

Ānanda Vārtā

*A quarterly presenting the divine life and
teaching of SRI ANANDAMAYI MA and
various aspects of Universal Dharma.*

Advisory Editorial Board

Swami Bhagawatananda Giri
Dr. S. C. Bhattacharya, Ph. D.
Sri R. K. Banerjee

•

Editor : Atmananda

Managing Editor :

Ānanda Vārtā welcomes contributions, especially reflections and experiences connected with Sri MA. Also articles on the life and teaching of saints and sages of all religions, ancient and modern, anthologies of words of wisdom, etc. Articles should, as far as possible, be typed with double spacing and on one side of the page.

★ ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION ★

India— (Postage free) Rs. 8/- only

Foreign— (By Sea Mail) Rs. 12/50 or £ 1-0-0 or \$ 3.00

“ (By Air Mail) Rs. 30/- or £ 2-15-0 (Europe etc.)

“ .. Rs. 40/- or \$ 6.50 (North & South America)

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

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

Vol. XXVI

January, 1979

No. 1

CONTENTS

1. Mātri Upadeshamrita	—	1
2. From the life of Mataji	—Bithika Mukerji	13
3. Mother of Millions	—Anil Ganguli	24
4. An Illuminated Wanderer	—M. P. Jain	37
5. Visiting Sri Anandamayi Ma	—Rama Jyoti Vernon	38
6. Kali Puja and Annakut at Bhasha	—R. K. Banerjee	48
7. The Reign of Dharma	—Swami Atmanand Giri	55
8. Touches of Love's Madness	—David Frawley	58

YOKED but FREED

You are all without exception embodiments (mūrtis) of Ānand (Bliss). So coming to your Self entails being in that Ānand which is the Self.

× × ×

The invoker of Guru's grace along with the Guru's śakti cohabit every disciple. Prayer and response—each disparate element is actually an expression of that one Self-Light ever resplendent within. So, pray always for Guru's grace.

× × ×

The various practices pointed out by Śri Guru as leading toward the one Ideal-Goal are for becoming one-pointed. When a disciple begins to focus on the single Ideal with single-eyed intensity, could it then be imagined that an Ideal Goal exists not ? Only unswerving strides directed toward Fulfillment according to Guru's teaching can be called steadfast devotion (niṣṭhā). One thing is acting for outer pleasure, quite another acting for inner Treasure. Toward the surpassing is Yoga ; toward the ever-passing, merely pleasing is bhoga. Unitive action or separative ! Whoever pursues action as Yoga (Kriyāyoga) is on the path of Liberation.

Entirely immersed in whatever current of practice is made your own, endeavour by that form of action to gain liberation from all action. "In eternal Freedom, in the transcendant, and trans-transcendant...— There, no questions arise. First, be united to action—diving single-mindedly into whatever current it may be—then only freed from action. To be eternally yoked, and to be eternally yoked, is to be eternally free.

× × ×

Be ever intent on uncovering the Mahāyoga (absolute Unity) that reveals the fact of being eternally yoked to the Divine.

—Sri Anandamayi Ma



Mātri Upadeshāmrita

I am only a child and do not know how to lecture or give discourses. Just as a child, when it finds something sweet and good takes it to its mother and father, so do I place before you what is sweet and good. You take whatever pleases you. Mine is only a child's prattle. In fact, it is you alone who question and you alone who answer. You beat the drum and you hear the sound.

—Mataji

Mātri Upadeshāmrita, "The Nectar of Mother's Teaching", comprises excerpts from various sources of Sri Ma's spiritual instruction on selected subjects.)

On Grace

(Continued)

To be able to engage in sādhanā is itself the grace of God.

* * * *

If anyone has been so blessed as to feel that the spiritual path is all-beneficial if God bestows His grace on anyone in this way—it is necessary that he should exert his will-power to the utmost and devote day and night to the service of God.

* * * *

Although it is true that without His touch the child sādhanā cannot reveal itself, nevertheless one must

keep one's winkless gaze fixed on the light obtained so far. Every moment is pervaded by Him, by His contact, His touch, His advent, His acceptance, His victory.

* * * *

He grants and will grant His touch in His own time. But we have to do our duty, which is to call out to Him.

* * * *

You must do your own work; He will look after His.

* * * *

"God is everywhere. Why then should we have to call out to Him? Surely He does not want anything from us!" Words of this kind can often be heard from young and old. Precious gems and metals lie hidden in the interior of the earth. How much strenuous labour is not required to bring them to light! Similarly, although He dwells in every human heart, man must by prayer and meditation, by delving deep into the mysteries of Truth, purify his mind and remove his ignorance, so as to become fit to receive divine grace which alone can induce the Supreme Experience.

* * * *

"Unless one is blessed with His grace is it at all possible to pray to Him?" Such considerations sometimes serve as an excuse. If His grace were not upon you at all times you could not even be alive. Take the trouble to examine your life patiently and you will get some idea of His mercy.

Scattered all over the earth there are innumerable things. In order to collect and convert them into useful commodities,

machines and factories are at work, and science is constantly inventing new expedients and gadgets. If with similar zest you put your heart and soul into calling down His divine grace, you will very soon become aware of it distinctly and undeniably.

* * *

Question : When can we get the grace of God ?

Mataji : It will come whenever necessary.

Question : How can we know it ?

Mataji : When you have eaten, you know that your hunger has been appeased. Similarly, God's grace is known.

* * *

Question : By practising sādhanā one cannot attain. Does it not depend on God's Will, on His grace ? Please explain how we can attract God's grace ?

Mataji : God's grace is streaming down at all times. If you keep your vessel turned upside down the grace will flow down the sides. Keep your vessel straight up and open and it will be filled. This is one aspect of the matter. And for those who proceed along the line of grace, how is it possible to be vouchsafed the vision of God without His grace ? You say attainment does not come by effort. But the Lord is present right in front of you; you have only to look in His direction from here. You have to advance towards Him. Truly, God (*Svayam Bhagavān*) is ever present. You come and go, but actually neither come nor go. The veil of ignorance is cast over you but God is ever present. He has left only this little bit of distance for you to traverse. This is called *kriyā*.

He is ever present right here and everywhere. His revelation cannot come by any *kriyā* (practice). Why then have you taken to spiritual exercises ? Lives and lives you have spent trying to gratify your desires and longings. If after wasting countless births in this manner a person has the intelligence (*sad buddhi*), the good idea (*subuddhi*) to decide, "Let me get out of this endless round of birth and rebirth, let me not be born again", what does he do ? He takes to serious *sādhana*. While the person who does otherwise suffers misery life after life due to his cravings and longings, his desires and passions.

There is only God and nothing else. Not to aspire to Him, this is the veil of ignorance. You should engage in the practice (*kriyā*) that is appropriate at your stage, that is within your line of approach. Who is disguised as *kriyā* ? Who am I who is practising the *kriyā* in order to realize God ? So long as this is not revealed, so long as the knots (*granthi*) that constitute the ego are not cut asunder, it is but natural that questions should arise.

*

*

*

Question : God lavishes His grace on some and not on others. How can one speak of equality and justice ?

Mataji : He does according to His pleasure.

Question : Why should His pleasure be at our cost ?

Mataji : Where there is "mine" and "thine" it appears as you complain. Actually He claps His own hands and hears Himself the sound—just the one Self.

*

*

*

Without God's grace it is difficult to become a pilgrim on the Path, this is perfectly true. All the same, after having set out on the journey it is not right to keep the mind vacillating—that is detrimental. Strengthen your mind and lead a life of *tapasyā*. The Supreme Lord of this path is God Himself.

* * *

The awakening of a painful awareness of His absence must also be regarded as an expression of His grace. So long as the result of one's spiritual practice (*kriyā*) cannot be perceived, it must be understood that it has not been carried out in exactly the right manner or spirit; still, the wayfarer has progressed on his pilgrimage. However, in such a situation one will have to make one's faith very firm.

* * *

If at all times you cultivate a spirit of dedication, who can tell but that perhaps some day, by His grace, by His mercy you may really become wholly His. This is why it is so important always to foster a spirit of self-dedication.

* * *

Question : Why is the individual born into this world ?

Mataji : To fulfil his own desires, to experience happiness and sorrow.

Question : Is it not possible to go beyond desire and experience ?

Mataji : If everything is possible, why should not this be possible as well ?

Question : Is there any short cut towards this goal ?

Mataji : By the grace of God such a short cut may sometimes be found.

* * *

Question : Man's life is conditioned by his *prārabdha karma*. Where does free will (*puruṣkāra*) come in ?

Mataji : You must use your free will to find the Supreme. The practice (*kriyā*) by which you advance towards Him (*Puruṣottama*) that exactly is called *puruṣkāra* (free will or the power to decide for oneself). By God's grace even your destiny may be modified. If a devotee has firm faith that his *prārabdha karma* can be changed by God's grace, then this may become possible. There certainly are laws in God's creation, yet nothing is impossible for Him. If you think that God's grace is also within destiny, this is so for you. If on the other hand you are convinced that God is more powerful than destiny, then He may do anything at all for you. He provides for the worldly as well as the spiritual needs of His devotees.

* * *

One of God's names is *Chintāmani* (fulfiller of desires). At first men turn to God because He fulfils all desires, but by and by they become so absorbed in the contemplation of Him that there is no room left for any other thought; that is to say, they become infused with the divine Presence. One must pine for God as keenly as the miser craves for wealth, as the childless long for a son. Throughout life's journey keep Him first and foremost in your thoughts and He will become your sole aim. If anyone can thus enshrine Him in his heart, He will take all burdens off His devotee and give him freedom to con-

template exclusively the Divine. There have been numerous instances of this, not only among saints and *sannyāsis* but also among men of the world. Even beasts, birds and plants are within the pale of His mercy. Laying all cares at rest, take shelter in Him with a tranquil mind. Keep your kite flying with the string held firmly in your hand; the wind will of itself seize it and carry it soaring into the sky.

* * *

Question (from a letter): To know you always near although physically you may be far away, this experience can only come by your grace. It seems impossible through my own efforts.

Mataji: You must know Him in such a way that no place remains where He is not. According to Vaiṣṇava terminology, there is *viraha* and *milana* (separation and union). But this *viraha rasa*, this experience of profound yearning for God after having known union, is not like the wordly sense of separateness, which means not knowing the other—being unfulfilled.

Everything comes by His grace alone. This, of course, is a fact. You experience as your own the power He has vested in you. Apply it in His service to the utmost of your capability—whatever the nature of your approach, whatever your line.

* * *

That you have become aware of not knowing is also God's grace, and your aspiration is equally God's grace.

* * *

The sense of want arises spontaneously—it is the Divine that awakens it.

* * *

Question : Does God's grace depend on the receiver or the Giver ?

Mataji : Divine grace is pouring forth all the time. If you hold your vessel the correct way up, it will get filled. All of you without exception invariably desire to receive something : you are in want. So try to keep your receiving vessel the right way up, with simplicity and sincerity. Just carry on with your sādhanā and He Himself will, out of His grace, do the rest—He always does. Wherever there is man or woman there is God. When there is a question of receiving, there is also effort. Grace streams down in torrents like rain. When grace is received in its fullness there is full Enlightenment. You receive in proportion to your effort. This is one thing. Then, where there is no more question of action or non-action, this is grace without cause or reason : the realization that God's grace is being showered on me not because of any particular effort on my part. "Without reason" means it does not depend on your or my personal effort or deed. When this realization comes, then there is hope of obtaining God's grace without cause or reason.

Question : Does the manifestation of His grace depend on the performance of any particular action or rite ?

Mataji : It does not.

Question : Is it then due to merit from a previous birth ?

Mataji : No. His grace is without cause. You perform an action or a rite and you get a certain result, but when you talk of His grace you must not look at it from this angle.

Your effort is designed to tear down the veil of ignorance. God has given you intelligence; therefore, you must carry on with your duties. But His grace is without reason. The question may be raised, "Why does His grace not descend on all?" That is precisely His divine dispensation. All creation is His very own; He is free to do as He pleases. Where there is the feeling, "I am responsible for my action; I am the doer", there is and will always be cause and effect.

What is the cause for realizing one's own Self? I alone. You yourself are the cause. So long as there is a cause, there will be the desire to receive which produces the fruit of your action. I have toiled, so I have reaped. Whose fruit? The fruit of what? Who toiled? Your own deed and your own reward. But God is your own. He is the one Self of all. Because you do not realize this you ask this type of question. In the state in which such queries arise it appears like this.

Question : When His grace is unlimited in His boundless store, why is He so miserly in dealing it out ?

Mataji : He certainly keeps on bestowing His grace, but man is not aware of it.....The desire to obtain grace, its fulfilment, a glimpse or touch of divine bliss, these are certainly manifestations of divine power (*vibhuti*). All manifestation is an expression of God's divine power. He alone is revealed as divine power—He, the One-without-a-second, the Self. Again, who appears in duality? He Himself. Nobody can remain on this path without experiencing some realization of this sort. To be turned in this direction means there must have been some prior involvement, there still is—

this eagerness to attain something. How can one continue on this path if one does not gain anything ?

* * *

God Himself draws you towards Him.

* * *

Question : Does God's grace operate according to laws? Does He consider how much *sādhana* anyone has performed and accordingly bestow 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 help him and so I returned."

A lesson can be learned 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.

*

*

*

You want to know whether grace (*ahetuka kṛpā*) is without cause or reason? Certainly; for grace is by its very nature beyond cause or reason. When working one reaps the fruit of one's actions. If, for instance, you serve your father and he, being pleased with your service, gives you a present, this would be called the fruit of action : one does something and receives something in return. But the eternal relationship that by nature exists between father and son does surely not depend on any action. The Supreme Father, Mother, and Friend—verily, God is all of these. Consequently, how can there be a cause or reason for His grace? You are His, and in whatever way He may draw you to Him, it is for the sake of revealing Himself to you. The desire to find Him that awakens in man—who has instilled it into you? Who is it that makes you work for its fulfilment?

Thus you should try to arrive at the understanding that everything originates from Him. Whatever power, whatever skill you possess—why, even you yourself—from where does everything arise? And does it not all have for purpose the finding of Him, the destroying of the veil of ignorance? Whatever exists has its origin in Him alone. So then, you must try to realize your Self. Are you master even of a single breath? To whatever small degree He makes you feel

that you have freedom of action, if you understand that this freedom has to be used to aspire after the realization of Him, it will be for your good. But if you regard yourself as the doer and God as being far away, and if, owing to His apparent remoteness, you work for the gratification of your desires, it is wrong action. You should look upon all things as manifestations of Him. When you recognize the existence of God He will reveal Himself to you as compassionate, or gracious, or merciful, in accordance with your attitude towards Him at the time. Just as, for example, to the humble He becomes the "Lord of the Humble".

* * *

God fulfils a Truth-seeker's desire. Appearing in the form that is longed for, He does what is needed. It is He who kindles the mind's desire and He Himself fulfils it.

* * *

— — —

"Meditation will help you to find your bonds, loosen them, until them and cast your moorings. When you are no longer attached to anything, you have done your share. The rest will be done for you.—By whom? By the same power that brought you so far, that prompted your heart to desire Truth and your mind to seek it. It is the same Power that keeps you alive. You may call it Life or the Supreme".

NISARGADATTA

From the Life of Mataji

Bithika Mukerji

(Continued from the July 1978 issue)

In Jhansi (near Allahabad) in the beginning of the year 1944, Mataji came in contact with a few of the eminent sādhus (ascetics) of North India. Prabhudutta Brahmachariji had invited them to participate in a function at his ashram and they were also to plan for a jointly sponsored festival of nāma-sankīrtana later on. Every evening the ascetics, robed in their saffron clothes, sat in the beautifully decorated Satsang Mandap and gave discourses on religious subjects. Mataji also sat with them and since She was not one of the speakers, She was with the audience as well. At night Mataji returned to the Mandap and sometimes answered questions put to Her by the crowd which always gathers round Her wherever She is. Prabhuduttaji and the other sādhus also came sometimes and held formal discussions regarding their further plans.

It will be recalled that those were difficult times. The Government of India during that period was highly suspicious of any concerted activity and discouraged assemblies of any kind. The sādhus felt it to be their duty to participate in the life of the people and this could be done by them through the medium of religious festivals alone. So the festival of nāma-sankīrtana was decided upon as a function which would touch the largest number of people at the simplest level of religious

activity. There was much discussion regarding the details of this event. During one of the nightly sessions, after an agreement had been reached regarding the manner and extent of the sankīrtana, Mataji was requested to choose the site for it. Mataji, who had been listening to the deliberations silently so far, broke out into a spontaneous peal of laughter.

It is difficult to describe Mataji's loud ringing laughter because as a phenomenon it has to be experienced by each person for himself. Her whole body seems to radiate the joyous sound which is totally arresting as obviously being a significant answer to a query or a response to a situation. In this assembly of spiritual men, seriously engaged in organisational work of some moment under trying conditions, it immediately commanded attention so that many accredited speakers attempted interpretations of Mataji's laughter. It was said that how should Mataji, who belonged everywhere and nowhere, 'choose' a particular site for a particular event since She accepts all that happens as the only way of its occurrence? It was also felt that this inimitable laughter was perhaps the manifestation of *Ullāsa* mentioned in the books.

Mataji Herself volunteered no explanation, but after a while said gently : "He, who has manifested Himself in your hearts in the form of a wish for this joint function will further reveal Himself in the choosing of a place acceptable to all of you. A good resolve is actualised by the Good itself. As far as I am concerned, I, as your child belong to all of you equally. Whatever decision is taken by you all, know it to be my suggestion." The assembly seemed pleased with this pronouncement and Jhunsi itself was quickly chosen as the venue for the proposed function.

In the meantime, Didi had been trying to acquire a little land in Varanasi near the river bank, so that a small ashram could be built for Mataji's convenience. Mataji at this time was visiting Varanasi quite frequently and would put up in dharamśālās or houseboats or in the little mud hut in the garden of Nirmal Chatterji's house in Ramapura. The devotees not unnaturally felt that they should make permanent arrangements for Her stay in the city, so that She could be more comfortable.

Didi's efforts were crowned with success and a piece of land on the banks of the Ganges in Bhadaini was acquired where Vasanti Pūjā was performed in the month of April. Although some sheds were erected for this purpose, the land was free of any buildings. Mataji's presence, however, imparted to the function the perfection which is independent of the quality of accessories and means for the *Pūjā*.

Before the end of the year 1944, a great loss was sustained by the devotees of Mataji : Swami Akhandanandaji passed away in Varanasi in the month of August. In these few months, the ashram at Bhadaini had begun to take shape. The girls of the Kanyapeeth were staying in the city at this time under the guardianship of Swami Akhandananda. As soon as news of his indisposition reached Mataji, She sent Didi to Varanasi. Savitri Mitra who was in charge of the Kanyapeeth at that time and the other girls were only too ready to render him service, but he did not require much tending or nursing. During the last days, Didi asked him more than once, if she should send a telegram to Mataji, but

he invariably replied, "It is not necessary." It was clear to his attendants that he felt himself to be living constantly in the presence of Mataji and felt secure in the refuge which he had sought and found in his life. His last moments were calm and peaceful. The manner of his death was as he had lived, exemplifying the experiencing of *kṛpā* (grace) in his life.

Mataji continued to travel around as She had been doing always. The Durgā Pūjā festival of this year was celebrated at Allahabad at a place called "Krishnakunja", which was a Hall dedicated to the singing of Krishna-Kirtana. Kanhayalal, the proprietor of this beautiful building, had become drawn to Mataji during Her previous visits to Allahabad. In response to his ardent wish, Mataji came to Krishna Kunja for this function. In another part of the city, another Durgā Pūjā was being celebrated by Sri Gopal Thakur at his ashram. Sri Gopal Thakur was the disciple of Sri Satya Deva Thakur of the renowned *Sādhan Samar Ashram*. Mataji was invited to visit this mandap also. In the course of his Pūjā, Sri Gopal Thakur, in an exalted state, made Her welcome with flowers and music as the living presence of the Devi he had invoked to accept the worship of the devout congregation.

This meeting was the beginning of a long association between Mataji and Sri Gopal Thakur, his family and devotees. In commemoration of Her first visit, She went to *Satya Gopal Ashram* for three days every year at the ardent request for Her presence by Sri Gopal Thakur. After his passing away, his daughter Kalyanididi kept up this tradition for many years. Even now Mataji once in a while visits the Ashram to the great joy of all its inmates.

Mataji had been receiving many messages from Sri Hari-babaji Maharaj, the much revered samnyāsi of Vrindaban, whom She had met at Jhunsi, requesting Her presence at Bhirauti a village near Aligarh. He promptly sent a personal messenger to escort Her to this rather remote place. The messenger, Sri Premraj, told Her that the whole countryside had heard about Her and was eagerly awaiting Her visit. They had decided to continue with the kirtan (which was nearing its date of completion), until Mataji came to Bhirauti.

In answer to this appeal, Mataji and Her usual large entourage left for Bareilly en route to Bhirauti after the Durgā Pūjā at Allahabad. At Bareilly they changed to a local train and came to a station called Dhanari. Bhirauti, was seven miles from Dhanari. This distance was usually covered by bullock-carts or on foot.

The atmosphere of the miraculous has always surrounded Mataji. One amongst other such miraculous incidents took place at this time. A gentleman, Sri Kamal Malaviya, belonging to the family of Sri Madan Mohan Malaviya at Allahabad, wished to accompany Her on Her journey to Bareilly. At one of the Stations, he along with others gathered in front of Mataji's compartment and returned to his own only at the last minute, when the train was already picking up speed. There was a scuffle at the door. The people who had got into this compartment were a set of ruffians who shoved him off not caring to see what might happen. As a result Malaviyaji lost his hold and fell on the stony embankment from the speeding train. As he lay on the ground stunned and bruised, he saw dimly the figure of a lady dressed in white who urged

him to get up and walk ! He somehow managed to do this at her behest and followed her shadowy figure along the track for a while; after some time he perceived the twinkling lights of a small station and saw the lady no more. At this place, which in fact was a halt only, the officials were frankly incredulous of his statement that he had fallen off the running Punjab Mail and had not only survived the fall but had walked to the station ! On perceiving his ticket, however, they signalled down the next train, which was the Doon Express, to an unscheduled stop at this halt and found a seat for him. On arrival at Bareilly, the officials took him to the Railway Hospital. Mataji on being informed of the accident, sent some of Her people to the Hospital to stay with him and render him whatever aid might be needed. On his rejoining the party he was accommodated in Mataji's compartment. Apart from a slight bruise on his head, he had sustained no damaging injury. He later related his experience to Didi and others.

At Dhanari station and all along the route to Bhirauti where Haribabaji was awaiting Her, Mataji and Her party were met with a quality of welcome which set a standard for such visits in the future as well. The people of the countryside seemed united in the effort to accord a fitting reception, in their way of thinking, to the most exalted of personalities. Mataji was prevailed upon to ride on an elephant so that the assembled people all along the route could have Her *darśana*. This princely procession was met halfway by Haribabaji himself with his kirtan-party accompanied by a formal band.

In this part of the country, the name of Haribabaji

commanded the greatest respect. He and Uriababaji Maharaj had made a place for themselves in the hearts of the villagers by living with them and inspiring them to abide in the constant remembrance of God. The Satsang was arranged with a view to the schedule of the villagers, giving them time for work in the fields and other jobs required to be done by them. At all other times, they would assemble in the large space provided for the purpose of singing kirtan, listening to religious discourses or the reading of scriptures. The two saintly men would sometimes themselves go to remote villages, from where the people could not easily come to the Satsang. A few miles away from Bhiruati, a solid mud embankment had been erected by Haribabaji with voluntary labour from villagers to stem the annual floods of the Ganges. Nearly eight hundred villages had been engaged in this stupendous task and consequently enjoyed safety now. Haribabaji himself had worked and sung with the villagers, carrying basket loads of earth to the embankment site. He was in every way the life and soul of this part of the country.

All this and more was related to Mataji. She was invited to visit Bandh and there was shown the embankment from which the place had acquired its name. A part of the embankment had fallen into disrepair. The prominent men of the villages requested Mataji to stay in Bandh because Haribabaji had stipulated that he would undertake the work of repair if She and Uriababaji consented to remain there. Mataji said, that She had no objection to staying in one place rather than another and would visit Bandh as frequently as circumstances permitted, if they could prevail upon Haribabaji to remain.

For the time being, however, nothing came of these suggestions as Mataji was scheduled to leave very soon. The farewell was also an unique experience. It seemed that the entire population had turned out to escort Mataji to the station. The villagers had obviously heard about Mataji from their revered teacher and beloved guide, Sri Haribabaji. They accepted Her as the person to whom Sri Haribabaji payed obeissance, and would, in later years, come to Her whenever they wished to prevail upon him to accede to their various requests at different times, which mostly amounted to pleas for staying at Bhirauti or Bandh.

The people who accompanied Mataji, were given the opportunity to witness another side of Sri Haribabaji's activity. Plays enacting stories from the scriptures are quite common at different levels of dramatic presentations. These were a regular feature of the Satsang at Bhirauti. The novel feature was a well acted drama depicting the life of Sri Gouranga Mahaprabhu who was hardly known outside Bengal and least of all in such remote villages. It was seen that the drama closely followed the texts and there was an authentic re-creation of the mood and spirit of this great ascetic, who is regarded as a Divine incarnation by the *sampradaya* (sect). It was entirely due to Haribabaji that Sri Gauranga was becoming known and revered in the villages of North India along with Rama and Krishna.

Plunging the countryside in dejection, Mataji departed on Her usual unstructured round of journeys to other places. It can be seen, however, that with Mataji's visit to Bhirauti and Bandh and later, to Vrindaban, a pattern of Her itinerary

seems to have emerged which has remained almost unchanged down the years. Although She still is free to move from one place to another according to her *kheyala*, She may in general, it is seen, be persuaded to accede to the requests of sādhus to be present at functions arranged or sponsored by them. Mataji had now entered the world of the ascetic orders of India. They are always given precedence by Her over every other consideration. The greatest respect is accorded to them when they visit Mataji, and She herself is now not only made welcome in every Ashram throughout the country but Her presence is eagerly sought by all. Under Mataji's aegis, the ascetic orders and the laity have come together in an unprecedented manner.

Before the conclusion of this account of incidents from Mataji's life, it may not be out of place to contemplate 'the changes' that have taken place in Her mode of life and behaviour. It goes without saying that the number of people surrounding Her at all times, has increased by hundreds, if not thousands. She is at most times busy with, what appears to be impossible crowds. Her programmes seem fixed months ahead, and there is a preponderance of functions during which the public can gaze at Her from a distance only. Many are taken aback at the general lack of order or discipline in Mataji's vicinity; many others get the impression that only important people can approach her. In fact this is not so.

It requires only a little attention to see that in all that Mataji is, or says, or in how She behaves, She has remained essentially the same from the earliest days. She makes Herself available to all irrespective of differences. She invites nobody

and asks no one to go away ! She offers no advice and gives no orders. By being Herself She affirms everyone and this is the attraction of Her undeniably magnetic personality. She has always said that She has no mission to fulfill and so She does not preach or deliver discourses. Her one "message", if it can be called such, is to awaken in everyone who would learn from Her the yearning for Self-realization. The crowds, Her busy schedule, the functions etc., are no bar to the conveying of this message. In fact it is endemic to this unique situation because the 'message' pulls us toward that to which we belong and yet live in its forgetfulness. Who after all, can deny the attraction of a 'treasure-hunt' !

Mataji's personality, of necessity, is enigmatic for us because our standards of measurement can judge effectiveness in the world only. We are completely thrown out of our stride, when we are confronted with someone who radiantly and joyously views the entire spectrum of human experience. In this viewing there is compassion and understanding which dissolve despair and anguish. Thus She participates even while standing apart from our life in the world.

It is absurd to think that Mataji will choose order instead of chaos because that is what we do. To Mataji the world is only as it should be. The will to make things different from what they are is not operative here at all. Since we cannot understand this, we are puzzled by what we think are acts of commission or omission on Mataji's part. For us the 'meaninglessness' obtaining in Mataji's proximity should reflect only the universal meaninglessness prevailing in the world. To

Mataji alone is everything of a beautiful rhythmic pattern which She enjoys as an extension of Her own joyous nature. Therefore, to Mataji alone one can look for that reassurance which must sustain all spiritual endeavour. As such, it can be seen that Mataji neither needs to change nor does She in fact change. Mataji always is only as She is.

(*Concluded*)

“Many read the Bhagavad Gita. You know that Lord Krishna has said : “All are instruments in My hand. I am every where. Everything is within, Me and I am within all”.

God gives *darśana* to the devotee in the form he or she cherishes most. He gives according to His supreme will, fulfilling the devotees needs.

Whatever you do, whatever you utter—the very words, sounds are the music from that hand of God playing His instrument. Whatever work you may also try to think always that you are an instrument in His hand. You have no power to do anything—He is the power house. Even when you do nothing, this also is His wish. He is the Player, let Him play the drum as He wishes. Renunciation comes naturally to those who lead sādhu’s life.”

MA ANANDAMAYI

Mother of Millions

Anil Ganguli

(Continued from the last issue)

“BIRD ON THE WING”, perennially “PERCHED”

The very idea of a bird flying and at the same time perching is paradoxical. However, Ma's *līlā* is replete with examples of such paradoxes. “This body”, She often says, “is like a bird on the wing. Sometimes it enters somewhere, then again it escapes.”¹ She also assures us that She is always with each one of us. “*Far* and *near*”, She once observed, “are concepts that exist only in your view. You imagine this body to be far away. Actually this body abides quite close by. How can it possibly desert you ?”² On another occasion, She expressed Herself more specifically. “I am”, She said, “ever with you. But you don't want to *see*; what am I to do ? In whatever activities you may be engaged—in places far and near—remember, the watchful eye of this body is at all times fixed on you.”³ Let us now listen to Ma speaking in the role of a sweet little girl. “Here's a little wayward daughter who stoutly refuses to move away, even if asked to do so, who never has moved away and who will indeed stay put.”⁴

1. *Ananda Vārtā* XXIII/4/222.

2. *Mauna Milani* Bulletin No. 46.

3. *Matri Darśana* by Bhaiji (1946 Ed.) P. 60.

4. *Mauna Milani* Bulletin No. 59.

Here is the gist of another saying of Ma which supplies the key to understanding the paradox mentioned above : "The Mother is omniform and omnipresent. 'Ma' means Atma. All space is pervaded by the Mother's (*Ma-mayi*) presence" She permeated everything.¹

This saying, it seems, refers to Anandamayi Ma's Inner Being. It is beyond our comprehension. In the sphere of *līlā*, however, Her Outer Manifestation comes down to our level and She has thus explained why the bird has to be on the wing : "Many seek my company in diverse ways. So, it is for them that this body has to move from place to place. Of course, persons who can do *japa* and *dhyāna* in the quietude of their own abode, whose restless mind has become to some extent subdued, who are self-composed and calm for them it is different. But persons with an unsteady mind get the chance to attain peace of mind, at least for the time being, when they have the opportunity of the physical presence of this body in their midst. This explains their ardour for personal contact with this body."²

This "bird often inspires "nests" : we have seen how an Ashram was founded on a big scale at Dehradun. But even that Ashram failed to hold the "flying bird." After "perching" on the foot of the Himalayas for a few years, with occasional breaks, Ma's Outer Manifestation had a *hheyāla* for incessant wandering on the plains of North India and, thereafter,

1. *Mauna Milani* Bulletin No. 63

2. *Mauna Milani* Bulletin No. 64.

across the northern mountain ranges right up to Mount Kailash in Tibet. This fact did not prevent at least some of Her "children" residing in distant places in India and overseas from feeling Her presence within themselves. Kenneth Grant of London is a typical illustration. He had a distressing problem one evening and decided that he would submit his perplexity to the Mother and seek Her advice.* "It is to be noted", he observes, "that there was no conscious formulation of prayer designed with the purpose of creating a link or channel between Mother and myself, through which She might pour the healing streams of Her Grace; on the contrary there was a distinct feeling or decision of postponing the matter till the morrow when I would either compose a letter describing the problem, or, more subtly, ask directly of Mother, and within myself, that She give me the strength to dispel my perplexity, enshrining my plea in some sort of prayer or formula or incantation, I had not even made up my mind which it was to be." And what happened on the morrow to this "child" of Ma, thousands of miles away? "Imagine my amazement," he continues, "on waking next morning, to receive a letter from one of Her devotees in India....., wherein was contained an answer to my unformulated plea - an answer, note well, that must have been given long before I had thought even of approaching Mother concerning my problem, an answer somehow implanted in the mind of another devotee with the express purpose of having that devotee convey the same to me in the manner in which it happened. Needless to say, my correspondent had not been

* *The All-pervading Presence of the Mother* by Kenneth Grant.
Ananda Vārtā, III/3/219.

informed in any way either by Mother or by myself as to the state of my mind *which was known to none other* during the time the letter was conceived, written down and despatched."

Kenneth Grant has placed these facts on record "as showing Mother's omniscience and omnipresence concerning one who has not contacted Her in the physical at all, not even through correspondence." In conclusion he has postulated a theory to explain his mysterious experience :—"Mother's ways are truly mysterious. Such an event, quite apart from the problem or the answer thereto, has had the effect of conferring that most valuable of boons, the certainty of the unity of existence, i. e. the absolute conviction that Guru and chela are one, and that if we could only and at all times enter and abide in the deep recesses of Being, where alone is the true Undifferentiated Consciousness, we could always know That which being known everything is known. And whether a problem is trivial or great, such distinctions of degree altogether vanish in that union of the individual soul with the Infinite Life which, for the sake of convenience and of our limited and finite understanding, we lovingly refer to simply as.....Mother."

Possibly Kenneth Grant had, as it were, the requisite "electromagnetic" wave-length of "telepathy" with reference to Ma. So, he could feel in London the Presence of the "bird" perched on his heart, though physically She was far away in India. To this Westerner, Ma Anandamayi seems to be the embodiment of the Universal Mother. So is She to many others in both the hemispheres.

Once the Sri Anandamayi Ashram at Almora had the exceptional privilege of Ma's presence for nearly two months and a half at a stretch—(usually the "bird on the wing" would not stay anywhere for more than a week or two. On the last night of Her stay, a small number of Her "children" had the good fortune of being blessed with Ma's holy company till 1 a. m. On that occasion Ma happened to be in a delightfully communicative mood, relating incidents of Her early life and replying to all sorts of questions one after another. Everyone kept wide awake, listening entranced. At the end, a resident of Almora exclaimed : 'Mataji, you are leaving us; we shall feel so lonely; our lives will be empty without you.' Ma consoled the devotee by saying : "Why do you say I am leaving you ? Why do you want to push me away ? I am always with you !" Encouraged by Ma's answer, the questioner directly put a specific question : "Do you then live in our hearts ?" There was a ring of sincerity in the enquiry. At once the Universal Mother in Anandamayi Ma was revealed in a flash and She uttered these words : "In your hearts ? Why do you want to restrict me to a particular spot ? Blood of your blood, bone of your bones am I". Perhaps this was the voice of *kheyāla* that welled up from Ma's Inner Being, described by Kenneth Grant as "Infinite Life, lovingly referred to as Mother". It was, indeed, Ma's message of assurance that "farewell" was a word not to be found in Her dictionary, a message of confirmation that She completely identified Herself with Her "children". Ma's physical presence in any particular place seems immaterial in the light of Her saying as follows :—"This body has her being in all Ashrams. You imagine she is confined only to the Ashram set up by you.

This body knows but one sole Ashram which extends over the whole universe. Where is the scope for duality ?”*

Back to Bengal

As already mentioned, Ma's "children" in the Ashram at Dacca had experienced an atmosphere of ecstatic joy, which suddenly turned into a cheerless vacuum when Ma left Bengal in 1932 for a "flight" across Northern India up to Raipur. Thereafter they were impatiently waiting for Her return. The pang of their separation did not go in vain. It intensified their desire for darsana.

"Real darsana" has been explained by Ma as follows : "To see that which when seen the wish to see anything more vanishes for ever; to hear that which when heard the desire to hear anything else does not awaken anymore. Real darsana (vision) is that darśana after which no more question can arise of vision or non vision or of displaying anything. Darśana must be all-encompassing, unveiled, uninterrupted, indisputable".**

It is needless to say that the capacity for real darśana—even the aspiration for it—is limited to a few. All that Ma's "children" in Bengal earnestly prayed for was just an opportunity to have Her in their midst and sit at Her feet for darśana according to their lights. She responded to their call—towards the end of 1936 when she returned to Bengal. Let us have

* *Mauna Milani* Bulletin No. 72

** *Ananda Varta* XIX/4/182

glimpses of Ma's *līlā* at Navadwip and in Dacca and Calcutta on this occasion.

Navadwip is the famous place of pilgrimage in West Bengal which had, in 1485 A. D. produced Mahaprabhu Gauranga, also known as Lord Chaitanya, the great apostle of Vaishnavism. In December, 1936, Ma came to Navadwip for a comparatively long stay. Devotees came to Her from distant places such as Calcutta, Dacca, Rajsahi, Srirampur and Jamshedpur. Notable among the visitors were Professor Triguna Banerjee, Professor Girija Shankar Bhattacharya, Professor Amulya Kumar Dattagupta and Professor Atal Behari Bhattacharya. The usual satsang in Ma's presence often reached a high level of spiritual fervour in Navadwip. The holy place had a special tradition, the participants were receptive and Ma was in a "jolly mood" (this expression is sometimes used by Ma). The kirtan sung by Ma and Her followers proved to be the most fitting contribution to the spiritual atmosphere of Navadwip, replete with memories of Mahaprabhu Gauranga and his principal follower Prabhupada Nityananda. Occasionally Ma used to go for trips on the Ganga, accompanied by Her "children" in a fleet of boats; the local people flocked to Her for darsana, kirtan and satsang.

One day Ma called on Lalita Sakhi,* an outstanding figure of this century among the Vaishnavas in Navadwip. Lalita Sakhi told Ma that somebody had informed him that Ma had left Navadwip without meeting him, adding that he had been in a pique on hearing this. Promptly did Ma reply;

* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, Vol. II, P, 41.

“It is because you had been in a pique that I have come to you !” Such was the pleasant prelude to a protracted satsang that followed in the presence of Ma and Lalita Sakhi. At Ma’s suggestion, the audience placed before Lalita Sakhi a few questions on spiritual subjects. Lalita Sakhi gave short answers in simple, convincing language and concluded thus : “We have neither the will nor the capacity for sādhanā. The best course would be to seek refuge in Ma. She is like a mighty steamer. Any small boat attached to that ‘steamer’ will speedily reach the destination without any effort on its part.”*

One day Ma suddenly entered the City Police Station at Navadwip. The Officer-in-charge, Naresh Banerjee, welcomed Her, Ma took Her seat under a tree. A passerby saw Ma in the Police Station and exclaimed, “Look, Anandamayi Ma and her people have been arrested by the Police.” Ma remarked; “I had stolen the attention of the police officer for a few minutes; this is why he has brought me here.” The meaning of Ma’s remark was not clear until the Police Officer made the following statement; “I heard that you visited Lalita Sakhi because he had wanted to have your darśana. I said to myself; ‘I shall also pray silently and see whether Ma answers my prayer.’ I am blessed indeed that you have come.”** Ma does “steal” the mind of many. But in very few does the urge for darśana arise as it did in the case of the Police Officer of Navadwip.

A lady who deserves special mention in connection with Ma’s Navadwip *ullā* is Nirmala Ma of Adya Peeth, An earnest

* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, Vol. II, P. 41.

** *Ananda Varta*, XX/1/16

seeker of God, she has been blessed with rare spiritual experiences, Her simple, unassuming approach often made Ma behave like a typical human mother, caressing the little child in Nirmala Ma.

One day Nirmala Ma happened to attend a satsang held in the presence of Ma Anandamayi and Lalita Sakhi. Visibly moved by the kirtan that was being sung, she earnestly prayed to Lalita Sakhi for Bhakti. Lalita Sakhi was touched by the outburst of her spiritual emotion and encouragingly assured her that her surrender to Anandamayi Ma would leave nothing else to be done by her.*

Another pious lady, Seva Dasi by name,** prominently came into the picture in *Mātri līlā* at Navadwip. She had dedicated her life to Govindaji whose image was installed in the temple in which she used to reside. She scrupulously avoided human society and had no desire for darśana of Ma Anandamayi till one day she felt that she had received a message from God. "The body in which Govindaji has been manifested is at present in Navadwip. Go and invite Her to this place." Thereafter, Seva Dasi took the earliest opportunity to pay homage to Ma in Her *dharmasālā* and invited Her to pay a visit to Govindaji's temple. "You are", she submitted, "Govindaji personified. So far I have had your darśana only on the mental plane. Now that you are incarnated in Anandamayi Ma, it is time that you should physically reside in your temple; I won't allow you to go away from there." This

* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta Vol. II P.47.

** *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi* by Gurupriya Devi, Vol. III P.826.

submission made Ma laugh like a child. "Well", She said, "it is news to me that Govindaji resides in this body; could you tell me, since when?" Seva Dasi replied; "Since birth." Ma accepted the invitation and visited Govindaji's temple, accompanied by Her retinue. What happened there was least expected and most embarrassing.

Kirtana was started in the temple at the instance of Ma. Seva Dasi was deeply moved. The ecstatic thrill created by the kirtana made her shiver and she seemed to lose her sense of proportion. She approached Ma and firmly clasped Her with her arms. Ma drew the attention of Professor Amulya Kumar Dattagupta and others who were near Her to the strange behaviour of Seva Dasi. "Look", said Ma, "how tightly she has caught hold of me. The fingers of one of her hands are interwoven with the fingers of the other; you won't be able to extricate them even if you apply force." Seva Dasi was determined to instal Ma in the temple. Ma told Professor Dattagupta; "Beware, this lady has been drawing me away; better disentangle me from her." Didi and others present were somewhat perplexed; they did not know what to do. At last Ma Herself appealed to Seva Dasi to release Her. Seva Dasi complied with Ma's request. Then Ma joined the kirtana accompanied by dancing rhythmically with the music. The participants became charged with deep emotion. Seva Dasi, in particular, lost control over her body and fell unconscious. The tide of spiritual fervour caused by the kirtana continued till it was time for Ma to take leave. Seva Dasi, still in a different world, as it were, was not in a position to know that Ma was bidding farewell to her. Ma left a message for her and quietly retired.*

* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta
Vol. II p. 107.

Eventually Ma departed from Navadwip. But her presence continued to be felt even after Her "departure" from that holy place. Several residents of Navadwip told Professor Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, "We have seen many saints and sages visiting Navadwip. We have never seen the like of Ma Anandamayi."*

Shortly thereafter Ma paid a visit to Dacca. To the utter surprise of Her "children" Ma suddenly appeared before them on January 7, 1937. One lady told Her almost in a pique; "Ma now a days you don't want us." Ma's reply was "Whether you want me or not, I simply cannot do without you."**

The paradox of the "flying bird" being simultaneously "perched" on different places was from time to time discussed during Her stay in Dacca. The gist of some dialogues is noted below. Somebody asked Ma what She had brought for Her "children" after travelling to so many places. Ma denied that She had moved away to any far off place and observed; "I have been moving in the some house, in the same garden. Since I have been inside the same house, how does the question of bringing anything for you arise?"*** Somebody complained; "But we cannot see you with our eyes. If you had really been with us, certainly we would have seen you. I am not satisfied with such an explanation from you." Ma's reply was; "By thinking

* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, Vol. II, P.140.

** *Sri Sri Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, Vol. II, P.146.

*** *Sri Sri Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, Vol. II, P.151.

about somebody one can come close to him. There is really no difference between seeing with the eye and seeing with the mind." Being requested to clarify Her statement, Ma said, rather peremptorily. "First of all, do your best; the rest will be done by Him. If you perform your part, the result will automatically follow."*

Khan Bahadur Naziruddin, Registrar, University of Dacca, wondered why Ma Anandamayi should be moving about from one place to another, if She had attained peace. The gist of Ma's answer was somewhat as follows.

"It is because you people cannot but think in terms of 'coming and going' that you suppose that I too am coming and going in the sense intelligible to you according to your standard. As a matter of fact, I am stationary. Alternatively, I would say this. I do not move about hither and thither; my 'movements' are restricted to my own house. When you are in your house, do you stick to a particular spot in it? Of course, you do move about from one room to another within the confines of your house; Similarly, I have been promenading in my own house. This whole world is my house. I am in it (wherever I may happen to be according to your estimation)".**

After a short stay in Dacca in January, 1937, Ma undertook a hurricane tour of Bengal, visiting numerous places, such

* *Sri Sri Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, Vol. II, P.143.

** *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Prasanga* by Amulya Kumar Dattagupta, Vol. I. P.162.

as Krishnanagar, Berhampore, Rajsahi, Chittagong, Ohandpur and Cox's Bazar. An interesting incident that took place in Cox's Bazar is worth relating, One Abinash Sen (a relative of the late C. R. Das), an astrologer and palmist with vast experience in India and the U. K., examined Ma's palm. He remarked, with great enthusiasm, that he had never come across such a combination of stars, Bhaiji wondered if there was any indication as to whether Ma's spiritual pursuits would be of benefit to the world. The palmist replied that the question did not arise in the case of Ma who was "above spiritual pursuits" Bhaiji continued that She was believed to be a worshipper of Mother Kali. The palmist replied with a smile; "Well, it will be for Mother Kali to come and worship Ma.

(*To be continued*)

An Illumined Wanderer

M. P. Jain

Calm and free he roams,
His ego has been extinguished ;
He has no desires of his own,
Nor any aims to accomplish.

Conflicts keep themselves away,
No worry can ever touch him ;
Come what may, he remains gay
Attuned with the eternal rhythm.

He loves but doesn't appropriate,
He acts but doesn't calculate ;
Caring for results is not his wont,
Living in Divine Mother's lap is his way.

Attributes of nature affect him not
Yet he enjoys her force's play,
An ocean of bliss in its grandeur rolls
Of that mighty ocean he's a wave.

Visiting Sri Anandamayi Ma*

Rama Jyoti Vernon

Rama Jyoti Vernon is a former president of the California Yoga Teachers Association (CYTA) She is on the staff of the Institute for Yoga Teaching Education, San Francisco.

In 1973 my husband and I were hosted on our first trip to India by Sant Keshavadas known to his many followers as "the spiritual nightingale of India." It was through Sant that we met many masters, including one of India's most revered in the female form, Sri Anandamayi Ma (the blissful eternal mother of discrimination).

I first felt the desire to see Anandamayi Ma in 1959, when reading Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Mataji, as she is endearingly called by throngs of Indian devotees, is considered to be a saint (self-actualized). Saint in Sanskrit is "Sant."

"Just what is a saint?" we asked Sant. His quiet reply was simple, but nearly impossible. "A saint is one who is equal in all situations." A saint, as I later found out, is also one around whom many people experience extraordinary phenomena. In the West, a saint is usually dead. But in the East saints are very much alive.

* Reprinted with kind permission of *Yoga Journal* (c) copyright 1978. This article appeared in the May/June 1978 issue of *Yoga Journal*, Berkeley, California, U. S. A.

What began as a pilgrimage of appreciation of India's vast cultural heritage, ended) as an expedition into the unexpected. In our search for Mataji, we were directed to Hardwar, tiny city on the banks of the Ganges, overflowing with ochre-robed swamis, and sadhus with the matted locks of Lord Shiva. As if on a treasure hunt, our small party of five blindly, but faithfully, followed directions from one temple to the next.

"Let's quit." the others said. The humidity of monsoon season mingled with the piercing sun's rays to steam our bodies and heat our tempers. No !" I said. An obsession to find her made me insensitive to their discomforts. We forged on, much to everyone's silent displeasure. We climbed the stairs of what the group decided would be the last temple. A priest met us at the top saying that Anandamayi Ma was in seclusion at the nearby Ashram of the Seven Sages. I was breathless at the beauty of the name...the others said they were breathless from climbing the stairs.

The monsoons had flooded roads along the banks of the Ganges. To reach the gates of the ashram we needed to pass through one of these roads. Our hired cars could go no further, so we were forced to get out and walk. The waters had receded leaving enormous potholes of Mud. As we neared our destination the mud deepened, inhaling sandals, saris, bermuda socks and my husband's favourite tennis shoes. Sacred cows roam more freely than people in India, and the consequent mixture of mud and fresh cow dung was not too popular with the more finicky members of our group.

"A saint is one who is equal in all situations. Even the mud is divine." Sant reminded us of the lotus that float on top

of the water after growing from the depths of the mud. I was definitely not a saint. The suction of the mud reminded me of the pull of gravity upon the mind, and mine was sinking fast. Was this a test? Our small band of pilgrims, to show their goodwill and forgiveness, smiled at me through clenched teeth and furrowed brows.

As we sloshed on I thought of all the miraculous stories of the seekers and the sought. There was once a man who followed Hariakhan Baba into the Himalayan peaks to seek discipleship. When Babaji said "No," the man jumped to his death. And here we were complaining about a little mud. Although the story had a happy ending, the others in the group were not too happy to hear it.

In India, before meeting a saint or sage, custom dictates that one be bathed and clean. We arrived at the Ashram of the Seven Sages with eager faces, mud-spattered torsos and clay feet. The name was as entrancing as the grounds were beautiful. They were filled with fragrant roses and bougainvillea. A multi-tiered fountain stood majestically in the center of a tiled courtyard. In the back were attached buildings surrounded by large trees shading the weary traveller from a sun that always shines. The word "Ashram" literally means shelter in the woods. However, in India, they are city sanctuaries where one can take reflective refuge from the noise and turbulence of the crowded dust-filled streets.

We were met at the gate by a soft-spoken Swami, uncommonly neat in his starched ochre robe, English umbrella and shiny black and white spats. As we crossed the threshold, dragging our footprints behind us, he graciously sent for water

and towels. Sant explained our mission, asking if Mataji was there and if she would receive us. To protect her privacy, the Swami pretended not to know. When he was told that we had travelled 15,000 miles for this moment, he scurried away giving instructions for us to wash and to wait.

When he returned saying that she would receive us in private, I could not contain my joy. For years I had heard stories of the miraculous experiences of others. Although I had always pretended not to want such things, now my heart was pounding with expectation. We filed past a long line of devotees that had been waiting for days to catch a glimpse of "the secluded mother." Their palms were pressed in the reverential greeting of namaste. In passing, we returned the greeting. A mild feeling of unworthiness swept over me...I wanted to give my place to one of them but it was too late.

As we entered the second story room, it was a shock to see "the Mother" sitting erect and cross-legged on a small raised platform. She was dictating an article on meditation to her secretary. I had expected her to be bubbling with joy and unable to function on the physical plane. Instead, she was calm and articulate.

The impact of our shocks and surprises are only measured by the degree of our own expectations. I realized afterwards that I had expected to find her lying languorously on a sofa (Ramana Maharishi-style) or slumped in a chair in a catatonic state of ecstasy, mumbling divine incantations. Instead, she was sitting firmly upright with a towel wrapped around her head. She had just washed her hair and would dry it at intervals between dictation. Her attendant was in

the same room behind a half-pulled curtain preparing her lunch—another surprise. I was bewildered. “How could this be?” I wondered. “She’s supposed to be blissed out.. drunk on God. She’s not supposed to have any desire for food..... only God...How can she eat? Isn’t that sacrilegious? How can she do such a simple and mundane thing like wash her own hair?”

She was toppling from the pedestal that I had built from my own imaginings and expectations. The disappointment must have shown. “There is a difference in the levels of samadhi,” Santji whispered as we were invited to sit. “Sam’ means to put together and ‘Adhi’ means to adhere or to stick to. ‘She used to be in savikalpa samadhi when she was younger.’ he added, ‘now she is in nirvikalpa.’* That didn’t help ‘When she was younger,’ Sant whispered, ‘she could not function. Now she can. She has pierced through the form of her experiences and can now integrate her expanded states of consciousness into the actions of daily life.’”

We had not brought the customary offering of fruit or flowers. The offering to the teacher is like a prostration; it is symbolic of the offering of one’s heart and the softening of one’s ego. It is of no benefit to bend a rigid knee if the ego does not bend with it. It serves no purpose to offer a flower

* In Sanskrit. “kalpa” is a measure of time; “Vi” is negating, in this case meaning without. “Vikalpa” is without time. This refers to fancy or imagination. The prefix “sa” means with and “nir” without. Hence, “savikalpa” means with imagination or form and “nirvikalpa” is without. “Nirvikalpa samadhi” is the transcendent state of awareness that is formless in its perception of universal truth,

if the heart does not reach out with it. The outer symbols are only reminders of the less tangible symbols within. We do not offer or bow to the personality within the body, but the light of universal essence that shines through it.

We had only a song to offer. We chanted Sant's composition of "Rama Krishna Hari." Her attendants were mildly amused at seeing Western men and women trying to adjust their tongues to the language and their bottoms to the floor. At that time, Indians were surprised if we adopted their customs and ways of dress, but we Westerners were surprised if they didn't adopt ours.

She offered us prasad (divine food) and after eating in silence; Sant nudged me and said, "Sit closer to her." I was already near her feet, but I tried to scoot closer. Pressing my palms in the customary namaste, I bowed my head to the floor. "Look into her eyes," Sant urged. I was caught in the grip of self-consciousness. "I'll look and then move away quickly," I thought reluctantly. My greatest fear was that she would look back and see that even though my body was in a posture of humility, my heart and ego were not.

Mataji was always surrounded by thousands of followers. Those who spoke to me of her had always viewed and been affected by her at a distance. Yet here I was, nearly touching the hem of her garment, and nothing was happening. Feelings of unworthiness were choking my cells, forcing them to contract so as to take up as little space as possible. My body was occupying a place that should belong to those who love and believe in her. Although my insistence had brought us here, now I wanted to be elsewhere...or nowhere. Where else was there to go?

Not wanting to be rude, I looked at but into her eyes. A strange translucent film slowly began spreading out over them. It was as if an invisible curtain of dewy haze was descending from the upper to the lower lids. Tears were forming, but they did not fall. Instead, one droplet merged into the next until her eyes were two gigantic teardrops. I was overwhelmed with sorrow and wanted to look away. "Look into her eyes," Sant quietly commanded. I tried, but they were no longer her eyes...they were the eyes of human pain and suffering. They were the cries of the body writhing in the limitations of its own creation; the endless search for human love, freedom pain and the bondage of our attachments. They were the agony of the spirit crying out, life after life; in its earthly search for unity. "We are all one," they seemed to say. Within them she held no pity or sympathy for humanity's sufferings...because she was one with it. She was the eternal Mother mourning the deaths of her children. She held the world in her eyes, and within them I could see the reflection of my own sorrow...sorrow so deep that I could not reach its depths. A wave of energy leapt from my chest into my throat forming a knot of unshed tears. The pain was lifelines of unbearable,

"You will not know God," she said to me with her eyes. "until you cry for Him as the mother cries out for her lost child. Want Him above all else." Her eyes glowed with the essence of unconditional love.....love which has no limits, contracts or expectation.....that which exists for its sake alone. "Ma," I ached to cry, but could not. I was choking on my own sorrow and feelings of self-pity. She was supposed to be *joyful not sorrowful* mother. Where was the joy? I tried to move and look away, but my gaze and limbs were paralyzed.

Just then, the pupils of her eyes began rolling upward into their sockets. Mine could not help but follow hers. Her eyes were turning up into her head and I was turning up with them. The knot in my throat loosened and a jolt of energy moved from throat to head. The heaviness in my heart lightened. I was now looking at, rather than swimming in, the sea of planetary pains.

Was it possible to look at one's own pain without feeling it? And feel another's as we would our own? She spoke without speaking. "Pain comes from attachment and rejection. We create our own. It is the expectation of getting and the fear of losing." Instead of turbulence, her eyes were now still lakes mirroring the joys of the infinite. She held in them the bliss of unitive consciousness from which all things flow. First, there had been an inkling of the symptom of pain, and now, a glimpse of its source which is beyond both pain and pleasure and all polarities—it just is.

As I was about to take a deep breath and relax, her eyes suddenly became swirling magnetic vortices of energy. They were the universe and I was standing on its edge, ready to drop in. Fear loomed up, stretching its tentacles over the openings of my mind. I tried to pass through but could not. I was standing in my own way, crowding the doorway to self-awakening.

Frantically, I searched for feeling and identity within my body. Where was *my* arm...*my* leg...*my* head? I could not feel where I was supposed to be. "Where did God stand when He created the universe," my son once asked. "Where

do we stand when we look at the universe ?” the I now asked. Nirlamba.....without support.

As the variations of each of the yoga postures are symbolic of life's situations, the way we do the pose is the way we do our life. The postures are tools for self-exploration, for redefining one's spatial as well as social relationships. I was learning through yoga asana that it takes courage to change one's habitual positions and move through space without fear of falling. I did not have that courage at this time.

Mataji did not “teach.” She was a clear crystal reflecting one's own image; the clearer the being, the more penetrating the reflection. I was struck to the core. Whether standing on feet or head, fears—all the little ones such as failure, criticism, rejection—are all tied to the ultimate fear, death. It was not the death of the body I feared when looking into the universe of her eyes, but the letting go of life—the annihilation of ego. Without speaking, she revealed to me that I did not have even the courage of the infant who ventures out for a first step, for that is based on faith. I did not have that faith, for that is based on love. And I now knew that all my practices in yoga, until that moment, had been done with an empty heart.

Mataji's eyes continued rolling upward, moving into galaxies where I could not follow. As her lids closed, one could feel her journey into the infinite began. I sat before her vacant body, alone and yet not alone, remembering what Yogananda called “her paradoxical isolation of omnipresence.”

Her attendant signaled that it was time to leave. We arose knowing that it was not the end to the journey, but an

endless beginning. At the door, I turned for one last look, Her form was erect and motionless, immersed in radiance. No end spoke of personal experiences, but in the sunlight of the courtyard our embraces of each other were overflowing with joy and self-giving.

I do not remember the muddy walk to our waiting cars. But I do remember glancing back at the temple towers of the Ashram of the Seven Sages, filled with the knowledge that Sri Anandamayi Ma carries within her heart the saintly love and immersion in God consciousness, tempered by the discriminative wisdom of a sage.

“Behold now and always one with the Eternal, I am ever the same.”—Mataji

Kali Puja and Annakut at Bhasha

R. K. Banerjee

Mataji had left the thronging crowds of Agarpara Ashram as recently as the 29th of August; so it was surprising that belying the guesswork and the assumed knowledge of many in Calcutta, Mataji returned on the 29th of October, exactly two months after Her last visit, to the scene of Her hectic activities in the Greater Calcutta Area, but this time twelve miles to the south of the city at Bhasha on the Diamond Harbour Road, instead of twelve miles to the north at Agarpara Ashram.

She came at the fervent request of Her whole-hearted devotee Sri Bibhuti Chakravarti, who had with immense care and forethought built a new cottage for Mataji and Her party in the grounds of his Bhasha garden-house. The plinth of the cottage is 6'-7' above ground level, to obviate the necessity for Mataji to climb to the roof-apartments of the original house used by Her during previous visits.

A year ago, Sri B. Chakravarti had made similar arrangements for Kali Puja at Bhasha, but Mataji, not in very good health and unable at that time to meet Her multifarious commitments, had summoned him at short notice to Varanasi, where he was requested to participate in the Kali Puja and Diwali celebrations held there in Ma's presence.

However, this year Mataji crossed over two thousand kilometers from Gondal in Gujarat (where Durga and Lakshmi Puja had been performed) to Calcutta for Kali Puja, only to recross a similar distance for *Samyam Mahavrata*, scheduled to start at Nadiad in Gujarat on the 7th of November.

It seemed likely that Mataji had another object in revisiting the Greater Calcutta Area so soon after Her recent sojourn at the end of August, during which the crowded programme at Agarpara had disappointed the aspirations of a number of worthy devotees of long standing, desirous to obtain at least a momentary close daršana of Ma, to receive Her benedictory glance, to get an opportunity for making their humble offerings to Her and of sitting quietly in Her presence for a reasonable length of time.

At Bhasha, it seemed, She was abundantly generous in bestowing Her grace on every single person, so that the flow of mercy that radiated from Her Being bathed all who came within Her orbit during the four days and three nights of Her visit.

And to what immense herculean labours had Her host been subjected before Her arrival! The devastating floods that had raged over the West Bengal countryside, particularly in the last week of September, had inundated the whole Bhasha site to a depth of several feet, connected as it was with tidal drains and nullahs along both sides of the Diamond Harbour Rd., which in turn flowed into tidal creeks cutting across the Hooghly basin from Budge to Palta near Diamond Harbour. In fact the village had been called 'Bhasha' as it was prone to flooding ('bhasha' in Bengali). In the face of the continuous load shedding that prevailed, Bibhutida had to contend with the periodic high tides during each successive full

and new moon that continued to flood the countryside along the river basin throughout October. All three tanks in the Bhasha compound were soon overflowing. It was, with great difficulty that the site was at last drained of water just before Mataji's arrival, leaving a trail of slush over the pathways and the site of the pandal erected for the Divali celebrations, so that extensive sand filling and brick-bat soling became necessary to provide minimum comforts for the crowds expected to gather. A stand-by generator had to be installed to guard against the city's frequent load shedding over prolonged periods.

Calcutta buzzed with rumours of Mataji's visit from week in advance, but very few knew the time of arrival. Thus, on October 28th a sizable throng of devotees waited at Howrah Station between 6 a. m. and 9 a. m., only to note with dismay the absence of Mataji among the arrivals of several long-distance mail and express trains of the Eastern Railway. Only a selected few knew that Mataji had been in Vindhyachal in seclusion for a week's rest and had entrained at Mirzapur.

More people turned up at Howrah the next morning, October 29th, and were blessed by the darśana of Mataji arriving by the Delhi Mail. Mataji was accompanied by Brahmacharis Bhaskarananda, Panuda, Dasuda, Brahmacharinis Udas, Purnananda, Chitra, Jaya, Mala, Km. Chhabi Banerji and others. Dr. Nirvanananda had arrived already the previous day from Dehradun. It goes without saying that local help from among Calcutta's ashramites and devotees was readily available. So Mataji commenced Divali celebrations at Bhasha in good weather and congenial surroundings. Her very capable, resourceful host was assisted by a number of

hard-working and efficient relatives and friends of both sexes and sufficiently experienced staff.

On the morning of Her arrival Mataji looked tired. She had been suffering from fever for the past few days and there was a pallor on Her features, normally so radiant. A wheel chair had thoughtfully been provided for convenient passage to and fro in the compound of Her cottage, to save unnecessary expenditure of energy.

But such was Her spontaneous response to the friendly surroundings and the spirit of service obviously inspiring all around Her that on the 30th morning, Mataji was once again Her own inimitable, glowing Self. Dispensing with the wheel-chair, She wandered about at will from the steps of Her cottage to the railings fencing Her compound in order to touch and bless ardent and fortunate devotees.

Mataji's darsana was fixed from 10 to 12 midday and from 6 to 8 in the evening, yet She never disappointed any supplicant devotee who happened to come beforehand or stayed behind until later.

More and more people started arriving from the 30th onward, among the distinguished visitors being justice S. A. Gupta, Sri Subimal Dutta, Sri J. N. Talukdar and others.

Mataji's new cottage had been carefully planned, so that the floor was well above the highest known flood water level. Her compound was screened from the public and yet connected on one side with the original house by an open staircase and on the other side through the special kitchen for *bhoga* etc. with the *Caṇḍi Mandap*.

A separate high level *Caṇḍi Mandap* had been built for the twelve feet high image of Goddess Kali, which arrived on the 29th evening and was unveiled after appropriate decoration, at 10.30 p. m. on the 31st. The Goddess was splendidly proportioned with an equally impressive Sivaji at her feet, resplendent with the usual accoutrements of *kharga* (sword) and *trisul* (trident) respectively. The colour of the Goddess was appropriately not black, but of a lighter shade between blue and mauve.

In front of the *Caṇḍi Mandap*, at a much lower level, were two wooden platforms to seat male and female *vratīs* (those participating ritually) and kirtana parties equipped with musical instruments and a microphone. Further beyond, to the south, was the general pandal, of sufficient capacity to seat the large number of men and women who came to attend the Kali Puja.

In the morning of October 31st, big crowds had excellent darśana of Mataji. Kali Puja celebrations commenced promptly at 10.30 p. m. with the arrival of Dr. Nirvanananda at the Chandi Mandap. Long before-hand Kali kirtana had been started in front of the Goddess by well-known devotees. Later distinguished musicians, such as Sri Siddheshwar Mukherji, Km. Chhabi Banerji and others regaled the audience with high class devotional songs suitable for the occasion. Brahma-charini Puspa finally sang appropriate stotras to the accompaniment of the harmonium. Brahmachari Nirvanananda, who always performs pujas with exquisite artistic skill and precision, took great pains in offering enormous size garlands, profuse in numbers, to the twelve feet high murti of the Goddess during

the various ceremonies, sometimes with the help of a pronged stick.

Throughout all this, Mataji reclined on a couch to the west of Goddess Kali, in full view of the congregation. The puja continued upto 1.30 a. m., kumari puja and āratī being the concluding items. *Havan* (offerings to the sacrificial fire) and *phūrṇāhuti* were performed later.

On the 1st of November, the immersion ceremony of the image in the largest compound tank started as early as 9.30 a. m. to be completed by 10.30 a. m., so as to prepare the *Caṇḍi Mandap* for the Annakūt festival scheduled to begin at 1 p. m. At Mataji's instructions continuous kirtana was performed in front of the *Mandap* from 10.30 a. m. to 3 p. m. it was brought to a fitting and significant conclusion when Mataji asked Puspa to sing in her very reverent and melodious voice "*Pūrṇa karo Mā Annapūrṇa.*" Oh Goddess Mother that givest us all our food, be gracious and fulfil not only our earthly needs, but grant us spiritual fulfilment.

At the end of the festival Mataji took one of the largest garlands that had been offered for puja, and linked with Her own hands our generous host, hostess, their daughter, son-in-law and other near relatives with the single garland. This seemed like an illustration of the famous passage of the Bhagavad Gītā, in which the Lord says : "*Mayi sarvamidam protam sūtre manigāṇā iva.* (All this is threaded on me as rows of gems on a string.)

Limited prasāda was made available to all and Mataji departed at about 5 p. m. She visited a few ailing devotees

on the way without getting out of the car, before entraining at Howrah for Delhi—en route to Nadiad where She was due to arrive on November 4th for the *Samyam Mahavrāta*, commencing on Nov. 7th.

West Bengal had been passing through miserable times as a result of floods, famine, maladies, scarcity of goods, breakdown of rail and road transport and so on. Mataji's swift return on an errand of mercy seemed to rejuvenate one and all and infuse new spirit into their tired beings. The devotees of Calcutta now continue to live in the expectation of Ma's next visit, and of being afforded more unforgettable opportunities of witnessing again and yet again, as well as participating in Her never-ending Līlā for the common good, mysteriously linked with automatic fulfilment of individual needs, and equally mysteriously granted by Her according to individual capacity to absorb and retain. May Her Līlā continue to inspire us throughout our lives.

Jai Guru—Jai Ma !

The Reign of Dharma

Swami Atmananda Giri (T. Krishnaji)

The concept of dharma governing the life of Hindus all over Bharat is a unique contribution in the history of mankind. Dharma is a blanket-word, covering all the activities of a Hindu, be they secular, spiritual or religious. A learned warrior has said, "Dharma is an elusive word that might stand for law, duty, virtue and religion either jointly or severally".* It has no equivalent word in the English language. It is defined as "*dharamat dhārmā ityāhu*" and "*dharm dhārayate prajāh.*" Dharma is the base and support of mankind. The beginnings of man and dharma are simultaneous. Hinduism is rightly called "Sanātana Dharma" which has no human origin. Dharma and God go together. Dharma includes law and duties. A king or a body of law-makers may enact laws but dharma binds the law-giver as well. The concept that a king does no wrong is negated by the reign of dharma.

A Hindu strives to achieve four objects (*Purusārtha*) in life namely dharma, *ārtha* (wealth), *kāma* (fulfilment of desire), *mokṣa* (liberation from the round of birth and death). The aim of life is to gain freedom from worldly life. *Artha* and *kāma* conditioned by dharma go to *mokṣa*.

In the Bhagavad Gīta Bhagavān says: "In beings I am desire not contrary to duty, *Dharmāviruddho bhutesu*

* Cultural Heritage India, III, 623.

kāmosmi.* The four *puruṣārthas* cover the entire conduct of man and woman from the cradle to the grave, *Ahinsa* (non-injury) is *Parama*, *dharma* (the highest duty). Dharma comprises social life and the entire range of Creation of man, beasts and plants. Dharma assures social welfare and the development of the human personality in life Divine.

In the scriptures dharma is depicted as a four-wheel vehicle of god Siva and its four legs are *satya* (truth), *śauca* (cleanliness, *dayā* compassion) and *dāna* (charity). the Uandaka Upanisad inculcates: "*Satyameva jayati* (Truth triumphs)", which is the moto of Bharat. The concept in western countries is that "Honesty is the best policy". God incarnates on this earth for the establishment of dharma: for the sake of establishing righteousness I am born form age to age (*dharma samsthāṇanāyā sambhavami yuge yuge*)." 2)

Dharma is immortalised in certain personalities in the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata. Sri Rāma is described as the embodiment of dharma (*dharma vigrahaḥ Rāma*). Rāma observed dharma himself and inculcated its practice by his relations. Lakshman took the weapon of Indra (*Indrāstra*) to kill³ *Indrajit* and offered a prayer to Rama: "If Rāma is *dharmātma*, truthful, *Dasartha* son and of peerless Prowess, let this weapon kill *Indrajit*." 3) *Indrajit* fell after three days of strenuous fight.

Skanda Purāna relātes : *Kartikeya* hurled his mighty. *Sakti* on titan *Tārakāsura* with a prayer to dharma:

* Gita 7/ii. 2) Gita 4./8.

3) Valmiki Rāmāyane, Yuddha kand 91/76.

"If dharma is true and mighty in the world assuring success, then let this titan meet with his terrible doom."

The Mahabhārata reiterates dharma in its variety and that success in life is the breath of dharma, King Yudhistira is called 'Dharmarāja.' Arjuna says of him to virata king : "He is dharma personified." The divine Krishna and dharma go hand in hand assuring success, goddess Durga told Arjuna : "*yata dharma tatā Krishna, yata Krishna tata jaye* (where dharma is there is Krishna and where Krishna is there is victory)." these words were echoed by every character in the Mahabhārata : by Dronacharya, Sanjaya, Karna. It is needless to reiterate. All characters proclaim that success is assured where dharma and Krishna are.

Aswathama issued the Brahma *astra* (weapon) to destroy the child in the womb of utara, the wife of Abhimanyu. Utara appealed to Bhagavān Krishna, who offered a prayer: "If I ever and always have my stand on Truth and dharma, let this dead child of Abhimanyu come to life, " The child revived and was named pariksit.

Bhagavān vyāsa with uplifted arms proclaims at the close of the Mahabhārata in Bharata Savitri that *artha* (wealth) and *Kāma* (desires) are fulfilled through dharma alone. So it must certainly be observed. Don't avoid dharma because of desires, delusion, fear of life, because dharma is perennial whereas happiness and misery are ever alternating. Atmā is eternal while the body is ephemeral and cannot last. Therefore let us all be subjects of dharma in the life state where dharma reigns supreme.

Touches of Love's Madness

David Frawley (U. S. A.)

Oh Rama ! can't you hear your sita call ? Your sita calls by day and by night, by night and by day. Day and night are for her one continuous stream of sorrow ! Oh Rama, a million Ravana's put me down, bind me in chains, hide me in darkness, torture me through the hours. But Rama, this punishment is nothing to me compared to the misery of not being able to see your face and the infinite tenderness of your glance !

*

*

*

Oh Rama ! why do you go so fast ? Why do you stay so short ? Already you are gone. You leave us only with enough impression of you to drive us mad at not being able to keep you.

Says Rama: Oh my child: The sun of Rama does not go: You dwell forever in my unending day. Like a bubble you float on the ocean of my radiance. From all sides you see only me. I seek you through every form. As you seek me, so I find you.

Rama says: Here is Gangotri, there Kedarnath. We can see all the way to Kailas, Sumeru: The sun is bursting in these mountains. The day is breaking in my veins, my laughter melts the sun. I engulf the whole universe in a single glance. Light ever breaks on the ocean of light:

Radha says: Oh Hari, be my Lord and I will be your sati, oh you who are ever-dead:

Radha says: Oh Hari, why are you so cruel? Don't you know that the slightest movement, nay even the slightest hint of movement of your eyes away from mine throws me down into the deepest abyss of sorrow? still you look away. You do not seem to even see me at all.

Never love a yogi, says Radha, for to him you are no more than a clump of grass. If you wish your Lord Hari to see you, you must immolate yourself before him in the very heart to night.

* * *

Oh Savitri, bring us forth in thy abundant splendor: Oh surya, impel us in the radiant path through all our days: Oh prāṇa, overflow us with life. May our breath be deep and full. May abundance and happiness pour down upon us from all sides. May our eyes see what is real and our ears hear what is true. May our hearts ever dwell in light, may King soma reign over us in drunken bliss:

Oh Agni, oh thou god who knowest all our ways, deliver us forth from the great darkness, consume us utterly in your transforming light, oh thou all-seeing flame:

* * *

As I walk across the mountain pass in the gentle glow of the setting sun, I recall to mind the Divine Mother, Lalita, deep red of hue, raimented with clouds, of benign countenance and gracious mien, seated on the dark blue mountain lotus

garlanded with snow, of flashing eyes and bewitching smile, in whom all the worlds find repose, making the gestures which grant boons and dispell fears.

Oh how wonderful are her virtues: How infinite her mercy and her tenderness: How supremely enchanting her beauty: How loyal and true her heart:

Oh my soul: when you cried out in the depths of sorrow who will save me, who will show me the way?—She answered: I will never let you go—She has lifted you up and even beyond death she will not let you fall.

I care not for a hundred books or a thousand teachings. These are only words which apart from your grace are of no account at all. There is only one thing I care to know—that however low I fall, that thou wouldst not abandon me. That if I plummet to the deepest hell I will only find you waiting there. That if I become lost in the most inaccessible place I will still be within the vision of your smiling face. Oh Rama, do what thou wilt only do not let me go:

* * *

Oh parvati, Uma, Kali-Krishna, siva-Radha, Rama-Durga, you bewitch us in every way: Immolate us in your laughter: In the night of your light let us live, let us die, let us see no one else but you:

The dawn of awakening is this very night of love.

* * *

For I am the sea
And the sky
Wave and cloud
Wild wind and rain
Alone I shall be All
I hear your call
I fall into your eyes
And will ever more arise
