higher up there was only snow. In the tent they cooked their "Khitchri" (rice and dal cooked in one dish) and went to have a bath. On returning they found the Khitchri had become a solid block and had to be heated again. Yogeshda was surprised to see water trickling down into a stream near the tent. Curious to find out the source of the water in a snow bound area, he traced the flow to a flat ground behind the cave. It was a frozen lake. The surface was ice, but underneath there was water that flowed out.

At another spot while trekking up the mountains, there was a large protruding rock, almost overhanging the path. It was the only bare piece amidst a snow covered region. They posed for a snap. Just as the camera was focused, two wild snow ponies came and stood on the rock above and got snapped with them.

The guides were *pandas*. Yogeshda was keen to go to the cave before anyone could reach there, just to make sure that no one was tampering with the *Linga*. One could often hear the people say that the *pandas* usually went ahead and formed the *Linga*. When they entered the cave, they saw the well-formed snow *Linga*,

beautifully carved as it were, in the most perfect shape. After *darshan*, they had to return immediately to their camp. One cannot stay long enough in the cave as it is too cold and there is no place to camp nearby.

They then returned to Pahalgam and from there to Srinagar. The forest officer left for Dehradun, while Yogeshda decided to stay on for a few days longer.

The trip back to Jammu took him about a month, it was about 200 miles. The whole Kashmir sojourn lasted for about three months.

At Jammu railway station, Yogeshda found he had fever. He lay down on the platform, the train came and all the passengers left. He heard someone call him. He looked up and was told the guard, who was sitting in a tea shop, was calling him. He asked Yogeshda from where had he come and where he wished to go. He gave him some tablets for fever and ordered milk to be given to him every day, all paid by the guard in advance. After two days he returned and enquired how Yogeshda was. By then Yogeshda had developed diarrhoea. He took only a few tablets that were given to him and threw the rest away. The guard took him in the train as far as he was on duty on the route. After that he got him a ticket to Saharanpur.

There a coolie ran up to him and took him to a waiting bus bound for Dehradun. When the passengers were complete, the bus started. On the way there was a puncture. It was repaired; but a little later there was another puncture, in a lonely place where no help was available. The driver got some grass to fill the tyre. With great difficulty he managed to take the vehicle up to the ghats. There again another puncture occurred and the bus could go no further. The passengers were asked to walk. This was hard for Yogeshda as he was weak and tired. Someone accompanied him carrying his belongings. At Dehradun bus stand he had a lemonade and felt refreshed.

He traced his way to a friend's house in Karanpur. He was examined by a doctor who diagnosed his illness as Malaria and gave him a few quinine tablets which Yogeshda did not take. A few days later he was quite well.

The year was coming to an end and he had to return to Shahbagh to see Mataji as directed by Her. His friend told him to visit Rajshahi town and meet Atal Bhattacharjee. Yogeshda did not know that Atal was the same person who had been asked to keep his salary in his absence. Yogeshda asked for a loan, Atal realized that Yogeshda was the person of whose money he was the custodian. Yogeshda took the rail fare and returned to Shahbagh.

When he arrived Bholanath at once recognized him. Mataji was in a trance and so did not see him. He was directed to have his hair cut. His first dish after returning from his pilgrimage was to be '*Charu*'. It is rice and milk with a little ghee cooked on *havan* fire. Then he resumed his official duty.



## FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—"Kirpal"

May 9, 1959

Dr. Nalini Brahma: How does one get rid of the effects of one's actions?

Sree Ma: God is not revealed by one's actions. You yourself said that God is not bound by our actions. God, who is ever revealed- when the clouds disappear. The mind is the curtain, the covering. The effect of your actions; those actions that will release you from bondage. One has to strive. What has one to do, to remove the covering, the cloud? You are sitting in a pandal. It is covered. There is the curtain, that is removable, that which will be removed.

God is Himself ever shining, radiantly. To reveal God by one's actions; that is impossible. Where there is the revelation, there is the achievement. The revelation and the attainment.

Sri Yogesh Brahmachari: Does one achieve the revelation of God by practice of the Samyam Saptaha. (The seven days of prayer and austerities).

Sree Ma: It will definitely happen. The curtain will be removed and the One who is ever revealed will appear. The removal of the curtain is through your effort. Therefore make an effort and practice auspicious and beneficial work - what is the effect of the manifestation- what happens, what doesn't happen, there remains no question.

This child (Sree Ma) has no bashfulness or hesitation. They are all one's own. There is no other- (Sree Ma) does not talk to another, or eat any one else's food, there is no question of another here, Ma is the child, whatever is said, Ma is that, as one plays the instrument- Ma is in-between the playing and the hearing. Between the two.

Q: About seeing.....

Sree Ma: The one who comes, is between coming and going. One is not beyond that state. Therefore, one must have *satsang*, i.e. the company of the holy and wise.

Q. Rishikesh? What is here and what is there? The atmosphere.....?

Sree Ma: One's motherland—at all places, everything is present. as there is a tree. There are seeds within the tree. Uncountable seeds are present—uncountable forms. The tree in the seed form, and the seed in the tree form. The father, the husband, the son, you alone in those forms.....



Q: I don't understand....

Sree Ma: It is not something to understand. It is an actual fact. And where is it that God is not, and where is it that the Soul is not. That is not subject to destruction. The one who is in the stage of coming and going; that is another matter. That is in the realm of humanity.

As there is one tree, innumerable seeds, innumerable movements, innumerable states. In this manner all within all. As some direction is there— The One Brahma and no other.

As a bird flies; sometimes it sits on the tree. If it finds a resting place, it sits there. The soul is ever in a state of movement. If there is a special place, then it stays there. That also, according to the state, it stays there. Some can see that, some only. And there is the mind. One makes a solemn promise in the mind, according to one's predilection.

The state is within one, as long as one is in the mind state. In the mind is everything.

Where there is the One Brahma (Lord) and no other, there no question can arise.

[To continue]

## CAUGHT AND BROUGHT

One day, during the celebrations at Allahabad in 1958, when hundreds of devotees had gathered in the pandal for Ma's *darshan*, an exchange of ideas on our spiritual future had taken place among those in whose midst I also happened to be seated. When many had seemed to agree that only a few among the thousands who come to Ma could hope to attain to spiritual heights, an old and well-known devotee, Sri S.N. Aga, from our group, suddenly addressed Ma loudly thus: "Ma, so many of us come to you. Are all of us going to pass, or will some fail also?" And Ma replied back immediately, "Do you come by your own free will? You are caught and brought here."

— Swami Joyananda Giri

## WITH MOTHER IN THE KUMBH MELA

[ Three ]

— Shraddha Davenport

The morning of January twelfth. One of Mother's brahmacharinis was passing by our cottage and told Krishnapriya that Mother was going to the Ganges. I dressed in my "favorite sari;" the white one which Mother had given me the day before. Then we went to the camp office and asked Swami Swarupananda where Mother's car would take Her. He directed us down the road south of the camp, saying that the girls had already gone there. It was quite a little walk, but we managed to get to that beach location before Mother arrived.

The reason for this special trip to the rivers was only known to us late that evening when Krishnapriya heard Mother tell it and then shared the story with us.

During the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad in 1966, when Mother went for a bath at the Triveni She saw the three goddesses of rivers as they stood before Her. Mother, who was wearing a bathing dress, had the kheyala to offer Her sari to the goddesses. After doing so, She saw that one goddess took the sari and wrapped it around herself, but the other two were shivering. The occasion of this visit to the Triveni was due to Mother's kheyala to offer saris for those two who did not receive them at the past mela.

When Mother got out of Her car I noticed that Her lip was quite swollen and She sometimes held Her towel over Her mouth. In the past I had been told that things like that occurred as an allergic reaction or if something had been offered to her which was not pure. It could happen even though She had not physically touched the offering or perhaps when it was offered by someone in a totally different location from Her body.

We walked with Mother and Her party across the sand to the water's edge where a boat awaited Her. That boat also carried Dasu, Udas and Makhan (Mother's younger brother, known as Mamu). In the second boat was Nirvanananda, Bhaskarananda, and some others, There was also a large house boat which bore Swami Paramananda, Swami Swarupananda, and some of the ashram girls.

We watched as Mother directed the seating in Her boat. Satya stood in the water taking movies of Her, and suddenly found that he was sinking further and further into the sand. One shoe was lost in the river as he struggled to get out. May be the river did not like his wearing shoes in Her sacred waters.

There on the river bank we met for the first time a very kind gentleman and sincere devotee from Ahmedabad, Dr. Shelat. He was staying in one of the tents at Mother's camp. Dr. Shelat and a couple of others walked down the beach and procured a boat for us. Among our party was Gadadhar, Ram, Suddhananda, Krishnapriya, Dr. Shelat, Satya, and myself. There were three others whom I did not know.

Our boat was the only one to accompany Mother's three. We rowed out along with Mother and Satya next to Her boat almost continuously. Dasu sat behind Mother playing a tambourine and chanting to the river goddesses.

At one spot in the confluence, the preparations were being made to do the puja, but officers pulled up in their boat saying that the water there was deep and it was not safe for us to stay there. We followed as Mother's boat moved to a different location. There the puja was beautifully done. We observed various articles being offered to the rivers. I saw two white silk saris with red borders, a leaf boat holding a flame, incense, and beautiful garlands. There might have been other articles which I could not see. It was a gorgeous sight and one that was our rare privilege to witness.

When we started back toward the shore, one young man on our boat retrieved a big garland of marigold and gave it to me. After most of the water had dripped off it, I divided it among the ten of us there. Realizing that I was holding in my hands flowers which Mother had offered to the holy rivers at this most auspicious Kumbha Mela, I became totally intoxicated. I was in such a divine mood that if I had been suddenly transported to the west at that moment, I could never have survived the weight of it. The atmosphere of that day was so light and heady, surely of a more spiritually refined place.

Satya and Gadadhar enjoyed taking the oars for a quicker return to the shore and to Mother who had preceded us. Alighting from our boat, we hurried across the sand to where Mother's car was parked. Mother sat waiting for the slower-moving house boat to bring the swamijis and the ashram girls to the landing. Watching the large boat approach, we saw Swami Swarupananda standing at the prow. He waved and asked Satya to take movies. We said, "Film hogia [finished]," but

Bhaskarananda laughed and said he should just push the button and the clicking sound would make everyone happy. We all laughed as Satya "clicked" away. Soon, Mother's car carried Her from our sight and we started the walk back. It was quite nice. We did not have to rush as we did get there earlier.

Back at Mother's camp we went to see if Shē was sitting out, but She had gone inside. So we walked out of the front gate and there we found our dear friend Jayananda who had just arrived. He looked radiant and full of joy to again be with Mother. He had brought twenty rolls of movie film for Satya. It was perfect timing, for earlier when Satya had said, "Film ho gia" it really was, for there was not a single roll left in reserve and a lot of time remained before the end of that trip. Jayananda went with the other young men to the sadhu camp where he would be staying. After settling his luggage and bathing, he would come to Mother's pandal.

At 5:00 p.m. Satya came from the camp across the fire road where he had filmed their enactment of Ram Lila. We went directly to Mother's pandal and found Her sitting on Her porch with Chitra at her feet. After some time I saw Jayananda standing at the back railing of the pandal. I told Chitra that he had just arrived and she sent me to bring him to Mother for pronam.

There was a large crowd in the pandal, but when he got near the front Krishnapriya cleared a path for him and he went up the three steps to Mother's porch and offered a lovely garland to Her. When Mother placed the garland over his head, She touched the top of his head blessing him as She sweetly smiled. Chhabi started playing the harmonium. God's Name filled the pandal and Mother graced us with her presence for about two hours.

That evening Satya made a wonderful vegetable soup cooked on our very nice little brass kerosene stove. The stove sat safely in a pit dug into the sand which sheltered it against the wind. Jayananda and Krishnapriya joined us and we all enjoyed the soup which was so full of great Indian vegetables that it was more like a hearty stew. After our meal Krishnapriya went back to Mother's hut and found Her telling some sadhus the story of the saris offered that day to the two river goddesses. Then She sprinkled water from the rivers on the visiting sadhus and Krishnapriya. When Krishnapriya came back to the hut, she told us the story. With the holy water still upon her head, she rubbed it with her hand and then put her hand on my head. So I also shared that blessing. What a dear friend and true *bhakta* of our Mother. A lovely close to a perfect day.

The following morning I awoke with a sore throat and had almost lost my voice. Darshan was in the large pandal and the warm sun felt good as I stood in the back gazing at Mother's beautiful face. Once again I mentally prayed to Her, asking to receive the same special blessing for which I had petitioned on the parade route. At that exact moment She abruptly turned Her head and eyes to my direction. She gave me such a strong loving look that I could feel the electricity of it. I stood with goose bumps from head to toe as She held me with Her eyes for a very long time. How can such experience be shaped by words? Lacking understanding of what She has given to me, my words fall like stones when I try to speak of Her gifts.

The next morning January 14th was the first "bath day" of the mela, but I was unable to go out in the pre-dawn cold nor was I able to walk very well. I awoke to the sound and vibration of many feet stampeding on the road just outside our hut. Jumping from my bed, I peered out of the door and saw the police directing a great crowd down our road as they sought to reach the rivers on this auspicious day.

When we went to Mother's pandal we found that Bhaskaranandaji was on Mother's porch. There was a curtain across where he was performing puja of the beautiful Padmanav *moorti*. Mother sat on the other end of the porch facing the moorti, but within full view of us all as we sat before Her. At Mother's direction the fruit which had been offered to the Lord was cut up by the girls as they sat at Mother's feet. That way there was plenty for every one there to have prasad. Mother went into Her cottage as the devotees formed a line to receive prasad.

Feeling weak, I could not stand in line and returned to our hut. I was sorry not to receive prasad, but a little later Krishnapriya brought some for me.

When we went to Mother's house we found Her sitting with Mahant Sri of Nirvani Akhada in the little pandal. No one was allowed to go in, but we stood with Jayananda by the railing at the front and could see Her quite well.

After lunch we walked down the road to the camp of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi where Mother was expected by the Maharshi's devotees. They had made very nice arrangements to greet Mother. When She arrived, She stepped onto a cloth which had been spread across the sand toward a large pandal. Girls in pink saris stood on each side of Her path and strewed flower petals before Her as She entered. Mother was escorted to Her seat on the platform in front of the crowd. She spoke a few words which were appreciated by the devotees-whose guru was not at the mela.

When we went to Mother's pandal the next morning, we found that Mother had gone to visit another camp. The large pandal across from Mother's cottage was

being prepared for a sadhu bhandara to take place later that day. As we stood near Mother's cottage waiting for Her return, Dr. Shelat and Mr. Bal Krishna Gupta joined us.

We all moved to the railing around Mother's smaller pandal. Where asanas were placed for the sadhus who would be coming to the bhandara. As we stood there mother's car arrived, and when She entered the pandal She came near where we stood to inspect the preparations. Afterwards She went briefly into her cottage then came out again and sat before us for a few sweet moments. There was a beautiful coral-colored shawl around her shoulders and a large garland of fresh flowers framed her face. She looked radiant. Chitra saw that I had brought some things which I wished for Mother to bless. So when Mother went into her cottage Chitra told me to wait. Soon Chitra came and took the things in to Mother. One special thing, an asana for our friend Chaitanya, Chitra lovingly placed beneath Mother's feet. All the other items were blessed by Mother including some flowers that I wished to place in the river on behalf of my mother who gave me birth . She had died when I was just five years old. Also some flowers for my grandparents who were recently deceased.

Chitra brought meditation shawls for Satya, Jayananda, and the other American men who were there. Mother's blessings showered upon us in great abundance.

When the food started arriving for the sadhus, we were told to move to the rear of the camp. Before long we left to take our lunch, and as we walked past the little pandal where Mother sat, She lookēd at us so lovingly, with almost a longing attitude, that it was very difficult to go, but we had no choice.

At about 4:30 p.m. we came back to see Mother, but the crowds, which had been growing daily, were becoming hard to control. The pushing and shoving made it impossible. We left for a while then tried again to see Mother. When Chitra saw me being pushed she had me stand in a more protected spot and we had a short darshan and received Mother's prasād from Chitra before She went inside for the night.

After lunch and a little rest we went if Mother was giving darshan. She sat on Her porch with only a few girls and Swami Swarupanandaji. There was a crowd all around the pandal, but to our delight there were only four people sitting inside. It was a feast for the soul to sit with Her—even for a few minutes.

The following day brought more and more people. Pilgrims were camping anywhere they could find an empty spot.

There is a quality which I greatly admire in India and her people—something exceedingly rare in the West. That quality holds the spiritual as having the only true value and true reality. Any discomfort of the physical is dismissed as the transient inconvenience, which is really all that it is. Many times I have seen how lacking is my endurance and how easily the prize is wrenched from my feeble grasp.

There at that most auspicious Kumbh Mela we both experienced an extremely intense spiritual current permeating the whole area. It was not only the mela itself, but we were also in such close physical proximity to Mother, whose play it all was. Progressively we felt as though there was less and less skin covering our bodies until our nerves lay bare before any experience that touched us. Whether positive or negative it was vastly exaggerated by that highly-charged environment. Sometimes we would laugh and say that we were Mother's yoyo's-up, down, up, down—all in the space of minutes and within a range of great opposites.

[ To continue ]

## SRI ANANDAMAYEE MA—A UNIQUE SPIRITUAL TEACHER

— Sri S. K. Bose

Sri Anandamayee Ma often used to say, *"The really important thing is to pay attention to the root of the mantra, keep your mind fixed on that. Perseverance alone counts. There must be efforts in some form or other upto the stage of spontaneity and realization. Ages and ages have been wasted in this way. Now, friend, return to your own house. Remember there is a state beyond efforts and effortlessness, which is ultimately to be realized."*

Acquiring spiritual knowledge merely by reading scriptures, listening discourses or performing *asanas* without proper guidance by a spiritually enlightened person for transformation towards self-realization may often lead to disastrous results. This happened to a devotee from USA with squint eyes, came first time to Anandamayee Ma. He was practicing meditation for many years by fixing eyes on the tip of the nose as laid down in Bhagawat Gita in order to intensify concentration on the chosen deity without any discontinuity. Knowing from the person of his spiritual practices through an interpreter, She emphasized, *"No doubt there must be efforts to concentrate the mind upon the true self, but allow it to occur in conformity with the normal course of nature free from physical constraints"*.

Being a follower of different spiritual organisation, the person received directions from Anandamayee Ma in dispelling doubts and correcting procedure while performing sadhana. Thus, Her guidance protected many ethically and psychologically unprepared persons from disastrous results during spiritual practices before gaining perfection. It is therefore important to accept a realized master or at least some one who is gifted with the blessings of a spiritually enlightened person as Guru who shows correctly the path to acquire spiritual knowledge.

"A proper Guru is one to whom your mind is attuned. He should be endowed with tranquility, patience, forgiveness and other virtues. He should be capable of attracting others even with his eyes just as a magnet attracts iron. He should have a



feeling of equality towards all. He who has all these virtues is a true Guru" (Ramana Maharshi).

Presence of all these supra-conscious qualities in Anandamayee Ma, attracted an Austrian lady, Miss Blanca Schlam, who was greatly impressed on her first meeting with Her. She was convinced that Anandamayee Ma could probably dissolve the distance between herself and God, keeping in view her exact spiritual requirement. Her desperate search for a spiritual Guru in India finally ended at the holy feet of Anandamayee Ma, who could teach and transform her towards self-awareness. lead her from spiritual darkness to Divine Light.

There is an infallible law that when the disciple is ready, Guru is bound to appear. Perhaps that auspicious moment had arrived for Miss Blanca, who was later named by Ma as 'Atmanand'. When light is thrown to the inner world, the outer fades into insignificance. But there comes a state when there is no inner and outer, but all is same as "*one whole*", as was realized by Atmanand in Anandamayee Ma's personality. Sri Ma also noticed on seeing her for the first time : "*a strong tendency towards mysticism and later exclaimed, wherever you go, you are mine*". This was nothing less than *diksha* for Atmanand.

Although there is a distinct difference between Guru and a teacher. A teacher makes one to learn, a Guru helps the disciple to transform and realize the divinity already there within him. For Atmanand, Sri Ma was both a perfect teacher and later a spiritual Guru, helping all the time in transforming towards inner self in order to realize divine grace which is showered upon all the time. "The trouble is we think I am doing *sadhana*. It is He who does and His grace that calls you to do". Nevertheless "One should constantly seek the conquest of mind and self control which are the fruits of wisdom". Once the mind is at peace, untangled, pure and free from worldly affairs, it does not long for anything, nor does it reject anything, always immersed in the true self.

Although Anandamayee Ma never attached Herself to conventional *Guru sishya parampara*, rather expressed her own experiences encountered during the process of self-initiated *sadhana* to those for whom She had "*kheyala*". Atmanand out of a few had the privilege to receive step by step Her teachings, directions and advices in following correctly every course of *sadhana*. In this respect the teachings that were imparted by Anandamayee Ma to an advanced spiritual practitioner like Miss Blanca were primarily to develop self control, switching off mental preoccupation from objects of the world, living amidst worldly objects without the 'I'. This implies that, liberation, the goal of life, could-be achieved only by a long process of progressive spiritual training. It does not stop with this, but emphasizes for the

attainment of liberation from repeated cycles of life and death, a stage where one is supra-social and also supra-personal. It is precisely to attain this state for which a person needs the spiritual guidance of a guru, the supreme authority.

Beginning with the role and importance of Guru towards the path of perfection, Anandamayee Ma dispelled the doubts and obstructions in a very simple manner.

*"As long as mind is in a state of disorder and divided, one cannot decide between two or three courses of actions. But this state of confusion slowly goes away if mind is raised to higher level beyond fickleness by doing some sadhana for some hours everyday".*

On further asking by Atmanand as to what kind of sadhana do you suggest , the answers which came out of Ma's lips were :

- *First put yourself into the right state of mind by thinking yourself as part of one atma that pulsates in every animate being.*
- *Imagine that Divine light and grace are showered all the time upon you.*
- *Become enveloped with great calm, quiet, until you are still and absorbed in concentration on your breathing.*
- *Do not hold or force your breath, but simply watch the natural inhaling and exhaling.*
- *If thoughts wander, collimate it to your breathing.*
- *Along with this try to enquire about the true nature of your 'Self'.*
- *Try to remember you are a part of 'That' and you work as a part of greater activity.*
- *Keep a diary and write down daily what experiences you have had, how you feel about yourself, your work and your surroundings. How your outlook changes.*
- *Keep account of the spiritual benefit that comes to you.*
- *Do not get disheartened if you feel that you are not getting anywhere but just go on.*
- *If you have any experiences in your meditation, note them, look at them like a spectator and just go ahead with your sadhana.*

- *Avoid physical contact with others as far as possible to prevent transfer of bad qualities in you without causing them to feel.*
- *Do not tell anyone about this.*
- *Keep the thought of God realization alone as a companion day and night, which will significantly transform the vibrational field caused by the society and the environment. Even the food we take has influence upon the stability of mind.*
- *Strict observance of the purity rules are therefore to be observed with proper understanding, otherwise the practice may degenerate into superstition and frustration.*

This all implies that a spiritual practitioner should think himself as 'Self luminous' poised in the bliss of the Self. Once this state is realized, our doubts and obstacles in the way of spiritual advancement are dispelled. Events that bind the mind are reduced to nothing. From this state of nothingness the individual gets united with the origin of creation, dissolution and destruction, the '*Ultimate eternal one, the Absolute*'.

While practicing *sadhana* Atmanand received step-by-step guidance from Anandamayee Ma, who protected her from all obstacles.

*Remember that mind can be a tool for bondage or liberation depending upon the way one turns. One is to keep in mind that the goal can only be attained by surrendering totally and unconditionally to Him. Then only He comes to rescue you.*

**"STRIVE TO BE WORTHY OF THE GRACE OF YOUR 'GURU'"**

Jai Ma