

*The Eternal, the Atman—
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality,
Self-contained—THAT is all in One.*

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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Matri Vani

(Dictated by Sri MA as letters in response to devotees, requests for personal advice and guidance.)

A human being must be vowed to the pilgrimage on which he becomes possessed of the Supreme Wealth. One who is constantly yearning for attainment of the Goal—when his love becomes undivided, perfect—at that very instant the Divine Touch occurs; this cannot be explained in any language.

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For a mind not turned towards God restlessness is but natural. Don't allow the mind to be idle all day long. Whether inclined or not, endeavour to let your thought dwell at Bhagavān's holy feet by staying immersed in japa, meditation or the study of sacred books.

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All this does happen in the beginning : when no result is noticed, not only is there pain but one's faith also weakens. Keep in mind : The Lord is doing and will ever do what is for my real good. As the result of sustained practice one progresses towards attainment of the Goal. For all these reasons invoke Him under all circumstances by any Name, in any way that

appeals to you so as to realize the Divine. Finding Him all is found.

* * *

For the revelation of one's true Being (*Svarupa*) one has to keep the eleven senses* (or faculties) under control, with gaze focussed on That. The purpose of observing a fast on *Ekādasi* (the eleventh day of each phase of the moon) is to keep up the remembrance of Him.

* * *

The path leading to the acquisition of own's own true Wealth (*sva dhana*) is called *sādhana*. By recovering the Supreme Treasure is revealed *Bhagavān* Who is Truth Itself, Who IS—eternal, unmasked Reality.

* * *

When the heart's desire awakens truly and fully its object manifests. Search out a *Sadguru* with all the insight and power at your command—then accept Him.

* * *

Tendencies and inclinations brought over from the past sometimes lead into error. The mind must

* Eleven senses : Five organs of perception : eye, ear, nose, tongue skin; five organs of action : hands, feet, voice, reproductive organs, anus ; and mind (the inner sense) the eleventh,

cling to God uninterruptedly. Otherwise, how can the road to liberation possibly open out? Whether you feel like it or not, concentrate on divine things. Mind and body must be occupied with aspirations and actions aiming at THAT.

* * *

The Pilgrimage in this world of coming and going is beset with many difficulties—they differ from person to person. However much pain and anguish you may experience, consider: “This trouble will not come to me anymore—*tapasyā* is being performed, it takes me nearer to God.”

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To be able to get into a state of ecstasy by engaging in religious songs and kirtana with heart and soul is a matter of rejoicing. Those who are dedicated to the supreme path must at every moment be engrossed exclusively in activities that keep the mind at the feet of their Beloved so that their pilgrimage may be crowned with success.

* * *

To someone who wanted to commit suicide, Mataji said in reply: “Only to exhaust your karma accumulated in former lives has your birth occurred. Anchored in patience endeavour to discover where and how God’s compassion is working within all this trouble. Surrender

your mind at His lotus feet. Genuine, sincere search after Truth is never fruitless. Nobody has the right to do away with his God-given body—even to think of doing so is a sin. While suffering the consequences of your own past actions invoke Him with your whole being. Never give up God.”

* * *

You are aware of the Guru's grace—what more do you want? By the Guru's grace every aspiration is fulfilled. Carry out His instructions to the minutest detail.

* * *

If she really wants to listen to this body, then this body again repeats: she should try to devote the maximum time to *japa* and *dhyāna*, remaining where she now is. The mind should be engrossed also in the study of Sceptures. No scope is to be given to the mind to indulge in mundane thoughts of any kind. If one intermingles one's own desires with the instructions by which one wants to guide oneself, then obstacles are sure to arise. Whatever she happens to experience on this path may gladly be written to this body.

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Some Glimpses of Ma Anandamayi

(Delhi : 1973-1976)

ANIL GANGULI

Ma Anandamayi's sweet voice regaled my ears for the first time in Delhi in the year 1947.* It has since been my good fortune to come in contact with Her in various surroundings--on the heights of the Himalayas, before the expanse of the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, in quiet villages such as Raipur, Vindhyachal, and Naimisharanya and in crowded cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Kanpur, Allahabad, Ranchi. From 1973 to 1976 I was destined to reside in Delhi and this period offered me excellent opportunities for having glimpses of Ma from time to time; also for coming in close contact with the inner circle of Her devotees.

There is a saying in Buddhist literature that when an Enlightened-one touches a dry twig, it begins to blossom. Delhi, apparently unconcerned with religion and avowedly secular in outlook, has been "blossoming" at the touch of Ma for about four decades. More ancient than Rome, Delhi was also not built in a day. The site of this metropolis, together with the areas in its neighbourhood, has for thousands of years provided an arena for political duels and military confrontations. Now the seat of our Central Government, Delhi is busy, beautiful and prosperous. It has the most

* See "Ananda Varta" January, 1977, P. 16.

attractive places of entertainment and originates the latest fashions in social life. True, Delhi has also quite a few centres of religious organisations, some with great traditions. However, the social atmosphere of Delhi today does not seem to be congenial to the development of religious fervour in her citizens. But the touch of Ma Anandamayi has worked wonders out of material none too promising.

In Kalkaji at the south-eastern end of New Delhi, far from the madding crowd, stands Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram, with a vast expanse of rocky wilderness to its east and a newly planted green belt to its west. The Ashram includes temples of Siva and Mahavira, a satsang hall and an artistically constructed abode for Ma. The extensive garden is attractive for its rich collection of flowering plants and shrubs, also as a haunt for stray peacocks reminding Vaisnavas of the peacock feathers adorning the coronet of Sri Krishna. In the close vicinity of the Ashram there is the temple of Goddess Kali, called Kalikaji (or Kalkaji from which the colony derives its name), dating back to hoary antiquity. The story goes that Sri Krishna and the five Pandava brothers once worshipped Kalikaji in this temple.

Usually the inmates of Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Delhi consist of a few *sadhakas* who delight in seclusion. On Sundays and certain festivals there are programmes of *kirtana* and *satsanga* (religious gathering) open to the public. On other days the special charm of the Ashram lies in its brooding solitude and profound stillness, interrupted only by the occasional chirping of birds. When, however, Ma comes to Delhi, the set-up of the Ashram undergoes a drastic, almost miraculous change. Let us see how the transformation takes place.

One evening a message comes floating, as it were, in the air that Ma is expected in Delhi the next morning. The news immediately spreads like wild fire and a big gathering collects in the Ashram in anticipation of Ma's arrival. It is simply amazing how such an assemblage is possible at such short notice. Delhi is a sprawling city of formidable distances, not specially noted for transport or telephone facilities; besides, the Ashram is situated a mile away from the main bus route. Yet, so long as Ma stays in Delhi there is an unending stream of visitors for Her *darśana*, day and night, leaving hardly any interval even for Her frugal meals.

On festive occasions the Delhi Ashram witnesses a wonderful congregation of men, women and children hailing from different parts of India and other countries and belonging to all classes and walks of life. Thus, there are the ascetic and the householder, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the political leader and the common citizen, the industrial magnate and the daily worker, the wayward teenager and the reckless youth. The assemblage represents a cross section of the capital's population and includes, from time to time, foreign diplomats and tourists. Some serious-minded westerners deserve special mention among the regular visitors to the Ashram during Ma's presence. Their devotion to Ma makes it possible for them to adjust themselves to strange surroundings and changed conditions of life.

Deserving persons, particularly those who have renounced the world and dedicated themselves to spiritual pursuits and are also pandits well-versed in *Śāstras* (scriptures) usually receive special recognition from Ma. But what is remarkable

is that She bestows Her gracious benediction even on people of questionable ways of life, who seemingly have no moral or spiritual moorings. Critics, ignorant of the universal nature of Ma's motherliness, often thoughtlessly and in a detracting spirit wonder why this should be so. Ma's simple answer is given in the form of a question : "Should the doors of a hospital be banged shut against persons suffering from serious maladies ?" In fact, Ma is the refuge of the fallen and the saviour of the sinful. She is nothing less than a mother even to a moral leper. And a penitent moral leper enjoys priority in receiving Her kind attention and special encouragement. "I want those very persons", She once said, "who have no prop to support them on their path to good life".

Inscrutable are the ways of Ma. She seems to be full of sympathy not only for persons of questionable character, but even for "diseases" of a virulent nature. In August 1976, Ma was taken seriously ill in Delhi. Very high temperature and other distressing symptoms shook Her apparently frail frame. Naturally, there was concern and consternation among Ma's devotees. According to the physicians Ma's body was passing through a crisis. I had no doubt that She must have been in the grip of excruciating pain. But there was no expression of suffering or discomfort on Ma's face. She assured me, in all seriousness, that She did not feel any pain whatsoever. She observed with a radiant smile and complete detachment that even "diseases" were Her guests, enjoying *kirtana* centred in Her body. I told Her that it was our common belief that She could drive away all Her ailments if only She chose to do so. She said unequivocally that if there was *kheyāla* (a spontaneous upsurge of Divine will), everything was possible and added

that there was no such *kheyāla* at that particular moment. I do not know what "*kheyāla*" means. But the implication of Ma's words seemed to be : whether the illness should continue or not was purely a matter of Her choice, but there was no occasion for the exercise of any choice either way at that particular moment. I enquired what was the point in not immediately putting an end to a malady so distressing and so undesirable. She denied that the illness was distressing to Her and would not admit that it was undesirable. The illness, She added, had not been invited by Her and was not going to be driven away by Her. She is never troubled by any sorrow nor has She any longing for pleasure, being above both.

Ma often repeats that "diseases" are beings with definite shapes like every one of us. "I do not", She says, "send you away when you come to me, but welcome everybody and everything as forms of Him. Why should I make an exception in the case of those of His guises which are illnesses ? It is all His play. He is in all forms, be they pleasing or painful. Everything is He alone. This body welcomes Him in whatever shape He chooses to come. I can assure you that I feel no discomfort; all conditions are the same to me. I am always well."

Fortunately, Ma came round within a few days even without any scientifically approved treatment worth the name. The crisis was tided over by what may be called nature cure. Ma's recovery in this manner was amazing to most of us; but not to those who knew that it was Ma's *kheyāla* of vicarious suffering in order to cure some ailing devotee or other. In what circumstances does such *kheyāla* come to play its part ?

And why? These are questions on which nobody could give me any light.

Was Ma's sudden recovery a miracle or just a coincidence? I do not know. Let me now narrate a miracle which I do know. One day in October, 1953, my wife, Sati, saw Ma in the hall of the Dehradun Ashram and heard Her sing kirtana. The same day, at the same time, I saw Ma in the garden of the Ashram, not visible from the hall, and I also heard Her talk to me. I was then recording in my diary the gist of a conversation I had had with Ma the previous evening. I was in doubt as to the exact words used by Ma. Her unexpected visit to the garden was, therefore, very welcome to me. I placed my difficulty before Her and She made certain additions and alterations in my original draft. And then Ma disappeared. After the kirtana was over, my wife declared that Ma had not left the hall during the kirtana. How could Sati disbelieve Her eyes and ears? But it was during the kirtana that I saw Ma in the garden. How could I, in my turn, disbelieve my eyes and ears? I thought Sati had been too much engrossed in the *kirtana* to notice Ma's departure from the hall for a few minutes. And Sati assumed I had been misled by my watch. The matter remained an enigma. After the lapse of twenty-two years Ma explained the mystery in 1975 during one of Her flying visits to Delhi. One day She was pleased to send for Sati and me and granted us a private interview. We had nothing to say in private and preferred silent *Matri-Sanga*. Suddenly it occurred to me that the Dehradun incident called for clarification and I narrated it to Her. She then asked me; "Now, what is your question?" I said with diffidence: "Do such things

happen?" Ma's reply was: "Why ask? It has happened; and I told you a few words, did I not?"

What Sati and I had witnessed on that occasion was a manifestation of Ma's yogic power of bilocation. The impression left on one's mind by a miracle like that may in course of time pass into nothingness. But Ma surpasses all miracles—She is beatitude, She is Joy eternal.

One day Ma "touched some dry twigs" in Delhi and they did begin to "blossom" in my presence. Some young men, aggrieved, as they alleged, by the high-handedness of a certain political leader, wanted Ma to speak to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on their behalf. Ma said that Her conversations with the Prime Minister were exclusively on spiritual topics. Obviously the young men were disappointed, but they were more than reconciled by Ma's words that followed. She kindled in their minds the 'kindly light' that showed them the way to follow in life. Whatever God gives, She said, should be accepted with a smile. If we want anything, She added, we must approach Him and not any human being. Sincere prayer to God, She concluded, would be granted by Him in some form or other, at times through some unforeseen human agency. Then She narrated a parable in Her inimitable manner.

"A starving little boy," said Ma, "had been told by his mother that God alone could solve their problem of daily bread. In simple faith the boy scribbled a letter addressed to God asking for daily bread, but could not drop it into the the postal letter box, the slot being too high for him. Again and again he tried his best but every time he missed the mark which was beyond his reach. Yet the boy had no

doubt that his letter would reach God. Physically it did not. But the boy's prayer was granted by God in a mysterious manner. His perseverance attracted the notice of a wealthy neighbour who in the end volunteered to provide daily bread for the boy and his family."

The moral of the parable is easy to understand. But it is impossible to describe the magic effect of Ma's narration on the frustrated young men for whom it was primarily meant. They had entered the hall bitter and desparate. When they left, they seemed to be at peace with themselves. These "Dry twigs" showed promise of "blossoming". Incidentally, the politician considered at the root of their misery has since proved to be :

"A poor player that struts and frets
His hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more !"

While narrating the parable, Ma had used different names of God such as Rama, Krishna and Śiva. A smart middle-aged man suddenly stood up and asked Ma, in a rather melodramatic manner, "Rama, Krishna and Śiva-- what's the difference?" Instantaneously Ma replied, with a disarming smile on Her face, "Are you not at the same time son, husband and father? What then is the difference?"

The essence of Ma's teaching is that God is one but appears different to different persons. Each one, She says, is right from his point of view; and She gives light and guidance to all, irrespective of their race, colour or creed. She lays special emphasis on single-minded devotion to God.

Indeed, one who gives God a second place gives Him no place at all.

During my stay in Delhi I once received from Ma a gentle admonition in public because I had given God a second place. Ma was staying in the house of Sri Gopal Swarup Pathak, the former Vice-President of India, to whom I was then a stranger. I quietly entered the hall unnoticed and took my seat in a corner at some distance from Ma. Suddenly to my surprise, I heard Ma's voice inviting me to sit by Her side and give a talk on the *Bhāgavata*. I welcomed the opportunity. The next moment, however, I had to face an ordeal. Ma wanted me to speak in Hindi. I pleaded that Hindi was Greek to me and begged to be excused as nobody would listen to my talk in Hindi. Ma said smilingly, "At least I will." So, I ventured beyond my depths and started in my broken Hindi with bad grammar and worse pronunciation. Quite justifiably my speech fell flat on the Hindi-speaking listeners. Some of them may have thought that I was speaking in Bengali which was Greek to them. I commenced with the recitation of a passage from the *Srimad Bhāgavata* which I happened to know by heart. But, unfortunately, I could not complete it—I suffered from lapse of memory at the crucial moment. I then turned to the book for refreshing my memory, but I was badly let down by the Bombay Devnagari script which I could not read. I clearly saw that my performance had been all too poor. My suppressed grievance was against Ma Herself. Did She not stand in the way of my speaking in English? In my mind I held Her responsible for my discomfiture. I noticed that the audience was not at all interested in my Hindi. Ma had

assured me that She would listen to my speech. But in order to save my prestige, I stopped abruptly. Then Ma said, to my surprise, "You have done well!". This remark put me to shame; I knew too well that I had in fact miserably failed. Ma seemed to want to console me by saying "Well, you were asked to talk on the *Bhāgavata* in Hindi and you did your best." I was not at all happy about this left-handed compliment. Ma then pulled me up short : "Of course, you were not fishing for compliments from the audience when you were called upon to talk on the *Bhāgavata* !" This observation at last set me thinking and I discovered that my love of prestige had prevailed over my love for God. Such seems to be the subtle method of Ma's guidance. She, however, does not admit that She teaches or that She has any method in particular.

As I was taking leave of Ma, I met a remarkable girl, invested with the sacred thread, who has adopted the life of brahmacārini and is attached to the Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram. She is a daughter of Sri Gopal Swarup Pathak. One of her sisters also is an Ashramite. This kind of idealism on the part of girls belonging to an aristocratic family of Delhi can only be due to their association with Ma.

Let me cite one more instance to illustrate the subtle method by which Ma once dealt with the treacherous "I"-ness in me. One day I told Her how a revered Mahātmā had advised me not to pray for anything but to remain satisfied with whatever had been given to me. Then I added : "Ma, I am in the habit of mentally praying for your special attention whenever I happen to have your *darśana*; is this not a weakness on my part ? Would it not be good for me to rise

above that weakness ?” Ma put a simple but embarrassing question: “Have you already risen above all other weaknesses ?” Those who were present laughed at my cost. My question had, perhaps, been appreciated by them. But Ma’s counter-question put me on the spot. Then Ma encouraged me: “There is no risk in that weakness of yours. Let it remain.” Thereafter Ma presented me with a piece of cloth that had been worn by Her the previous day. Was this a consolation prize ? The cloth emitted a delicate scent the like of which I have never smelled anywhere in any part of the world. The scent lasted for several weeks.

The Durga Puja in the New Delhi Ashram in 1976 revealed what a tremendous attraction Ma exerts on all sections of the capital’s population. The number of “dry twigs” earnestly praying for initiation from Her was amazing. She readily gave them spiritual guidance, coupled with motherly affection. Durga Pūjā is the most popular annual religious festival in Bengal and in all other parts of India where Bengalis preponderate. An image of the Goddess Durga, prepared for the occasion, is worshipped as the symbol of the Divine Mother, for three days (some times four) in the autumn and thereafter immersed into a river or pond on the following day known as *Vijaya Dasami*. Ma’s presence during Durga Puja in 1976 in the Delhi Ashram immensely added to the joyousness, sanctity and solemnity of the function. Throughout the festival Ma’s face beamed with a special glow. Again, notwithstanding Her advanced age and indifferent health, She suddenly became unusually dynamic and kept on moving all over the Ashram from one centre of ritualistic performance to another. Thus, She would now visit the Pūjā-Mandap (the

platform where the image was being worshipped), now the different places selected for the reading of scriptures such as *Chāṇḍī* and *Rāmāyaṇa* and then the courtyard meant for the feeding of *Kumārīs* and *batuks* (little girls and boys treated, for the time being, as symbols of the Godhead), and so on and on. Brisk yet graceful, Her movements seemed to give of sparks of love and light, Under Ma's inspiration and guidance Durga Pūjā was performed to perfection; and the spiritual side of it reached its acme.

The climax was on *Vijaya Daśami*, the day of bidding farewell to the image of Durga. It is associated with pangs of sorrow for impending separation from the Divine Mother. Indeed, *Vijaya Daśami* is usually a day of tears and depression but not so where Ma is present. In Delhi She inspired a feeling that separation from the Divine Mother is a contradiction in terms and that whatever may be the ritual, the Divine Mother ever IS; She is an anchor that never fails.

An occurrence which I had once the good fortune to witness in Delhi has been indelibly imprinted in my memory. It was the anniversary of *Nandotsava* celebrations on the morrow after Sri Krishna's birth in the previous night that is, *Janmāstami* (eighth day after full moon in August). On the occasion of *Nandotsava* in 1973 devotees from Delhi and other places had gathered in the Ashram from early dawn and *Nāma Kīrtana*, sometimes led by Ma Herself, was going on in an atmosphere of joyousness. The delight of Nanda Raja, Sri Krishna's father, and of the *Vrajavāsis*, the residents of Vrindavan, at the birth of Sri Krishna was, recaptured, and reflected in this gathering thousands of years later. Ma

was seated on a platform with eyes half-closed and hands uplifted, chanting God's name, radiating a divine luster and inspiring the whole assembly with an ecstasy of joy and devotion.

All of a sudden Ma stood up, Her eyes still half-closed and hands raised up as before, chanting God's name incessantly. Ma appeared to stand only on Her toes, and She was swaying in unison with the rhythm of the cymbals and drums. Ma's body seemed to have been transformed into an ethereal substance. As She continued in Her rhythmic dance keeping Herself erect on Her toes just like a fairy, Her body gradually began to collapse and fell flat on the platform. It seemed as if She had ceased to possess a body of bone and flesh. What happened then was stranger still—Ma's body began to roll on the platform like a dry leaf wafted by the wind not in a wayward manner but in unison with the rhythm of the music. The gathering was electrified and the music reached a crescendo. A few minutes later Ma became calm and composed and then resumed Her normal posture as if nothing had happened.

Glimpses of Ma in Delhi have made my life worth living even after I have crossed the biblical age of three score and ten.

* Jai Ma *

From the Life of Mataji

Bithika Mukerji

(Continued from the last issue)

December 10th, 1939-1941

The next day Mataji and Didi had to stop over at Bandel junction for their train to Navadveep. Didi, wanting to procure a little milk for Mataji, spoke to a young officer at the Railway Station to get directions about local shops. He eagerly came forward and offered to get milk from his own house nearby. A little later the young man returned with the milk and spent some time with Mataji and Didi talking about his own life. He told Mataji that he had had the good fortune to be initiated at a very young age by a much revered guru, but frankly he had not been observing any of the injunctions. He remorsefully recalled that when once his guru had paid him a visit, he had not even bothered to cook specially for him but had given him food in the ordinary way. He reflected wonderingly : "Now, I don't know why, I took off my shoes when I was bringing the milk. This had not occurred to me when my guru was with me. I am a brahmin but have long discarded the sacred thread and do not observe the daily practice of the gāyatrī-mantra."

Mataji said gently, "you should adopt the thread again and also take up the daily recitation of the mantra."

"It is a bothersome restriction on one's way of life."

“The clothes you wear, and many other ordinary things are also restrictive.”

“That is true. I shall think about it.”

Mataji later said to Didi : “You went in search of milk but received the rich gift of a mind turning towards Supreme Felicity. The milk will not last long, but the change of heart will remain for a while.”

After a few days in Navadvēp Mataji came to Calcutta. Her health was causing concern to everyone. Although nobody knew better than the devotees that Mataji was not suffering from any ‘disease’, Her quiescent mood was unusual enough to cause anxiety. People, after all, can use only their own health as a standard of measurement. Mataji’s pulse rate at times would be highly feverish, or again slow down to an imperceptible level, both at variance with Her tranquil appearance. Mataji never looked ill or indisposed, but sometimes She would be very quiet and unlike Her radiant self. In any case it was very difficult for the devotees to make any coherent statements regarding Her health to the public who thronged to see Her. Their attempts at regulating the visiting hours or the number of people who could approach Mataji, created the expected misunderstanding. The devotees, however, were determined this time that Mataji should be examined by some of the most eminent medical men of Calcutta. Mataji acquiesced, remarking with a smile, I shall have *darśana* of many *pitājis* this time, who are renowned *kavirājs*¹ and doctors !”

The medical experts, eastern as well as western, how-

1. *Kaviraj* Ayurvedic doctor.

ever, did not prove to be of great help to the devotees in their concern for Mataji. The *kavirāj* who studied Her pulse rate, desisted after a while, saying that he could not make any sense of a pulse which would be racing for one minute and slow down to a dead stop the next. Adding to his bewilderment, Mataji extended Her wrist again, saying, "Now you will find it quite normal." Dr. Devendra Mukherji, was equally puzzled by the erratic appearance and disappearance of a few clinical symptoms. After a few days of this anxious activity, Mataji one day, spoke to the medical people regarding Her physical condition, saying gently : "The fact of the matter is, that this body does not follow the usual rules of good or bad health. Sometimes it so happens that its activities, due to lack of *kheyāla* slow down; at such times the intake of food merely acts as an impediment; this is why, at times, you see symptoms of "liver" or "stomach" troubles. The reason why these 'symptoms' disappear suddenly is that the body, in its own time, returns to its normal rhythm. This body does not suffer from diseases which can be "diagnosed" or "cured" by the usual methods."

The doctors had realized as much already and now with humility acknowledged the correctness of Mataji's explanation. In a lighter vein She added, "You may have given rise to another problem. People have seen so many doctors being consulted that they will think Mataji is suffering from some terrible disease and that Her attendants are trying to keep it secret from the public !"

Mataji never shows any other than Her usual mode of acceptance towards such disorders in Her body as may take

place from time to time. Her invariable answer in effect amounts to this that as She does not reprimand anybody for wrong behaviour, or chooses only a particular type of person for approval, but uniformly accepts whatsoever may come to Her, why then should She single out bodily discomforts for eradication. These also are allowed to come and go in their own time. It will be readily agreed that Mataji's range of tolerance cannot be adopted even partially by ordinary people. The devotees, naturally enough, thought it their duty to take care of Mataji's health and tried to arrange for long hours of quiet and rest for Her till such time as it would be Her *kheyāla* to resume Her normal activity. The difficulty about this attempt lay in Mataji Herself. She, whatever the state of Her bodily discomfort (it may be a severe backache, a putrid sore throat, or a stomach disorder, or simply long hours of public *darśana*) never looked ill or fatigued. This made it very difficult for the devotees to make any coherent announcements to the public who thronged to see Her. Mataji's gracious presence and winsome smile would keep the hordes of people from dispersing even a moment earlier than was absolutely necessary. Much misunderstanding was created when Her guardians told the visitors that Mataji needed rest and that they should leave as early as possible. People would rush in for *darśana*, but go out in thin trickles, leaving the odious task of forcibly closing Mataji's doors to a few hardy souls. People do not realize that Mataji Herself never makes any schedules about public *darśana* and unless somebody tries to organize these meetings it would be more chaotic than it already is. Moreover, there is no centralized authoritarian structure near Mataji. Whoever wants to

assume charge may do so and many people aghast at the spectacle of disorder around Mataji, have tried their hands from time to time, but no satisfactory solutions have been found so far. Regarding Mataji's *darśana* the feature of public dissatisfaction and chagrin remains almost constant.

As far as Mataji is concerned, She is ready every minute of the day or night to give of Herself to whoever may have need of Her. It must be also said that, somehow or other, seemingly under impossible conditions, no one who comes to Her for help goes away disappointed. Hundreds of people will know what is meant by saying that Mataji has many ways of acknowledging the presence of those who come to see Her. Now that the number of visitors is legion, this aspect of Her all encompassing welcome may well stagger one's imagination. It would seem that one misses the point of Mataji's presence if one expects an atmosphere which is contrived and controlled, rather the atmosphere is as natural and realistic as life itself. With Mataji one is prepared for an experience which is not to be had in the ordinary world. Mataji opens for everyone a new dimension, which ordinarily one does not even know, exists. This supreme gift She bestows on people inspite of any number of difficulties created by large crowds, tight schedules or programmes of festivities, last but not least, Her own state of physical discomfort.

In Calcutta, therefore, Mataji continued to meet thousands; the devotees, in spite of their best efforts, not being able to dissuade visitors from crowding in upon Her. This time She stayed in Calcutta for more than two months, that is over the Christmas holidays and well into the New Year

1940. In February, accompanied by Paramanandaji, Rumadevi, Jogesh Brahmachari, Keshavbhai and Abhaya, She paid short visits to Puri and Bhuvaneshwar. The middle of March saw Her travelling right across North India to Delhi, via Vindhyachala. For the next few months of the year Mataji was constantly on the move to various places near Delhi and around that part of the country : Dehradun, Hardwar, Vrindaban, Mathura, Solon. She stayed often at Doonga, in Dehradun district, the country-seat of Chaudhury Sher Singh, who, along with his family was well-known for his devotion to Mataji. She also went to Jullundur at the insistent invitation of Sri Sadhu Singh. She paid a visit to Meerut as well after a gap of six or seven years at the end of the year. At each place, the devotees would welcome Her with kirtan and other festivities. They would entreat Her to stay a few days longer, or at least just one more day ! Mataji would gently dissuade them from pleading with Her and smilingly take leave of one disconsolate crowd to arrive in the midst of another jubilant one. Many times these roles were reversed, but every time it was a fresh pain of parting from and a real joy of meeting the most beloved person.

At the request of the devotees of Dehradun, Durga Puja or Lakshmi Puja celebrations were held in that town. Although these *Pūjās* are mostly observed by Bengalis, due to Matajis presence everyone, Bengalis as well as non-Bengalis, joyfully participated in the festivities. At the request of Hari Ram Joshi Kali-Pūjā was also celebrated in Dehradun.

At the end of the year, Mataji, leaving this part of the

country, travelled south to Bhimpura in Gujrat. She kept moving from place to place : Chandod, Rajpipla, Omkareshwar and also Ujjain, Baroda and Ahmedabad. Mataji had become quite well known at these places and was made welcome everywhere by the local people. The shores of the holy river Narmada are always peaceful and naturally conducive to meditation. Mataji seemed to have recovered Her normal ways of activity inspite of Her busy travelling programmes. Some time in the middle of March 1941, She returned to the district of Dehradun again via Delhi. She kept moving from Raipur to Kishenpur and again to Doonga. The people of Dehradun trekked across dry river-beds to Rajpur and to remote Doonga. Kishenpur was comparatively easier of access.

During this time, the Great War had begun to affect the entire world. In this context, Mataji was asked one day, "Who will win this war ? Is it going to have an adverse effect on India ?" Mataji burst out into Her joyous, spontaneous laughter : "Is there a war ! How can there be war without an enemy ? Is there more than 'one', that there should be two contestants ? The war you talk of is like the clapping of one's two hands; so where is the question of defeat or victory ? There is naught else, except He. It is His Will that you see displayed in this form : Pitaji, why do you worry ? Try to accept whatever happens as a manifestation of the Divine."

It must be said here that Mataji's words were spoken to a particular person, who evidently must have been capable of understanding and appreciating the profound ideas thus

expressed. It goes without saying that Mataji's words can never be construed to mean an apathetic acceptance of the vicissitudes of destiny. Actually She always gives Her ready attention to the affairs of men, the state of the country and similar matters when brought to Her notice. It has been recorded elsewhere that Her appreciation of all aspects of a problem, trivial as well as global, is instant and complete. If the person involved did not know Mataji well, he or she would justifiably think that Mataji had been briefed about his problem; this is not so. When She has the *kheyāla*, She knows whatever has to be known at that particular time. Mataji was not trivializing the enormity of the war situation, but giving expression to what She always says. In the context of a global war, this could only assume profounder meaning and significance.

Mataji's ceaseless travels created the feeling in every township that it was the most suited for Her sojourn. The inhabitants, with great confidence, would invite Her to stay permanently with them; but inevitably and relentlessly the day of parting would arrive. Once at New Delhi Railway Station, when the devotees were disconsolately waiting to say good-bye to Her, one person, voicing the thoughts of many, asked, "Ma, say that you belong to us." Mataji with one of Her enchanting, inimitable smiles, said, "I belong everywhere and to everybody." In this statement, perhaps, lies the clue to the mystery of Her constant movement from place to place.

(To be continued)

Questions and Answers

Sanat Kumar Sen

(*Translated from Bengali*)

Varanasi, April 1974

Question : Mataji, in non-dualistic Vedanta it is said : “Brahman is Truth, the world is illusory, the individual (*jīva*) is actually Brahman and nothing else.” What does “the world is illusory” mean ? We do not understand this. please explain !

Mataji : Oh, how beautiful ! “Brahman is Truth, the world illusory and the *jīva* actually Brahman and no other.” World (*jagat*) means that which slips away, which has no stability. What changes continuously cannot have permanent existence and is therefore illusory. However, there is a state where the question of permanence or transitoriness, of yes or no does not arise at all, a state beyond everything,

The one goal of sādhus and Truth-seekers is the Supreme. If they get entangled in ashrams and similar ties they fall away from their ideal.

Dibrugarh, Assam,
14-6-75

Question : Mataji, we are pining for God-realisation. Will our yearning be fulfilled ?

Mataji : The One who causes you to yearn, He Himself will fulfil it—in His own time.

Question : Ma, please talk to us about God—about His essential nature (*svarūpa*), His grace, His beneficent attributes, His bounty, how He can be realized. You are inseparable from Him, one *Ātmā*, to hear you speak about God is of immeasurable value.

Mataji : God has created the universe by a mere stroke of His imagination. We are told it is His play. This body also affirms this. God says “all are tools in my hand.” All are but instruments wielded by Him, whether within this world or beyond. God alone really exists. In order to find Him one must take shelter in the Guru. He appears in the form of *Riṣis* and Sages; He appears as Mother, He is all-pervading. Every Sage devises his own doctrine, his own path, creates his own sect. God Himself is in division, in the many. Butter may be cut into innumerable small pieces, it still remains butter.

According to the tenet of non-duality (*advaita*) there is one-Brahman-without-a-second. According to the *Vaiṣṇavas* God is the master and the devotee His server. Without the *Ātmā* the relationship of the whole with its part, of the Lord with His server, could not exist at all. “Wherever my glance falls, there Sri Kṛṣṇa takes shape.” When Sri Kṛṣṇa appears there is only He and He alone.

God assumes form for the sake of the devotee. Form—His own essential form, His own essential Nature (*svarūpa*). Just like water and ice. In ice water is contained. Ice means formed : it takes on the shape of the vessel in which it is kept. God is present in all shapes and forms. Everyone treads his

own path. There are innumerable lines of approach, countless states.

After much wandering, after numberless experiences a human body is obtained. Man (and woman) alone is endowed with the capacity to realize God. Although steeped in ignorance, there is also a door to Knowledge for the human being.

It is desire that causes coming and going. When the One becomes the sole target of desire there will be Enlightenment. One must enter that current, that stream. You are God's own tool, you have to dedicate yourself to Him. Just studying the timetable is not enough, one has to go to the station, one has to purchase a ticket. With heart and soul one must try to pursue the path of a *Riṣi*.

"My wife is the Goddess of the home (*Griha Lakṣmi*) let me serve her"—in this spirit. "My son is Gopal, the child Kṛṣṇa." This kind of attitude is to be fostered in the householder's *āśrama*. Arrange a shrine-room. Morning and evening meditate on God. Where is He not? Wherever you may be, from that very place and condition you must endeavour to find your Self. You are the descendant of a *Riṣi*—try to realize this!

Agarpara Ashram,
May, 1975

Question: Mā, many Brahmins have left Bangladesh and settled in India. Due to scarcity of brahmins it is now extremely difficult to continue the worship of deities in the temples. What is the right thing to do? Should the worship be suspended or performed by non-brahmins?

Mataji : If God is truly present in the *vigraha*, He Himself will arrange for the worship to be performed in the proper manner.

On the platform of New-Bangaigaon Railway Station, 19-20-6-1975

Question : The wise keep on declaring that everything happens by God's will. Not even a leaf falls against His will. If this is so, why then should man suffer as a result of his actions? Why is it said : "As one sows so one reaps"? If God is the originator of all action, why should man suffer for it?

Mataji : Everything that takes place is God's dispensation. Nothing happens against the Almighty's will. This is correct. All the same, is man actually aware of this fact? When the realization that *Bhagavān* is the sole actor becomes firmly rooted, then there is no more problem; then the question you have asked cannot possibly arise. It is true that *Iśvara* is the sole controller of everything; but it is also true that He has given man the freedom to discriminate between good and bad, between right and wrong, and to act accordingly. A human being reaps the fruit of his or her own actions.

Question : In the Bhagavad Gītā Śri Kṛṣṇa says, *niṣkama* karma (action free from desire) is man's duty. Please elaborate on this!

Mataji : Unselfish work, action directed towards God, this is *niṣkāma* karma. What is done from selfish motives

is called *sakāma* karma (action performed with a desire for its result).

Samyam Saptah, Kanpur,
10-11-1975.

Question : How can one attain to direct experience ?

Mataji : What do you mean by direct experience ?

Question : Self-realization - direct experience of the *Ātmā*.

Mataji : Follow precisely the Guru's instructions. This will bring it about.

Question : The Guru's instructions are concerned with actions. Whereas the *Ātman* or Brahman are beyond action, are the essence of Supreme Knowledge. Can one reach the realm beyond action while engrossed in action ?

Mataji : Action is indeed the means to reach beyond action. The *Ātmā* is self - effulgent. It shines forth constantly, at every instant. Yet it is covered by a screen which has to be removed, and this is accomplished by action. Just as the sun always shines but at times is hidden by clouds. So long as there is ignorance, so long as there is *sāadhanā*, action is imperative. When Revelation supervenes, the state beyond action is reached. There the question of action or inaction is non-existent; but until then action has to be performed.

Question : What is sin and virtue, dharma and adharma ? Who decides about this ? What exactly is sin and what virtue ? Who solves this problem ?

Mataji : Action that aims at God is virtuous and beneficial. While action that leads to degradation is sinful.

11-11-1975

Question : What is the result of practising *samyam* (self-restraint) ?

Mataji : If the rules of *samyam* are observed carefully, *Śakti* will be awakened. And then you will yourself find the answer to your question.

13-11-75

Question : How does one develop faith in God ? Please tell me how I can find my Self.

Mataji : All the discourses you are listening to, the ideals that are placed before you, these can give birth to faith. Try to grasp what is said, make an effort to understand. Learn to ask questions. If faith and devotion were not deep within you, this question could not arise. The question itself is a sign that faith is concealed within you. Just as good and bad are within you, so also faith and devotion. The desire for God-realization is begotten by faith.

Question : How can I come to know my true nature (*svarūpa*) ?

Mataji : Have you obtained a Guru ?

Questiones : I love the name of Rāma. Today itself it has occurred to me again and again that you indeed are my Guru.

Mataji : By obeying the Guru's instructions, by carrying out the injunctions of the *Śāstras* your question will find its

solution. Seek satsang. By the Guru's grace achievement comes.

Questioner : I look upon you as my Guru. I pray for the blessing of the Guru's touch for everyone taking part in the *Samyam Vrata*, since it is forbidden to touch your feet and there are hardly a few minutes available for personal questions and advice. Your gate-keepers do not allow us to go near you.

Mataji : God alone is the one Guru. If you pray inwardly God will respond to your prayer and grant it.

Question : Does God's grace operate according to laws ? Does He consider how much *sādhana* anyone has performed and accordingly bestows His grace ? Or is grace without cause and reason ? Is it lavished without strict relation to one's worthiness and entirely dependent on God's Will ?

Mataji : In God's kingdom everything is possible. Listen to a story. Lord Narayan was having his meal. Suddenly he got up and hurried away, saying : "One of my devotees is being beaten. I have to go and rescue him." But after a little while he returned leisurely without having gone to his destination. On being asked why he had rushed away in the middle of his meal and then returned so quickly, the Lord replied : "My devotee was invoking me in dire distress. I hastened to his help. But when I saw that he had started defending himself, there was no need for me to save him and so I returned." A lesson can be learnt from this. One has to invoke Him and, to the very

end, depend on Him alone. Remembrance of His name, forbearance, seeking His shelter, and complete self-dedication are man's duty. Although grace has this motive, it still remains without cause and reason. When a devotee receives divine grace he realizes that it is infinitely greater than what he could have deserved by his devotion and the conscientious performance of his duties. Thus grace is unmerited divine favour—without motive, cause or reason. God's whole creation is such. But unless one has attained to a certain state of achievement one will not be able to understand the complete causelessness of Grace.

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There are two kinds of sorrow : The suffering due to the want of some worldly commodity and the pain of separation from God. The latter kind of sorrow ultimately leads to real happiness, while the former only goes on augmenting sorrow. Although of course, this sorrow also, in time, induces man to go out in search of Truth.

14-11-75

Question : God Himself abides in Bliss while He keeps the world immersed in sorrow. Moreover He says : "Repeat my name and sing my praises !" Why has he created a world of this kind ?

Mataji : God is Himself within the world. All are God's manifestations. Nothing except God exists at all. According to His pleasure He plays in an endless variety of

ways. The play is indeed His. Where the relationship of a master to his server exists, there He appears as the server. A server's work is to engage in service. Along whatever line one proceeds, God will reveal Himself accordingly.

15-11-75

Question : There is too much ego in me. This gives me pain. Ma, please tell me how to get rid of the ego. Save me from my egotism !

Mataji : During the last few days the reply to this question has been given in the discourses of the Mahātmās. The straight and simple answer is : "Carry out the Guru's instructions. Do as he says. Proceed according to the directions given in the *Śāstras*." To be born as a human being is a very special boon, Strengthen the ego in such a way that it exerts itself in the search of God and becomes determined to find Him.

Question : Ma, so many people come to you and perform your *pūja*. What do you feel about all this ?

Mataji : If you do *pūja* to this body it feels just as you feel. But of course, it goes without saying that God's worship is performed, not this body's.

During the *samyam saṅgah* one endeavours to sit absolutely still, gradually one's attitude of heart and mind and body improves. By and by there is less coughing, less drowsiness. One's posture must become steady, the spine kept erect. When a *kriyā* is performed, the spine often straightens of itself. This is action leading to the revelation of the true Self (*Svarūpa prakāsa*), You are divine in nature—the path

to this realisation opens out. Use your ego to enter this path. If the Iness is active in the domain of the mind there will be sorrow. If you really and truly find out who is "you", you will know "who am I." Kapil taught his own mother. When that state is attained, a son can become even his mother's Guru.

When the ego is understood one realizes one's Self. But one will have to go beyond realization and non-realization. This cannot be explained in words.

With God there must be no barter, no trading. "For so many years I have practised and yet gained nothing. What is the use of doing more *sādhana*?" This is not right. You will have to persist with constancy and devotion. By doing *sādhana* a state of achievement will gradually come about. Or, it may also happen that, having sat down to meditate at exactly the right point of time, Supreme Knowledge supervenes instantaneously. In this there is no hard and fast rule. Nevertheless, everyone has to perform his duties in keeping with his condition and with the *āśrama* to which he belongs. If one lives in the world regarding everyone as a manifestation of God, the road to His realization will open out also while in the householder's *āśrama*. Engage in selfless work done as a service to God. If the "I" has remained, strengthen it by actions and practices aiming at THAT.

"I Worship The Terrible"

By

Brahmacāri Ram

Sister Nivedita in her inspired biography of Swami Vivekananda, tells us concerning him, "but now he seemed to fasten his whole attention on the dark, the painful and the miserable in the world, with the determination to reach by this particular road the One behind phenomena. The worship of the terrible" now became his whole cry. Illness or pain would always draw forth the reminder that "She is the organ, She is the pain and She is the giver of pain, Kali, Kali, Kali."¹

"I worship the terrible" he was constantly saying, and once, 'It is a mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the motive. Quite as many are born to seek after pain. Let us worship Terror for Its own sake'.²

I have found this last line to be particularly provocative. It should be understood that there is nothing masochistic implied here. Vivekananda is not referring to the perverse egotistical enjoyment of suffering, but to the joyously devotional acknowledgement of the Creatrix of pain as being the same Divine Mother who gives us pleasure. She is equally

1. "The Master as I Saw Him" p. 125 by Sister Nivedita. Published by Swami Niramoyananda, Udbodhan Office, 1 Udbodhan lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta-11th Edition.

2. Ibid, p. 159.

inherent in both and one is no less a manifestation of Her Divine Play than the other. It is through hardships and suffering that we are reminded of the transitory and painful nature of human life; and our minds and hearts are more readily turned towards God.

However in attempting to offer a rational explanation of the "Terrible" I must be careful not to miss the great Swami's point. God is never bound to explain Himself to man's limited intellect, in spite of the insistence of modern rationalistic religion and philosophy that He should do so. It is only through surrender and ultimate union with the one God, the only Reality, Who manifests Herself as the "Terrible" as well as the "Good and Beautiful" that we can hope to know who She is or why She does things. The modern agnostic or atheistic humanitarian rationalist who says "I cannot accept any God who is the author of evil, injustice and pain", is actually saying, "I cannot accept any God who does not conform to my narrow conception of Reality and who does not cater to my own and humanity's desire for sense gratification as the main purpose of life."

To sustain perfect equanimity seems to be the challenge heartily accepted by Vivekananda. Sister Nivedita tells us, "His own effort being constantly to banish fear and weakness from his own consciousness and to learn to recognise the Mother as instinctively in evil, terror, sorrow and annihilation as in that which makes for sweetness and joy, it followed that the one thing he could not tolerate was any sort of watering down of the great conception. "Fools", he exclaimed once as he dwelt

in quiet talk on the worship of the "Terrible." Fools, they put a garland of skulls round thy neck and then start back in terror and call thee "the Merciful". And as he spoke the underlying egoism of worship that is devoted to the *kind* God, to Providence, the consoling Divinity, without a heart for God in the earth-quake or God in the volcano, overwhelmed the listener. One saw that such worship was at bottom, as the Hindu calls it, merely "shop keeping" and one realized the infinitely greater boldness and truth of the teaching that God manifests through evil as well as through good. One saw that the true attitude for the mind and will that are not to be baffled by the personal self, was in fact the determination in the stern words of Swami Vivekananda "to seek death not life, to become one with the Terrible for evermore".³

If non-duality is the nature of truth then there is nothing to fear because the one who fears, the act of fearing and the object feared are all God. Therefore fear is a delusion of the mind which keeps the *sādhaka* from his goal of Self-realization or union with God. A good way to resolve this problem is to worship the Divine Mother Kali as the author of terror and inherent in the terrifying act. Then the *sādhaka*, through his *sādhana*, identifies himself with Her until the lower self is extinguished and perfect union attained through Her Divine Grace.

Still, I am afraid my formulas, my attempts at rational explanation, are too sterile and do not do justice to the exquisite power and profundity of the Swami's statement,

3. Ibid, p. 160.

"Let us worship terror for its own sake". Like a Zen koan it must be meditated upon and its meaning experienced directly.

From Brahman to Avatāra to Jiva and back

Mother Kali is not a mere symbolic conception, a philosophical convenience illustrating particular metaphysical truths but a divine personality, a perfect projection of the one absolute Brahman--the unchanging formless Reality--into this eternally transitory dualistic illusion that we call life.

This is so not only for Ma Kali but for all the *Avatāras* and anthropomorphic heroes round which the world's great religions are centered. They are a gate and a way that opens on everlasting Truth, a bridge which leads "from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality". In this relative world of continual change in which all things are limited by space and a definite time-span, in this world which most of us mistakenly consider real, the individual's awareness of the world around him is determined by the thing's name and form. Theoretically there is a perfect language, the phonetics of which correspond exactly to the vibration of the object described. It is considered that Sanskrit approximates this language. Thus, Sanskrit mantras and prayers have a fundamental creative power inherent in their audible sound, above and beyond the mere intellectual meaning they convey. The Hindu science of mantra teaches that a thing's name is not merely an arbitrary sound but corresponds directly to the molecular vibration of the object which it identifies. Recent subatomic physics tells us that the smallest

particles comprising matter are not made of tangible separate substances, but behave more as energy - both as particle and wave. The solid shape of a particular thing is determined by the density of interaction of these particles which are simultaneously energy waves. This pattern of molecular interaction gives the impression of external solid form as we normally perceive it. As these energy particles also behave as energy waves, solid form can be said to be determined by the frequency of the waves vibration. Sound is determined by a similar action. Thus modern science would tend to support the ancient Hindu teaching on mantra; namely that form proceeds from sound and is an effect of sound.

A mantra, in the specific sense I am concerned with here, is quite literally the Name of God - the sound vibration corresponding to the form of a particular Deity. This form is subtle and not visible to the human eye. The mantra AUM is said to contain all possible sounds and it corresponds most closely to Brahman, the infinite absolute Reality. All of us exist in a dualistic awareness of nature, i. e. observer and the thing observed. It is the object of spiritual discipline to transcend duality and to become one with the absolute eternal Reality—our own true Self.

The *Tantra Śāstras* say that just as dirt may be used as an abrasive to remove dirt (when cleaning pots, etc.) so certain forms are conducive to eradicating our limited perception of form, bringing us into transcendental union with the one Supreme Reality. The *Avatāras* and supreme Gods and Goddesses such as Mother Kali, through their sound-bodies or mantras, are the divine forms which cleanse our consciousness of the dross of dualistic egocentric awareness.

For the mantric process to be valid it must be planted like a seed in the disciple by a qualified Guru. This planting occurs at *dīkṣā* (initiation). Once the living mantra has been implanted, the disciple, through repetition of the mantra, will ultimately *become the Deity* to Whom his mantra corresponds. The frequency of the particular mantric vibration gradually forces out and erases all lesser vibrations within the *sādhaka* until he becomes God. To become one's chosen Deity is to become Brahman, because, as I have said before, the Deity is a perfect projection of the formless God into the relative illusion of form. It is only logical that as long as man's awareness is centered in duality--in awareness of external names and forms--Divinity will reveal Itself through name and form.

*Om pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate,
pūrṇasya pūrṇamadāya pūrṇamevāvāsīsyate.*

(Om, That is perfect. This is perfect. From the perfect springs the perfect. If from the perfect, the perfect be taken, the perfect remains.)

Mother Anandamayi says, "When insight into form and the formless dawns in its boundlessness, everything will be uprooted",⁴ The divine hurricane-like Śakti of Ma Kali uproots the trees of ignorance embedded in the human soul when She reveals Herself. Again Mother tells us: "There is certainly a level where difference and non-difference are perceived simultaneously".⁵

4. "Words of Shri Anandamayi Ma", p. 185.

Published by Shree Anandamayee Sangha-Varanasi/2nd Edition

5. Ibid, p. 187-8

Is this not Mother Kali ? The Primordial *Śakti*, Mother of *prakṛiti*, of duality, of all creation – standing on top of Her inseparable consort, Lord Siva, Who is infinite attributeless Brahman, the One Reality.

Swami Vivekananda says: "I believe in Brahman and the Gods, and not in anything else". Sister Nivedita adds, "He was evidently afraid that my intellectual difficulty would lie where his own must have done, in the incompatibility of the exaltation of one definite scheme of worship with the highest vedantic theory of Brahman. He did not understand that to us who stood about him, he was himself the reconciliation of these opposites, and the witness of the truth of each".⁶

How deeply all of us who have experienced the divine grace of Ma Anandamayi must feel that She fulfills the same role for us in this respect as did Swami Vivekananda for Sister Nivedita. After all, She is that Brahman manifesting within duality in a perfect form. She is a window through which we see infinite absolute Consciousness, our own true Self. Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai Ma.

Finally, for those to whom this "worship of the Terrible" seems abstruse and alien, no better attitude can be adopted than that of Nivedita, herself an Irish lady, who tells us; : "I set myself therefore to enter into Kali worship as one would set oneself to learn a new language or take birth deliberately, perhaps in a new race."⁷

6. "The Master as I Saw Him" p. 163.

7. Ibid, 161.

Kali the Mother⁸*by*

Swami Vivekananda

The stars are blotted out
The clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness vibrant, sonant.
In the roaring, whirling wind,
Are the souls of a million lunatics,
Just loosed from the prison house,
Wrenching trees by the roots
Sweeping all from the path.
The sea has joined the fray
And swirls up mountain waves,
To reach the pitchy sky.
The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side
A thousand, thousand shades
Of death, begrimed and black.

Scattering plagues and sorrows,
Dancing mad with joy,
Come, Mother come !

For Terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath.

8. Ibid, p. 126.

And every shaking step
 Destroys a world for e'er.
 Thou "Time" the All - Destroyer !
 Come, O Mother, come !
 Who dares misery love,
 Dance in destruction's dance
 And hug the form of death -
 To him the Mother comes.

Concerning the last four lines of his poem Vivekananda said : "I have proved it. For I have hugged the form of death".⁹ And on another occasion concerning the highly misunderstood subject of karma yoga, he wrote to Nivedita: "Death for the cause is our goal, not success".¹⁰ Of course here he is referring to the death of the ego, the death of selfishness.

In the following poem I have attempted to depict Ma Kali as she is popularly and traditionally portrayed, giving a brief meditation on some of the symbolism therein.

Om Ma Kali

By

Ram

(1)

Black-scarlet, blue stabs of light invade the night.
 To reveal Infinity's heavy-bosomed shadow.
 The seconds slip away until She steps on the clock
 And devours eternity to appease Her passion.

9. Ibid, p. 132.

10. "Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishne-Vivekananda, p. 109
 by Pravrajika Atmaprana-Sister Nivedita Girls School/5 Nivedita
 lane, Calcutta.

(5)

There's no compassion or false mercy here, my friends,
 Only the celestial precision of truth, boldly unveiled
 And the immediate destruction, inherent in
 such revelation,
 Of the falsehood and vanity men worship as life.

(6)

Oh Mother Kali, I am not afraid,
 Because as the destroyer of illusion and death
 You clear the way to eternal life.
 You are the divinely radiant goddess of perfect Truth
 So I sing your praises
 Knowing that you will unite the pairs of opposites
 Thus destroying the relative illusions of good and evil,
 pleasure and pain.

(7)

Oh Ma Chamunda, drink my blood to-night
 That I may gaze into your drunken, bleary eyes
 Until, divinely intoxicated, I forget who is
 looking at whom.
 Then may you grant me the grace to hear
 The hideous, terror-stricken screams of a pathetic,
 deluded humanity
 Crescendo into the death destroying
 tintinabulation of AUM.

Ecce Homo*

(*Sri Swami Chidananda*)

The Crown Jewels are on view and the Tower of London is thronged with eager crowds, come to have a look at them. They are a rare sight nowadays. But today many see them, some merely glance and pass by. Others find them a feast for the eyes, while a few realise that these jewels that sparkle and scintillate with a hundred precious gems set in pure shining gold, represent the beautiful finished product, while behind lies a history of years of slow and painful labour, of digging and drilling deep down, also of a great deal of melting, and smelting, cutting, filing and polishing. Such few that have the imagination, are enabled to picture with some vividness the strife and struggle and the sweat and pain, that combined to build up the perfection that one beholds in the finished product.

Just so, amidst the ugly din and discord of this iron age, we do have some handiworks of rare beauty and worth, crown jewels of the King of kings. For the Saint and the Seer are indeed like ornaments adorning the Divine. By their very lives, they glorify Him.....They are on view now. Eager throngs crowd round to get a sight. They all look and behold the man. Yet how many really see? To such that have but little time except to look and to pass on, I shall here essay to give some picture of Swami Sivanandaji as he is now as well as a few glimpses behind and beyond the perfection that you now see—a few facts of the furnace and the file as it were, that helped to fashion the great model before us.

* Reprinted from "Divine Life", Sept. 1976.

A human and intimate pen picture of Swami Sivanandaji as the man, the gentle and serene figure moving about familiarly with the inmates and visitors at the Ashram, reveals him only as a dignified yet simple man, going about his work in a spirit of absolute detachment and selflessness. But a longer stay and a closer contact with him, bring to light certain traits that are like precious gems in his gold-like, pure personality.

A most beautiful trait of this great man is the astounding gentleness that characterises his thought and conduct. His mind is so completely free from the least trace of crookedness and worldly wisdom, that he has become like a child and the simplicity of his actions reflects this at every step. A spontaneous artlessness at once becomes apparent even within a short time in his presence, that contrasts with the philosophic depth of his mind, making at times a disconcerting blend of the Sage and the Child in him.

This inherent simplicity has the effect of endowing Swamiji with the peculiar quality of working himself into the hearts of the persons with whom he moves.

I have found that he is quite incapable of keeping anything to himself, both with regard to outward possessions as well as in the matter of concealing any thought or idea or withholding any information. A disarming frankness and open-heartedness is perceived in him; which the careless may commit the error of judging as a want of the conventional 'genteel tact', which is in reality nothing short of a socially licensed humbug.

With all the serene confidence that he has, there is no trace of the superiority complex in him. He feels everyone to

be just like him and behaves with all with freedom and equality. Within a few minutes of talking he makes them feel perfectly at home. He will readily take suggestions from anyone, be it even a child, for he considers none as trivial or less important or of meagre understanding.

Another thing that stands out prominently in him, is the supreme calmness that pervades his entire being like the silvern serenity of a moon-lit night. He has found his centre and ever lives in it. No flurry of emotion can ruffle it under any circumstances; so that at all times he is serenity personified. Even when something very disturbing or improper is done in his presence, Swamiji's way of correcting or showing his disapproval is to merely become silent and look grave. Then if need be, he will quietly leave the place. Never would he utter any word in a loud tone indicative of anger or even annoyance. If a situation requires a hard word, then the utmost he is capable of, is a reprimand followed at once by a pleasant joke like the pinch of sugar administered close upon a dose of medicine.

I have never known him to refuse a request. As a matter of fact, his nature is to note a man's need even before it is expressed, and once a request is made, Swamiji cannot rest till it is fulfilled. Moreover, it should be done then and there. His urge to oblige does not brook delay.

On occasions he was invited by devotees to do sankirtan when he was unwell, running a temperature that would keep any other man in bed. Swamiji nevertheless, ignoring the fever, at once went to do kirtan. Even having an attack of diarrhoea due to the overstrain of a train journey and

irregular food, he could not say 'No' to a request for Kirtan. The burning desire to see others pleased and profited, animate all his actions. You may call this recklessness, but though very careful as a rule about his health, Swamiji, when occasion requires, will maintain that sacrifice is essential. All his actions therefore express his firm belief in the doctrine of 'living for others'.

He has cultivated to a most astonishing degree that rare quality of seeing only the good and the pleasant in all men and things. With deliberate diligence and perseverance, he has reduced almost to zero the mind's receptivity to defects and deficiencies in others. Thus it happens many times that persons stay and work for him who are wanting in a dozen different things, and are positively incorrigible in certain respects. But the slightest trace of any one virtue that they might happen to possess becomes sufficient for Swamiji to lay hold upon and suffices to make him oblivious to all the rest of the crookedness that might be there. To understand what real tolerance and forbearance are, a person cannot do better than observe for a short while the actual life of this saintly personality moving about in sublime serenity by the Ganga. Refusing to see even faults of extreme type, Swamiji will perceive magnified tenfold the least good in a being. A little talent, a little goodness, the least service done, is enough to send Swamiji into a transport of admiration. He will proclaim it enthusiastically to all, as though it were the most wonderful and admirable thing, the very acme of perfection. On a dozen different occasions, I have myself been the embarrassed victim of his bubbling admiration and commendation, feeling all too

keenly how unworthy I was of it. I have simultaneously wondered at this truly great quality in him.

And to those who have moved about closely with him, observed him for some time, he has revealed a beautiful trait that one might search far and wide and long and yet fail to find. He instantly forgets wrong done to him, most serious offences even, yet cherishes for ever any trifling service rendered to him directly or indirectly. One can easily talk of 'forgive and forget'. Yet how seldom it is that one happens across a personality that has made it a part of his very nature. I found this virtue in a state of highest development in this Sage. There have been those who reviled, others who openly abused, some that tried their worst to undo the good work carried on by him. Yet to everyone of these persons, Swamiji's reaction is one of sweet and gentle friendliness, even at the very moment of their misdeeds.

We hear of how while at Svargashram he made it his special object to cultivate this attitude of ready forgiveness and instantaneous 'forgetting'. He went out of his way to do service to certain of his neighbours who sought to harm him. He had singled out one malicious and violent ruffian in ochre robes for his special good-will and attention with all his heart for a whole year. And when a series of disturbances took place in the locality due to jealousy at Swamiji's popularity, he in spite of his influence, chose to bear the persecutions without any attempt at retaliations. Later, during the illness of certain of his malefactors, he voluntarily went over to their places, nursed and attended upon them to their unbelieving surprise.

M. M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj

1887-1976

Dr. Biswanath Bhattacharya

Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj, who was destined to be the leading figure in the field of Indological studies and the spiritual quest of man, brought glory to Varanasi, the age old seat of traditional Sanskrit learning. He came to this city as a student to Dr. Arthur Venis, the illustrious Principal of the Govt. Sanskrit College, in 1910 at the age of 23 years. Since then till his death on 12th June, 1976, he maintained and upheld the noblest tradition of Sanskrit scholarship marked by selfless dissemination of knowledge. To Kaviraj, knowledge stood for 'parā vidyā' supreme knowledge which has no other objective than the realisation of the ultimate Reality. Rooted in this conviction, this great scholar lived a saintly life of exemplary simplicity and kept his door open to all who cared to approach him. His house was a true Āśrama of old, where permission was not a necessary precondition for admission. Till he shifted to the Ānandamayī Āśrama for medical treatment in 1969, one was sure to find the great scholar sitting in his room on the first floor of his house at Sigra, surrounded by a great number of books and invariably by some enquirers who observed no formality with regard to time, and explaining subtle philosophic points in an animated voice that rang conviction. He symbolised the true Indian spirit of selfless devotion to knowledge that keeps carefully away from all

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personal publicity and popular approbation, holding, with Manu, that a Brāhmana should always shrink from celebrity as from poison. [संमानाद् ब्राह्मणो नित्यमुद्धिजेत् विषादिव—Manu II. 162] Such an ideal is rare to be found and so Gopinath Kaviraj would always remain an institution in himself.

I

Gopinath Kaviraj was born of a Brāhmana family on 7th September, 1887 in the village Dhamrai in the district of Dacca of East Bengal, now Bangla Desh. His parents were Vaikunthanath and Sukhada Sundari. Vaikunthanath died a premature death while studying in the M. A. classes at the University of Calcutta, five months before the birth of his only child. Vaikunthanath belonged to the village Danya in the Tangail sub-division of the district of Mymensingh (Bangla Desh). As a result, the posthumous child, named Gopinath after the family deity, was brought up in the care of Kalachand Sanyal, a relation in another village, Kanthalia, in the same subdivision of Tangail. Kalachand had no child of his own and took special fancy to young Gopinath whom he declared to be his heir. The young boy, however, could not inherit the property after the death of Kalachand due to machinations of other crafty relations. As a result, the young Gopinath had to face financial stringency right from his childhood, which however strengthened in him a sense of self-reliance at the earliest phase of life.

Gopinath had his primary education up to the sixth standard in schools at Dhamrai and Kanthalia villages where from he went to the city of Dacca and joined the Jubilee

School. He studied there from the seventh to the tenth standard and passed the Entrance examination in the first division from the University of Calcutta in 1905 at the age of 18. By this time, Gopinath fell a victim to malaria and had to take a year's leave from regular academic life.

Deteriorating health and financial stringency posed before him a serious problem. He found the climate of Bengal rather inclement to his poor constitution. When he was thus seriously debating as to how he could study further, he came across, by sheer coincidence, an article by Dharmanada Bharati on the Bengalis in Jaipur. The writer had detailed in that article the role of Bengalis in the administration of the state and gave an account of the Maharaja's College, Jaipur. What impressed the young boy most was the information that no tuition fees were charged at the College. This information was very welcome to the boy who was despaired of higher education due to his precarious financial condition and poor health. He came to know from the article that the Dewan of the state was Sansar Chandra Sen and the principal of the College, Sanjivan Ganguli—both natives of Bengal. Jaipur presented a grand solution of his twin problems and in 1906, the young man set out for Jaipur, a city totally unknown and removed from his native place by nearly 1500 kilometres.

Gopinath, however, was warmly received by two teachers of the College, Meghnad Bhattacharya, younger brother of the famous Indologist, Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri popularly known as Guruji Maharaj—the teacher of Mathematics, and Nabakrishna Roy, the teacher of English. He also met Sansar Chandra Sen, the Dewan of the State

and was assured of all necessary facilities. Gopinath almost immediately drew the appreciative attention of his teachers by his wide range of study and singular devotion. Nabakrishna Roy, the teacher of English, himself a poet of some note was pleasantly surprised at the masterful explanation by Gopinath of a poem of Wordsworth ("The world is too much with us"). Here, he studied for four years and passed the B. A. examination in 1910 in the first class from the University of Allahabad to which Jaipur was affiliated.

Jaipur provided a great scope to the young inquirer to quench his thirst for knowledge. He was already introspective and a voracious reader. While in Dacca, he took to composing poems which though lack, maturity, were nonetheless expressive of this philosophic bent of mind. At Jaipur he found greater scope for reading in the rich library of the Maharaja. His favourite subjects were literature and mysticism. He studied almost all available works on mysticism and occultism along with the classics—Greek, French, German, Italian and Spanish, in translation. Gopinath was a serious student and believed in thoroughness. He would take notes and never permit anything to be forgotten. He trained his memory in such a way that he could always refer to all books read by him. His interest in philosophy took a definite shape at Jaipur which thus played a very important role in his life.

II

The final phase of Gopinath's education started at Varanasi. The young graduate came to this city in 1910 and met Dr. Arthur Venis, the principal of the Govt. Sanskrit

College. Dr. Venis was impressed by his bright academic career and advised him to join the M. A. classes. On the advice of Dr. Venis, Gopinath opted for Group D which consisted of Ancient History, Numismatics, Epigraphy, etc. The principal asked him to study, in addition, Sanskrit at the Sanskrit wing. He asked him to read the Bhāmati commentary on the Vedānta by himself but to attend the classes on Nyāya philosophy of Vamacharan Bhattacharya (Mahamahopadhaya), the famous pandit who was the senior professor of Nyāya in the College. The principal granted him the Sadholal scholarship as well.

Gopinath took his residence at the locality named Devnathpura and started his post-graduate studies. He had to go twice to the College. Dr. Venis used to teach them Epigraphy in the morning at his bungalow and he had to attend the classes of Prof. Norman in the afternoon, who taught German, French, Prakrit and Pali. Along with it, he attended the classes of Vamacharan Bhattacharya as well. He took the 5th year (M. A. Previous) examination held at Allahabad University in 1911. On account of a very serious strain due to walking twice daily to the College more than 2miles away from his residence, Gopinath fell ill and went to Calcutta after his examination, for treatment. He then proceeded to Puri for a change and stayed there for some months and could return to Varanasi by January 1912 to resume his studies. He thus lost nearly 2 years before he could join the final year classes. As a result, he became a class fellow of Acharya Narendra Deva, the famous Socialist leader.

Dr. Venis being acquainted with the difficulties of his favourite student allotted him a room in the Hostel. Gopinath shifted and again devoted himself to the studies. In the final

examination he did brilliantly well. Dr. Venis and Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar conducted his viva voce examination and he passed the M.A. examination from the University of Allahabad in 1914, standing first in order of merit in the first class.

The result reached him at Nainital where he had gone in the summer. Dr. Venis was also there. He asked his student to meet Munshi Madholal, the donor of the Sadholal scholarship, who also was at Nainital then, and express his gratitude. Almost simultaneously he received two telegrams, one from the authorities of the Lahore College, offering him the post of Professor at the College and another from Sanjivan Ganguli, principal of the Maharaja's College, Jaipur asking him to join the Mayo College, Ajmer. Gopinath naturally looked up to Dr. Venis for advice who however did not approve of his joining the College but advised him to undertake research work in the field of Sanskritic studies for a few years more. He, however, assured him of an adequate scholarship.

Through the offices of Dr. Venis, Gopinath was appointed Librarian of the newly founded manuscripts library of the Govt. Sanskrit College, Saraswati Bhavan and started his career of research. The University of Allahabad opened a new Department of Post-vedic studies under the headship of Dr. Venis. The classes of this department used to be held at Varanasi. Gopinath was also appointed in the Department and engaged in tutorial and lecture classes for the post-graduate students in the Saraswati Bhavan.

He served the Saraswati Bhavan as Librarian for six years (1914-1920) and then was appointed Principal of the College after Dr. Ganganath Jha, the previous incumbent,

had relinquished his office. The first unsought honour came to him in 1934 when the Government of India conferred upon him the title of Mahamahopadhyaya in recognition of his valuable service in the field of traditional Sanskrit Scholarship. After serving the institution as Principal for 17 years, Gopinath voluntarily retired from service in 1937.

III

Varanasi gave Gopinath eminence and wide-spread recognition. As Librarian of the Saraswati Bhavan, he introduced two series of publications which show his farsight and interest in Sanskritic research. His entire attention by now became steadily concentrated upon philosophy in general and obscure schools such as Yoga, Saiva philosophy and Tantra in particular. At the same time, he started contacting the sādhakas and yogis in his quest for the practical aspect of the different esoteric ways of sādhanā. The stages of the development of his personality may be pointed out thus—a keen researcher, a greatly gifted academician, a devoted seeker of Truth and ultimately a spiritual guide.

The two series introduced were the Prince of Wales Sarasvati Bhavan Texts and the Prince of Wales Sarasvati Bhavan Studies. Gopinath was the editor of both. The first series was devoted to the publication of Sanskrit Texts and the second to critical studies of different systems and Indological issues. In the texts series, Gopinath himself edited, among many others, the following important texts : Kiraṇāvalī Bhāskara, Kusumāñjali Bodhanī, Rasasāra, Yoginī-hṛdaya dīpikā (2 parts), Bhakticandrikā, Siddhāntaratna,

Siddhasiddhāntasangraha, Tripurārahasya (3 parts) and Goraksasiddhāntasangraha. He utilised the rich collection of manuscripts at the Saraswati Bhavan and encouraged a group of Sanskrit scholars to undertake critical editions of important texts. Almost all the volumes had his valuable forewords.

The Bhavan studies series was planned by him as a periodical publication in which historical and critical assessments of important topics by eminent scholars were published. Dr. Ganganatha Jha, Batuk Nath Sharma, Col. G. A. Jacob, Nilkamal Bhattacharya, Dr. M. D. Shastri were some of the contributors. Gopinath himself contributed by far the greatest number of research articles in these volumes. Up to 1930, some eight volumes were brought out in which some of his important contributions were: The view points of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy, *Nirmāṇa Kāya* (Vol. I), The system of Cakras according to Gorakṣanātha, Theism in ancient India (articles), Some aspects of Vīra-Śaiva philosophy, an English translation of the *Nyāya Kusumāñjali*. (Vol. II); History and bibliography of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika literature (4 articles). Some aspects of the history and doctrines of the Nāthas (Vol. VI). Some variant in the readings of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras*, The date of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Descriptive notes on Sanskrit Manuscripts (Vol. VII). Thus, in the field of bringing out a regular series of invaluable books on Indology, Gopinath proved to be a pioneer in the entire Northern India.

Along with this academic work, Gopinath was advancing on the way to spiritual realisation. His academic interests brought him close to the doctrines of sādhanā followed by

the Śaivas and the Nāthas. Incidentally, he was the first to bring to light the doctrines of the Siddhas and the Nāthas and a comprehensive bibliography of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika literature. He mastered both the northern and southern Śaivism, the monistic and dualistic systems respectively, and found himself temperamentally attuned to the monistic Śaiva philosophy of the Kashmir School. He started searching for a spiritual guide, the Guru.

Varanasi gave him the Guru he was looking for. Gopinath had started looking for one for a long time. While a student in the Govt. Sanskrit College, he was impressed by the profound scholarship of Bhargava Ramakinkara Yogatrayananda (Shashi Sanyal) whose Āryaśāstra Pradipa had a great influence on him. Even before that, when he was a student in the school, he came to know of the great sādḥaka of Bengal, Lokanath Brahmachari of Baradi, from one of his teachers, Mathura Mohan Chakravarty (later, founder of the Shakti Ausadhalaya). He also had a great respect for Yogiraja Shyamacharan Lahiri of Varanasi and used not only to read whatever was available about the saints and sādḥakas all over the world but would run to meet the living seekers of truth and God. His search for the Guru found consummation in 1918 when he met Swami Vishuddhananda Paramahansa at whose feet he dedicated himself as a disciple. Since then he devoted himself to esoteric sādhanā. Unlike his Guru who used to demonstrate supernormal powers, Gopinath never aspired to show yogic powers although he had full faith in the doctrine of yogic powers (siddhis).

That his sādhanā was successful could be felt by coming close to him. Here was a man endowed with mastery over

so many branches of learning but without the least trace of egotism or pedantry. The strongest adherent to his own discipline, he had no sectarian bias and firmly believed in the truth that all the different paths lead to the same realisation of the ultimate Reality. His basic faith in spirituality as the essence of human life gave him an inimitable childlike simplicity that was quite baffling in relation to such an accomplished scholar. He was optimistic in faith and synthetic in approach. His vast range of study led him to an eminence where sectarian distinctions naturally wither away. That is why he could so easily maintain his views without coming into conflict with the orthodox schools, the Buddhists, the Jainas, the Christians or even the viewpoint of Islam.

Gopinath came into personal contact with Mata Anandamayi in 1928. Both realised the worth of either and the contact continued until his end came in the *Āsrama* of Anandamayi Ma. In addition, he had personal contact with many well-known sādhas of whom Ram Thakur, Meher Baba—the Parsee saint, Sitaram Das Onkarnath, Swami Paramananda Tirtha may be mentioned. Bharataratna Bhagavan Das also had impressed him, whose work on Theosophy drew his attention to that discipline. Dilip Kumar Roy, the well-known singer-disciple of Sri Aurobindo also had personal relationship with Gopinath and some important letters were exchanged between them.

IV

In 1937, Gopinath voluntarily retired from government service. This year was important in his life as in that

very year his Guru Swami Vishuddhananda breathed his last. Though all the disciples of the Guru wanted to put the mantle of the Guru on him, Gopinath resisted this attempt. He, however, took upon himself the responsibility to look after the Varanasi Ashram of his Guru, the Vishuddha Kanana, wherefrom he started the publication of a series in Bengali under the name, "Vishuddha-Vānī." The series aimed at an exposition of the special discipline advocated by his Guru, Swami Vishuddhananda, and Gopinath was the chief contributor.

Retirement from service, for Gopinath, did not mean a retired life. He became the more active in matters academic and spiritual. He continued to remain the fountainhead of inspiration for the researchers who flocked to him for guidance and insight. Gopinath suggested topics, helped prepare the synopsis, directed the attention of young researchers to the salient points of the problem and even taught them the texts. With his profound scholarship and original ideas, Gopinath proved to be the real guide of generations of research scholars who, however, were registered with formal supervisors in different universities, almost all over India. It was a unique selfless service of the noble savant to the cause of higher studies.

In addition to guiding research scholars Gopinath held classes at his house and taught the texts particularly on Yoga, Śaivism and Tantra. If impressed by the sincerity of the enquirer, he would teach literary texts or elucidate the viewpoint of Abhinavagupta on literature or any other subject. Buddhistic philosophy was also one of his favourite subjects.

His approach being thoroughly original, his teaching invariably aroused keener thirst for knowledge in the taught. A contact with him for even a short period was sure to become a memory cherishable for the whole life.

Gopinath was associated with almost all Universities as an assessor of research work. It would be no exaggeration to say that all researches in Indology, especially in Northern India, from the thirties upto the sixties happened to be directly or indirectly indebted to this great scholar for this academic achievement.

His personal contribution to the scholarly world also went on unabated. He contributed articles in Bengali, Hindi, English and Sanskrit. *Uttarā*, *Ānanda Vārtā*, *Himādri* are the important Bengali periodicals wherein his articles were regularly published. His Hindi writings were mainly published in the *Kalyan* of Gorakhpur. He was associated with the publication of the special issues of *Kalyan*. At his suggestion special issues on Yoga, *Sādhana* etc. of the *Kalyan* were conceived, planned and published.

Gopinath was also associated with the management of two Sanskrit Colleges in the city—The Sharatkumari Sanskrit Vidyaśrama and the Goenka Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya.

Along with all these activities, Gopinath must have been proceeding on with his personal spiritual *sādhana* which was never made public. He was dumb about personal achievement which, however, was apparent on his shining face and the endless compassion in his eyes.

V

By 1960, Gopinath fell seriously ill. Medical examination detected a cancerous growth in the rectal region and he was taken to the Tata Institute of Bombay for treatment. In 1961 he was operated upon by Dr. Burgess of the Tata Institute. The late Sri Prakash, the then Governor of Maharashtra personally looked after his treatment at the hospital. The operation was successful and Gopinath returned to Varanasi via Poona and Delhi where he convalesced at the Anandamayi Ashram.

In 1964, the Govt. of U. P. decided to offer him the headship of the newly started Yoga-Tantra Department at the Varanaseya Sanskrit Visvavidyalaya, formerly the Govt. Sanskrit College. The Education Minister, Sri Kamalapati Tripathi personally came to him and requested him to accept the offer. He was allowed to work in his own house. Gopinath agreed and worked as the Head of the department from 1964 to 1969. During his tenure as head, an all India conference on Tantra and Yoga was held and a new series of publications under the name the Yoga-Tantra Series was introduced in the Sanskrit University. In this series, he himself edited three volumes of Tantrik texts : The *Luptāgamasangraha* (Part I)—a collection of agamic statements of such texts as are best; the *Tantra Sangraha* a collection of 18 Tantrik treatises in three volumes.

Gopinath had been severely shaken by the attack of cancer and his health was gradually deteriorating. As a result he relinquished the responsibility of the Yoga-Tantra department in 1969 and was prevailed upon by Mata Anandamayi

to shift to her Ashram on the bank of the Ganges at Bhadaini locality. Gopinath submitted to the wishes of the Mother and became an inmate of the Ashram.

Here in this Ashram, he lived for nearly seven years (1969-76) under the personal care and supervision of Mata Anandamayi. Twice he had to be hospitalised at the B. H. U. and since then was kept under constant medical care. His daughter and devotees always kept a watch over him. It was at this Ashram that the end finally came.

VI

The personal life of the great scholar was as simple and unostentatious as his public life. He was married early, at the age of thirteen, in 1900 to Kusum Kumari, also of a well-known family of Sanskrit scholars of East Bengal. He had two children—a son, Jitendranath and a daughter Sudha. His family, consisted of, in addition to his wife and children, his mother who breathed her last at Varanasi in 1925. Gopinath lived in rented houses until in 1937 he shifted to his own newly built house at Sagra. Gopinath outlived his only son (a sad premature death) and wife and left behind him his widowed daughter, a grandson and two grand-daughters.

Though a family-man, Gopinath lived the life of a saint and inspite of bearing all responsibilities incidental to family life was never ruffled in the face of calamities. True to the ideal preached by the Mahābhārata, he accepted both adversity and prosperity with complete equanimity. His firm faith in divine dispensation never flagged,

Gopinath was not a spendthrift but never miserly either. His house like the *gurugrhas* of the past, provided shelter to a number of students and devotees whose material welfare was carefully looked after by him.

VII

To conclude, a reference needs be made to the many honours offered to this man who never hankered after them and the works that have been published in book-form. The list of books given here is not comprehensive but aims to refer to some of the important ones only.

In English, Aspects of Indian Thought and Bibliography of Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika literature-have been published respectively by the University of Burdwan and D. P. Chatterji, Calcutta.

In Hindi, the Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad has published--Bharatiya Sanskriti aur Sādhanā in 2 vols; Tāntrik Vāṇmaya men Śākta dr̥ṣṭi; and Kāśī kī Sārasvata Sādhanā. The Hindi Samiti of the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh published Tāntrik Sāhitya, a bibliography of Tāntrik literature.

In Bengali a number of books have been published of which the following may be mentioned : Bhāratiya Sādhanār Dhārā; Tantra O Āgama Shāstrer Digdarshan--both published by the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. Tantrik Sādhanā O Siddhānta--II volumes, published by the University of Burdwan. Different publishers published the following : Shri Krishna Prasanga; Sādhudarśan O Satprasanga II Volumes; Sahitya-cintā; Patrāvali; Akhanda Mahāyoger Pathe; Svasaṁvedan--II Volumes. etc.

Gopinath was awarded many honorary degrees from all over the country of which the following may be mentioned;

Mahamahopadhyaya by the Govt. of India in 1934. D. Litt. by the Universities of Allahabad and Banaras. Padmavibhushan by the Govt. of India in 1964, Deśikottama by the Visvabharati University in 1975. Vācaspati by the Varanaseya Sanskrit University in 1976 Sarvatantra Sārvabhauma by the Sanskrit College, Calcutta in 1965.

He was awarded the Rabindranath plaque by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1975 and a medal by the same society of Bombay in 1967. The Sahitya Akademy honoured him with a prize for his book in Hindi, Tāntrik Yāṅmaya men Śākta dṛṣṭi. The Govt. of U. P. presented him a special prize of Rs. 10000/-for his work, Tāntrik Sāhitya, in 1975.

A Felicitation Volume, Rṣikalpanyāsa was also presented to him by the A. I. Sanskrit Parishad, Lucknow on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. A biography has also been written in Hindi and published by Dr. Bhagavati Prasad Singh of the University of Gorakhpur under the title-“Manishi Ki Lokayātrā”.

The biographical sketch presented here is naturally a bare narration of facts. We have seen how Gopinath faced a great many problems right from his childhood and inspite of them rose to an eminence covetable by all votaries of scholarship. He was successful in every phase of life : as a librarian, a principal, a teacher, a pioneer in Sanskritic research and as a man of profound scholarship. Although it is quite sufficient to mark him as one of the greatest personalities in the field of Indological studies, this was not all. Gopinath Kaviraj was all this and something more. That is why we prefer to class him as an institution.

In Memoriam

Bhakti Sudha Mukhopadyaya

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth is a residential institution where girls are prepared from the *Prathamā* up to *Āchārya* standard according to the syllabus prescribed by the Sanskrit University of Varanasi. Naturally the pride of place goes to Sanskrit apart from the attempt to preserve our spiritual heritage and to recapture something of the exaltation that comes to us, in fugitive flashes, when our mind calls up the memories of the hoary past of our great civilization. To fulfil such an ideal is not possible without external assistance in so many forms. The Kanyapeeth library, inadequate to meet the needs of its students, was particularly looking for a saviour. Through Ma's grace Professor Satyamshu Mohan Mukhopadhyaya stepped in and replenished it with a number of original Sanskrit texts on philosophy along with their *Bhāshya* and *Tīka* on the Tantras and Agamas, as also on Pali literature. Professor Mukhopadhyaya himself went to the book-shops, selected the books, and got them catalogued under his own supervision and thus donated a big collection to the Kanyapeeth library.

Satyamshu Mohan was a real Brahman in the truest sense of the term. He was the Brahmanical culture personified in this age of scepticism and was an embodiment of purity and piety. Very strictly he adhered to the directives of the Hindu Scriptures, and never took even a drop of water

without repeating the Gayatri Mantra and performing the daily *sandhyā* and *pūjā*, even while suffering from acute physical ailments. He made the *Pārāyanas* of *Śrimadbhagavatam* and of *Mahabharata* 4 times and of the *Ramayana* twice. He was a man of principle, and never yielded to any pressure for personal favour or material gain. Thus he was a source of inspiration and a model for emulation by the students of the Kanyapeeth and other institutions where he spent his teaching career. Satyamshu Mohan was a friend to his students. They used to flock to him with their problems, academic or otherwise, and never had to go away disappointed. In fact, his residence was ever open to his students who came to him for research work in Sanskrit, Pali, Philosophy and Education.

The young Satyamshu Mohan inherited from his father love for pursuit of knowledge and later in life he became an eminent scholar of Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Bengali, Hindi, and English languages and literature, a philosopher proficient equally in eastern and western philosophy, an Indologist of note. As a post-graduate student of the Banaras Hindu University, Satyamshu Mohan came into personal contact with Mahamahopadyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj and studied with him Nyāya and Vaisheshika philosophy as also the phonology of Pali. In fact, Satyamshu Mohan was a voracious reader of both ancient and modern books. His library contained works on the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy, Buddhist and Jaina philosophy, Kashmir Shaiva philosophy, Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy texts and commentaries of Navya Nyāya of Bengal and Mithila Schools etc.

He was very much influenced in his prime of life by Gopinath Kaviraj and since the latter came to stay in the Ashram of Mata Anandamayi at Bhadaini, he was again in very close contact with his guru. He used to visit Kavirajji very frequently. He went to S. S. Hospital B. H. U. very often to see him when he was admitted there as a patient in 1970. Satyamshu Mohan again visited him daily in Shree Shree Mata Anandamayee Hospital, when he was ailing towards the end of his life. He rushed to the Ashram immediately after the demise of Kavirajji and paid his last homage to his guru having waited there till 10.30 P. M., though he himself was then in indifferent health. Shortly afterwards he paid tribute to his mentor over the radio.

Professor Satyamshu Mohan taught innumerable students in various institutions and capacities, including principalship, for nearly 36 years and retired from the Teachers' Training College of the Banaras Hindu University in 1960. Some two months and a half before he passed away he fell very ill. His revered friend Swami Narayanananda Tirtha of Shree Anandamayee Ashram came to see him, expressed the hope of his quick recovery and asked him to pay a visit to the Ashram as soon as possible. On November 2, Satyamshu Mohan went to the Ashram to meet his respected friend and other ashramites. The very same night he had a sudden attack of severe breathing difficulty, and ultimately left his mortal body on November 4, 1976, at his residence at Shivala, in full consciousness, at the age of 72.

Mātri Līlā

(April 13th—July 1st, 1977,)

In the April issue we have already reported that Mataji arrived at Kankhal from Naimisharanya on April 8th. On April 13th, Chaitra Sankranti, the anniversary of Didima's initiation into *sannyās* was observed as usual by special Pūja in Didima's Samadhi Mandir, by Sadhufeeding, kirtana, *ārati* etc. attended by devotees and disciples from far and near.

The next day Didima's centenary celebrations started. Didima was born on a Sunday in the month of Vaisakh in 1877. The exact date is not known. It was therefore decided to commemorate Didima's birth for the whole month of Vaisakh and were especially every Sunday. It was Mataji's *kheyāla* that the centenary should be observed not only at Kankhal and in all our other Ashrams but also, as far as possible, in the homes of all of Didima's disciples and devotees and should consist spiritual practices such as kirtana, japa, Puja, recitation of scriptures, entertaining sadhus, the poor, also kumaris and batuks besides guests. Numerous letters have been received from people who carried out these injunctions on a large or small scale, in keeping with their capacity and means,

On April 14th all the Mahamandaleswaras and principal Mahatmas of Kankhal and Hardwar, a veritable galaxy of saints, assembled in our hall and delivered short talks. *Ārati* and presents were offered to them. It was a unique and solemn function.

Throughout the following month Mahatmas enlightened the audience by their inspiring speeches. Some of them referred to Ma and Didima as embodiments of the principles laid down in the Sastras. Towards the end of the month of Vaisakh, Brahmachari Nirmalananda in a series of talks discussed in detail Didima's life and her outstanding qualities with special reference to her role as a spiritual guide. On occasions Mataji Herself would remark on the loftiness of Didima's noble life and cite anecdotes illustrative of Didima, an ideal *sthitaprajña* as described in the Gīta.

A remarkably impressive feature was *Rudra Abhišekha*, a ritual of hoary antiquity based on the Sukla Yajurveda. It was performed every Sunday with consummate skill by twelve Brahmins. Their recital was superb. The Ashram was electrified by their sonorous voices and perfect pronunciation accompanied by meticulously correct gestures. They uttered mantras invoking Rudra for the wellbeing of all. While the Śiva Mandir was reverberating with the soul-stirring sound of Vedic hymns, pindrop silence prevailed in Didima's temple at the other end of the courtyard, where *akhaṇḍa japa* was carried on by devotees one after another by turns throughout the whole month.

Every Sunday 150–200 sādhus were entertained to a feast. One kumāri was fed daily. Puja and a sumptuous meal and clothes were offered to 108 *kumārīs* and 12 *batuks* (boys) one morning.

Even during the *utsava* Mataji was unable to remain in Kankhal uninterruptedly. On the night of April 17th, She left for Naimisharanya, where on April 21st, *Aksaya Tritiya*,

She graced by Her presence two important functions, namely the second anniversary of our Purānā Puruṣa Mandir preceded in the early morning by the foundation-stone laying of an "Institute for Puranic and Vedic Studies and Research."

About two years ago, when Mataji drove to Naimisharanya from Lucknow in the car of the Governor, Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, She related to him and his wife in detail how our Purāna Mandir had come into being. She also mentioned that certain scholars were anxious to establish in Naimisharanya, the birthplace of the Purānas and of ancient learning, a centre of purānic study and research. Dr. Reddy at once got keenly interested. At his initiative six acres of land were acquired and a society was registered to see to the building of the Institute. Dr. Reddy was elected its Life Chairman, Dr. Gourinath Sastri, Ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Varanasi Sanskrit University, its Director and Dr. Gour Hari Singhania its Treasurer. He is trying his best to raise funds for the building of the Institute. Sri Sitaram Jaipuria and the brother of late Rai Bahadur G. M. Modi have offered to build students' hostel and a guest-house on institute land.

Thus the foundation stone for the Institute was laid on April 21st in Mataji's presence with due ceremony and solemnity during a function from 6-30-8 a. m. Pandits from Varanasi performed puṣā, recitations from the Vedas and fire sacrifice. Many scholars had assembled specially for the occasion from Lucknow, Varanasi, Hyderabad and other places. A number of Government officials attended, headed by Dr. Reddy who, in spite of urgent appointments with the Home Minister in Lucknow and the Prime Minister in Delhi that very morning,

managed to arrive by helicopter, landing on Institute land at 6 a. m. and leaving at 8 a. m. His speech was relayed by the All India Radio. Dr. Gourinath Sastri, Swami Naradanda, who donated a large plot of land to the Institute, and some Sanskrit scholars also delivered speeches.

The same evening Sri Ma left for Kankhal where She alighted on the 22nd early morning just in time for a Bhagavata Saptah which was held as an item of centenary celebrations. Discourses on the Ramayana were another feature of the month. On April 25th, Mataji visited the farm of Sri Ram Panjwani and was present at the inauguration of a Lakshmi Narayan Temple. The next day the anniversary of Sri Bholanathji's mahāsamādhi was celebrated in our Ashram.

On April 30th early morning Mataji motored to Dehradun; first to Raipur where a new public *dharmaśāla* was opened in Her presence. The people of Raipur had felt the urgent need of such a *dharmaśāla* for years and at last were able to construct it with the assistance of our Ashram. By 10 a. m. Mataji reached the Kishenpur Ashram. At 5 p. m. She was taken from there to the Ramatirtha Ashram where Her birthday celebrations started on May 2nd. The very day Sri Ma arrived, sādhus were entertained to a feast and presented with blankets. A pandal had been provided for satsang and every morning Rāsalila was performed and from 3 to 6 p. m. the congregation was kept enthralled by lectures delivered by Mahamandaleswaras. Among them were Swami Brahma-nanda of Kankhal, Swami Vidyananda of Kailashashram Rishikesh, Swami Purnananda of Hardwar, two brothers, Swamis Govindananda and Krishnananda both Mahamandaleswaras of the Udasin Math who took part in our function

for the first time, the Mahant of Nirvani akhara, Sri Girdhar Narain Puri, Swami Chidananda who spoke in English. Swami Govind Prakash and the new Mahamandaleswara of Ramatirtha Ashram took immense trouble to make the function a success. Their task was made difficult by frequent storms and rain. The pandal was blown down even before it had been used and had to be fixed a second time. Fortunately the weather cleared up within a couple of days. Mataji graced the Rasalila for some time every morning also the satsang in the afternoon. The *tithipuja* was performed with great solemnity in the packed pandal in the night from 6th to 7th of May. It goes without saying that the recitation of hundred *Chandīs*, *Kumari Puja* and feeding, and all the other items which form part of the yearly celebrations of Sri Ma's birthday were arranged for. Mataji was as gracious and attentive as ever to each and everyone. The throng of visitors from far and near swelled up enormously during the last two days. Mataji was anxious to return as quickly as possible to Kankhal where She had kept back a number of Ashramites and others to continue the festivities of the centenary. She therefore left already on the 7th evening, accompanied by a very large number of people travelling by special buses, cars and taxis. That very evening *adhivasa* of *nama yajna* started in the hall of Kankhal Ashram, followed by ladies' kirtana all night and men's kirtana until sunset on May 8th. After midnight on the 7th, Mataji came out of Her room and slipped into the assemblage of girls steeped in *nama kīrtana* while circling round the circular alter. Mataji was in great *bhava*. The women put a yellow sari round Ma's shoulders and decorated Her with flowers and garlands while She danced with them for a few minutes.

The festivities continued with full force for the next week. One afternoon Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Hyderabad gave a brilliant talk in English on bhakti. On the 14th, two hundred *Daridra Narayanas* (the Lord in the guise of the poor) were served a feast and given clothes under the spreading banyan tree in the spacious courtyard adjoining the hall. Mataji, accompanied by Sri Mahantaji who had taken active part in all the celebrations, walked with folded hands between the lines of poor men and women while food was being served and *arati* performed to them. It was a moving spectacle.

The same night Maharshi Mahesh Yogi paid a visit to Mataji who received him in the hall in the presence of a fairly large congregation. The Maharshi had brought pandits with him who recited hymns to Devi from various scriptures with remarkable skill and feeling for over an hour. Then Sri Mahesh yogi talked about his transcendental meditation and his work of spreading it in all countries of the world. Then Sri Ma also had Her say. At the end Kumaris Chhabi Banerji and Pushpa sang exquisite *bhajans*. The gathering continued until 11-30 p. m. when Sri Mahesh Yogi took his leave, expressing his wish to come for Mataji's *darsana* again and again. On May 15th when the centenary celebrations were completed, Mataji had the *kheyala* that as many of the practices as possible should be kept up for a whole year. Thus, perpetual japa throughout the day, special puja on Sundays, sadhu feeding, etc continues at Kankhal.

On May 15th evening Mataji left incognito for three days retreat in Her cottage at Panchavati next to Kalyanvan

in Rajpur. Nobody was allowed to disturb Her there, unless specially asked to come. However Mataji came to the Kishenpur Ashram for a short while on the 17th evening and strolled all over Kalyanvan garden on the 18th early morning. The same evening She returned to Kankhal. She stopped at the Kishenpur Ashram where everyone could approach Ma one by one while She remained in the car. On the 19th night She boarded the train to Bareilly from Hardwar.

There, Mataji followed the invitation of Ananda Ashram, a branch of Paramartha Niketan, Rishikesh, which had been founded by the late Swami Sukhdevananda. A Bhagavata Saptah was held from May 20th to 27th with Swami Vishnuashram of Sukhtal as the speaker. Mataji attended his talks daily for some time. On the 23rd, just after the arati concluding the narration of Sri Krishna's birth, Mataji became indisposed and had to be taken to Her room that happened to be near the hall. Luckily She recovered after a few hours. Governor Dr. Reddy and his wife arrived on the 26th from Lucknow and remained until the 28th morning when Ma proceeded to Almora by car, arriving there before midday.

Mataji came to Almora after an interval of 13 years when Her birthday was celebrated there in 1964. The people of Almora were overjoyed to have Mataji in their midst once again. Mataji was able to rest for several hours daily, giving *darsana* mornings and evenings. A number of local Government officials availed themselves of this opportunity of coming into Sri Ma's presence and talking to Her. A few devotees arrived from great distances such as Calcutta and Bangalore and one lady came all the way from Lebanon for four days

only just to be with Mataji. Mataji was in a communicative and expansive mood reminiscing about Bhaiji, whose samādhi is in the Almora Ashram, and about how the Ashram came into existence. The Vidyapeeth (the Boys' School run by our Ashram) had been in Almora for years, but was then shifted to Vrindaban. During Mataji's sojourn this time, part of the institution returned to Almora.

In the afternoon of June 17th Mataji motored to Bareilly where She rested for four hours before boarding the train to Hardwar, alighting in the Kankhal Ashram on the 18th early morning. From June 23rd to 30th, a Bhagavata Saptah was observed at the request of the Raja and Rani of Nabha. Pandit Sri Braj Kishore Goswami of Vrindaban officiated as the expounder of the Srimad Bhāgavata in Hindi, daily for three hours in the mornings and three hours in the afternoon. Mataji's health was indifferent and doctors were of the opinion that She needed more rest than She takes as a rule. Thus Mataji came to the hall only twice, namely for the narration of Sri Krishna's birth one morning and for the completion of the Hindi talks on the last evening. However Mataji gave darsana for a short while twice daily on most days on the veranda or terrace upstairs. On the 26th, Sm. Indira Gandhi paid a visit to Mataji accompanied by some relatives.

Mataji is expected to be in Kankhal during another Bhagavata Saptah with Sri Swami Vishnuashram as the speaker from July 21st and also for Guruparnima on July 30th.