



# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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Vol. XXVIII

JULY, 1981

No. 3

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*“Practice, practice ! Through the practice of spiritual disciplines the heart will be purified and a new realm will open. You will realize that God alone is real and that everything else is unreal. But when through japa and meditation a little awakening comes, donot imagine you have achieved the end. Light ! More Light ! Onward ! Attain God ! Gain His vision ! Talk to Him !”*

**Swami Brahmananda**  
(Rakhal Maharaj)

\* \* \* \* \*

*“To live from moment to moment means to be conscious of your immortality. Feel always that you are the supreme undying Reality, and the circumstances and affairs that seek to involve you are passing phases of life over which it is not worth while to worry.*

*This is possible when you have surrendered your little self to the higher Self completely.*

**Swami Ramdas**

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## SRI SRI MA'S UTTERANCES

*(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Vol. I & II)*

Once a student of the Medical College came to see Mataji. She asked him : "Did you come by horse-carriage ?" He said : "No, I walked. I avoid going by horse-carriage because to give trouble to the horse is a sin." Mataji said : "Look, to travel by horse-carriage is no sin, because just as you have been born to do certain kinds of work, and if you don't do it your karma will not be exhausted, so if someone gives you the opportunity to accomplish this work it is for your good. A horse cannot study medicine. By drawing carriages it fulfils its destiny. Therefore man should provide the chance for the horse to do this work. It is necessary for everyone to fulfil his particular duty.

\* \* \*

One should decide to observe purity in every respect and to eat frugally at least one day every week. Gradually the number of days for living in this manner may be increased.

\* \* \*

It is fitting, without paying attention to praise or blame, to carry out your work exactly in the right manner. If you are so concerned with outer things you cannot concentrate on your work.

Patience is the most indispensable part of *sādhana*. Be anchored in patience.

\* \* \*

It is necessary to sit perfectly still in one place and to concentrate when engaging in spiritual practice.

\* \* \*

Our unit is "one". We walk step by step, we eat mouthful by mouthful, we write one letter at a time, and so on and so forth.

\* \* \*

Keep yourself in readiness, so that when the work is to start you will be able to do it.

\* \* \*

Carry out without arguing whatever I say. Be certain that it is for your best.

\* \* \*

Sri Sri Ma's explanation of the Gayatri : Let us contemplate the splendour of the Parabrahman, the All-knowing dweller in the heart, Him who constantly creates, sustains and destroys ; who exists in all forms, who enlightens our intelligence.

\* \* \*

Exactly in keeping with his actions everyone reaps the fruits. God's grace is also received according to one's karma.

\* \* \*

It has to be admitted that everything happens as the result of one's actions. As anyone acts so he reaps the fruit. However, at a certain stage the aspirant becomes aware of God's grace. Then he declares that nothing at all happens without Grace,

But in actual fact it is due to the results of his own actions that he has earned the privilege to become the recipient of Divine Grace.

\* \* \*

Whatever happens is ultimately for the best.

\* \* \*

By the performance of service and japa the householder and the housewife practise *sādhana*.

\* \* \*

Two meals a day are necessary to keep the body fit. Similarly the remembrance of God and spiritual exercises have to be practised without fail with great regularity every morning and evening. Further, just as you drink water or eat pan or fruit in between, it is necessary to remember God as often as one possibly can or to repeat His name. This will also be a help on the spiritual path.

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“Seek not that everything should happen as you wish ; but wish for everything to happen as it actually does happen, and you will be serene.”

—*Epictetus*

# MĀTRI SATSANG

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

( Translated from Bengali )

*Samyam Saptaha at Sri Sitaram Jaipuria's, Kanpur,*

*November 13th, 1958.*

*Question :* What is the necessity for a *Samyam Saptaha* ?

*Mataji :* Why have you come here all the way from Calcutta ?

*Questioner :* Here only discourses on the paths of knowledge ( *jñāna* ) and devotion ( *bhakti* ) are held, but nobody even mentions the path of action ( *karma* ).

*Mataji :* Whatever is being said by anybody here, all relates to action. Whatever is being advised or done in order to realize God is all action of one kind or another.

At this juncture a devotee started reciting the *praṇāma mantra* for Ma :

*“Bhavatāpa pranāśinyā ānandaghana mūrtayaye !*

*Jñāna bhakti pradāyinyei mātastubhyam nāmo namaha !!”*

(“O Mother that destroys the suffering of life in the world, who art the embodiment of supreme bliss and who grants us knowledge and devotion, salutations to Thee again and again.”)

To destroy the agony of worldly life, which you are doing, is indeed the most excellent work of all.

*Mataji :* What is the purpose of doing work ?

*Questioner :* Work can lead to knowledge and devotion and by working karma will be fulfilled. But here most discourses are on knowledge and devotion. Nobody even men-

tions that by action liberation can be attained. In the Sri Sri *Candi* it is said : "*Samsāra bandha hetuśch śaiva sarveśvareśvarī.*" So work may lead to bondage as well as to liberation.

*Mataji* : What is your own opinion ?

*Questioner* : Will you please tell us your views !

*Mataji* : A small child is first of all taught the alphabet. Then he or she starts on his or her studies. What is the objective ? To understand the meaning of whatever book is being read. The rules and regulations of the *Samyam Saptaha* have been laid down by the *Riṣis* and *Munis*. *Samyam* means to go out on the pilgrimage to your own true Nature. Just as someone becomes a doctor by studying medicine or an engineer by studying engineering—( their objective is merely the acquisition of knowledge and its enjoyment )—so have the sages laid down the principles for leading a life of self-restraint.

*Question* : Don't you agree that *samyam* may become successful through action ?

*Mataji* : What kind of success ?

*Questioner* : Successful action.

*Mataji* : You people know what is written in your *Śāstras*. But this body talks in a topsy-turvy fashion. What is called action (*karma*) and what non-action or wrong action (*akarma*) ? The action that is helpful to the contemplation of God, to *japa* and the remembrance of Him is real action and all else is non-action or wrong action (*akarma*). To realize one's Self is to realize God and to realize God is to realize one's own Self. To undertake



the pilgrimage that leads to the realization that God is eternal in Himself and eternally manifested is called *satkarma* (right action). Everything else is *akarma* (worthless action). Total effort to realize God is real action. But you will have to transcend both *karma* and *akarma* and go beyond action. It is the bounden duty of a human being to engage in *satkarma* (action directed towards God). For this purpose a disciplined life is necessary. *Sat-karma* alone is man's destined work. *Satkarma* has to be performed in order to open the lock. A lock indicates separation, therefore there is actually no such thing as a lock. Action that results in loosening man's bondage is real action and whatever results in strengthening his bondage is wrong action (*akarma*).

*Question* : In the Gītā it says :

*“Jñānāgni sarvakarmāni bhasmāt kuruterjuna !  
Prakṛtim yānti bhūtāni nigrah kim karisyati !!”*

(“The fire of true Knowledge reduces all actions to ashes. Beings follow nature ; what shall restraint avail ?”)

If both the wise and the foolish are dancing to the tune of their inherent natures, what power does man possess ?

*Mataji* : The fire of real Knowledge reduces to ashes action prompted by passion.

*Question* : Is this correct from the point of view of Vedanta philosophy ?

*Mataji* : What has been said is in fact based on the philosophy of Vedanta. If one's natural instincts have remained, then what has the fire of true Knowledge burnt to ashes ?

*Question* : It is also said in the *Gitā* :

*“Sadriṣam cheṣṭate svasyā prakṛterjñānavānapi”*

Even the man of knowledge is led by his natural instincts.

*Mataji* : Baba knows everything, but he wants to sound this little girl, so he asks questions in a round about manner. He calls this child “Ma” and has made her sit on a pedestal. This is an expression of his love and respect.

*Questioner* : You are our Mother and we have all come to you.

*Mataji* : You have come to your own Self—having gone to one’s enemy he is punished by being regarded as one’s own. You are yourselves playing the instrument and are listening to the playing. This little girl always maintains that whatever anyone may say from whatever angle of vision is correct from his standpoint. He can only express what he perceives. Whatever he experiences at any particular point he keeps on stating. God is Himself manifesting in his line.

Something has to be said—you will probably laugh ! Just as you exist within yourself as your son and daughter, so everything is contained within you in a similar manner as there are an infinite number of seeds in a tree and therefore endless trees are potentially contained within those numberless seeds. In the tiny seed is contained infinite manifestation and infinite non-manifestation, infinite movement and infinite stability. If someone declares that the tree is different from the seed, he may say so. And if someone says something else, let him say it. The veil of ignorance causes conflict and

dispute—and so does darkness. Where conflict is there is sorrow and where sorrow reigns there will be death. So long as the concealing cover is not removed—whether by the path of knowledge (*jñāna*) or of devotion (*bhakti*) or of action (*karma*)—so long as God is not revealed, darkness and dispute are bound to persist. Some people ask, who is God? God is whatever you say He is, whether with form (*sākāra*) or without form (*nirākāra*). God manifests in all forms and in all modes of being. It is man's duty to engage in *sādhanā*, worship, reading of Scriptures and so on, to realize his own Self.

14th November, 1958.

*Question* : Will God be realized by observing this *samyam* week ?

*Mataji* : Are not all these Mahātmās speaking to you daily ?

*Question* : I fail sometimes during meditation.

*Mataji* : You have not practised *Samyam* at a young age and therefore you cannot bear its rigour. Hence you experience failure during meditation, yet you must not give up *japa* and meditation. Even if you experience a downfall when observing sustained self-restraint, you will again be lifted up.

*Question* : Will you yourself (*apni*) lift us up ?

*Mataji* : It is your own Self (*apni*) that lifts you up. Just as a small child falls down when trying to stand but rises again and again and

gradually learns to walk. It is not right to be afraid of a fall. Even if you do happen to fall, start all over again. Some ask : why practise self-restraint ? To drive out indiscipline, to raise up those who have fallen. Your whole life you have spent without discipline, hence it has been particularly full of pain and misery. It is imperative to live a disciplined life so that it may be revealed and realized that God Himself is urging you to advance towards Supreme Bliss, unalloyed happiness, the bliss of the Self.

*Question :* What does one gain from the *Samyam Saptah* ?

*Mataji :* Bābā, self-restraint is the one and only road of life, you will have to become disciplined.

*Question :* Can this be achieved by observing *samyam* for one week every year ?

*Mataji :* After practising *samyam* for one week, you must observe its rules throughout your life.

*Question :* So, by arranging for the *samyam* week you are giving us a sample, as it were ? (Everyone laughs.)

*Mataji :* In a life without self-restraint there is nothing but sorrow. *Duniyā* (world) means living in duality.\* Therefore there is conflict, grief and death. Immortality is in fact your nature, you are the children of the Immortal. You are *Ātmārāma*, you are the Lord's eternal servant ; to realize this, to realize one's own Self, to know by direct experience that there is only one Brahman without a second, it is absolutely essential to live a life of self-restraint.

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\* *Duniyā* world. Du two, *niyā* based on. A play upon words.

Through *samyam* innumerable virtues will come to light. In fact, God Himself will be revealed, either God-with-form (*sākāra*) or God without form (*nirākāra*).

*Question* : In this *samyam saptaha* most of the talks deal with the formless and attributeless. Much less is being said about God with form and attributes.

*Mataji* : The *Mahātmās* talk both of the Supreme Being with form and attributes as well as about Non-duality. Continue to listen to what they say and try to understand it. Whatever they say is all right. By the mercy of the *Mahātmās* and their speeches further questions will arise which will also be resolved satisfactorily.

*Question* : How can the Vedas be explained to a child that does not even know the alphabet ?

*Mataji* : I want to ask you a question : you yourself tell what you consider proper and what not !

*Question* : God with form and attributes is sitting here right in front of us. Hence the speeches should be about our Divine Beloved (*Iṣṭa*) in whom we have implicit faith.

*Mataji* : He who truly experiences that God with forms and attributes is sitting in front of him will never harbour this kind of attitude of mind. One who has had the vision of God will speak sweet and gentle words. Your mind is obviously attracted by Divinity with forms and qualities, others prefer the One without form and attributes. This body observes that all kind of subjects are being presented here. Everyone may accept what is to his liking. Here the path of devotion is being expounded as well as the philosophy of *advaita*, the

*Vedas* are being recited and kirtan is also being sung. Whatever is to anyone's taste should be selected by him. The same does not appeal to every person. Inclinations and disinclinations vary.

*Question* : What can be done to make faith firm ?

*Mataji* : Try to take in what the Mahātmās are telling you.

*Question* : In the Rāmāyana it is said that Bhushundi became a crow by the curse of Rishi Lomash. If one has no faith in God-with-form, how can one develop faith in the One ?

*Ma* : You know that this little girl talks in a higgledy-piggledy fashion. Here it is fitting for everybody to think : he who is my Guru is the Guru of the whole world and my Divine Beloved is the Beloved of the whole world and the *Iṣṭa* of the world is my *Iṣṭa*. There cannot be two, there is only the One. Try to look upon your Guru or *Iṣṭa* in this light. Whatever anyone says is correct in his particular place, at his particular stage or state.

*A Mahatma* : In this particular case Bhushundi the crow was full of egotism.

*Question* : Is it right to worship God in a particular deity or is it not ?

*Mataji* : Mahatmas do say so. He who has faith in a deity may follow his inclination and he who believes in the Attributeless can advance along this line. *Iṣṭa* (Beloved) is called he who can never do any harm. He who has received a mantra from his Guru or *Iṣṭa* can perform japa and obey the instructions of his Guru. *Sādhanā* should be

engaged in precisely as the Guru prescribes. God is supremely gracious and full of mercy. God has infinite names, infinite attributes, infinite forms. With great regularity practise *japa* of God's name. By clinging steadfastly to His name God will manifest. He who has not yet found a Guru and has not yet been initiated should repeat whatever Name appeals to him most. By sustained practice of the Name, the longing for a Guru will awaken and faith and devotion will increase. When his yearning grows so intense that he feels he can no longer remain without a Guru, then the Guru will certainly appear before him.

Some people say they don't feel inclined to repeat God's name. Formerly there were four *āśramas* (stages of life)—the *Brahmacharya Ashram*, *Grihasthashram*, *Vanaprastha Ashram* and *Samnyāsa Ashram*. In those times life during Brahmacharya Ashram was strictly regulated and disciplined. Ashram means where there is no *shrama* (toil, forced labour). After life as a brahmachari, one entered the *grihasthashram*, but some would, after the brahmacharya ashram take straightaway to the *samnyāsa ashram*. One must pursue the life of *sāadhanā* with the utmost steadfastness.

Without leading a life of self-restraint one cannot know the extent of one's faith. When pursuing a life dedicated to the Supreme Quest, it is God's wonderful dispensation that in some aspirants faith, devotion, knowledge and the power to act along these lines are automatically developed.

This body says that all of you who are sitting or standing here are images (*vigrahas*) of God Himself. "Wherever my glance falls, there Sri Krishna is beheld." Rāma, Krishna, Mā, Śiva are indeed all one. You have all gathered together for this *Samyam Vrata*. It is fitting that you should learn here to lead a life of self-control and discipline. Just as you get spotted with ink if you go into an ink-room, or smell of sandal if you stay in a room feel of sandalwood, so sitting in the presence of Mahātmās while engaging in japa and meditation is the means to enhance your faith and devotion.

Everywhere is God and none but He. Invoke Him, call Him by any name that you like best. Just as you are father, son and husband in one person, so are all names God's own names. Meditate, practise japa, bow down to God, read the Gita regularly every day. And also—go and sit under a tree. Do you understand ?

*Question* : What sort of a tree ? A peepal tree ? (Everybody laughs)

*Mataji* : "Under a tree" means at the feet of Mahātmās. Just as when you sit under a tree it bestows on you not only shade and shelter but also gives itself in the shape of fruit, so also if you take refuge with Mahātmās they give you shelter, peace and their own selves, in the form of *Ātmā-jñāna* (knowledge of the Self).

There is one *jīvātmā*, when held in bondage it is called *jīva* ; and where there is continuous motion this is called the world. A *mahātmā* is



called he who is ever advancing towards the Great (*mahān*) and *Paramātmā* is the supreme *Ātmā* reposing within Itself. What will be the gain from seeking *satsang* with *Mahātmās*? All that is good in you, your nobler qualities and tendencies will thereby be enhanced.

*Question* : Two days of the *Samyam Saptaha* have passed. Five days remain. We are children. Please point out our mistakes to us so that in the five remaining days we may commit no further errors. Ma, please tell us what you have observed !

*Mataji* : You have to play the instrument. Having come here you are listening to the sound of your own playing—one listens to one's own playing.

(To be continued)

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*God has many ways of drawing us to Himself. He sometimes hides Himself from us : but faith alone, which will not fail us in time of need, ought to be our support and the foundation of our confidence which must be all in God.*

—**Brother Lawrence**

# TEN APHORISMS OF MA

## AS UNDERSTOOD BY ME

Anil Ganguli

*“Rain water flowing down from a terrace through spouts shaped grotesquely like tiger heads appears to come through the mouths of the animals, but in reality it descends from the sky ; so also the holy teachings that come out of the mouths of godly men seem to be uttered by them but in truth they come from God Himself.”*

—**Ramakrishna Paramahansa**

The quintessence of Ma's message to mankind is epitomized in a nutshell in a number of aphorisms that have spontaneously welled out of Her in colloquial Bengali. Mostly enigmatic, these aphorisms cannot be easily understood even by Bengalis, because Ma does not bother herself about the dictionary or rules of logic, grammar or syntactic composition. They are not quotations but revelations enunciating important principles of supreme spiritual value. Invariably in conformity with the truths revealed to the seers of ancient India, Ma's sayings derive their authority from the inexhaustible fountain of Eternal Truth. These are conclusive. Ma's aphorisms have a completeness within the smallest compass, as if rubbed and polished to perfection. They are cut out in the mould of the mantras of the *Upanishads*.

Before attempting to explain the typical aphorisms of Ma, it is to be noted that not one of these sayings—seemingly jargon-like—can be grasped, far less explained, without *sādhana* and spiritual experience. Admittedly, I have little of the former and less of the latter. If I still venture to write on this difficult and delicate subject, it is because during the last thirty-four years I have, from time to time, been fortunate enough to hear a lot thereon in course of informal conversation with Ma in homely surroundings. What emanated from Her was, quite often, in answer to silly and superficial questions tolerated by Her with patience and sympathy bordering on indulgence. Fully aware of my limitations, I earnestly desire to communicate to the reader the conclusions arrived at by me, whatever their worth.

### First Aphorism

“*Jā tā*” (Whatsoever—that)

Questions often arise as to What is Supreme Truth? Who is It or He? What is It? How is It? Ma’s short and simple answer is: “*Jā tā*”. This aphorism disposes of all these questions in one stroke. It is extremely enigmatic. Apparently it conveys no sense and sheds no light whatsoever. Curiously enough, the saying has neither any verb nor any noun. It just consists of two pronouns without any noun preceding—a distinct breach of the accepted rules of grammar and composition. Again, judged by the criterion of the dictionary, the saying is absurd and sacrilegious if applied to

God—its English equivalent being “worthless”, “good-for-nothing”. Obviously, such a meaning can be rejected straightaway in the present context. The literal meaning of *Jā* is “What” and of *tā* is “that”. The expression ‘*Jā tā*’, in telegraphic style, has been translated variously as “That is what it is”, “That’s that” and “Whatsoever—that”. The last rendering appears to me the best. But a tautological gibberish like *Jā tā* is of little assistance to a spiritual aspirant. It seeks to explain one unknown quantity by equating it with another quantity, equally unknown. Such a mode of explanation is contrary to the standard canons of logic. Patently *Jā tā*—if it is a sentence at all—is grammatically incomplete and logically untenable. Indeed, it is baffling for the beginner. But let us not despair. Let us try to understand *Jā tā* in the light of other aphorisms of Ma if we want to make something out of what appears to be nothing.

### Second Aphorism

“*Āchche ; nāi. Āchcheo nā, nāi o nā ; Tār o āge’.*  
*Jā bolo tāi.*”

“It is and it is not and neither is it nor is it not ; even beyond that. Whatever you say so is It”.

Like the first aphorism—*Jā tā*—, the second one, too lacks a noun but has the merit of containing a number of verbs which, however, only deepen the mystery—they are self-contradictory and utterly misleading. This aphorism, expressed in free English translation consists of six clauses as follows :

- (i) It or He is,
- (ii) It or He is not,
- (iii) Neither is It,
- (iv) Nor is It not,
- (v) Even beyond that,
- (vi) Whatever you say, so is It.

Let us first analyse and elucidate each of these six clauses. For the sake of convenience "It, or He" will now be referred to as "God".

#### Clause (i)

*God is*

The *prima facie* meaning of this clause is easy to understand. But it is not possible to prove the statement by any scientific method to the satisfaction of one determined not to believe.

#### Clause (ii)

*God is not*

This is the antithesis which directly contradicts clause (i)—it positively denies the existence of God. Popularly known as atheism, that is to say, disbelief in the existence of God, it goes a step further than even the Sankhya school of Hindu Philosophy which simply maintains that the existence of God remains unestablished in the absence of proof.

The extreme view expressed in clause (ii) is founded on Ma's teaching that there can be nothing which is not God, not even atheism; so God is comprehensive enough to bring within His all-embracing umbrella a votary of clause (ii) however

repelling his attitude may appear to one who believes in God.

The obvious contradiction between clause (i) and clause (ii) of the second aphorism is verily a melting pot. Naturally it appears to be fantastic to a critic who depends solely on his so-called intelligence. And Clauses (iii) and (iv) make the position worse—in fact, simply bewildering.

#### Clause (iii)

*Neither does God exist :*

This clause directly contradicts clause (i) and supports clause (ii).

#### Clause (iv)

*Nor does God not exist :*

Again, this clause directly contradicts clause (ii) and supports clause (i). Irreconcilable contradiction of this nature has been explained by Ma in a third aphorism which is based on the authority of the scriptures. Let us pause for a moment and consider this aphorism before taking up clauses (v) and (vi) of the second one.

### Third Aphorism

*“Āchche, nāi, Jār madhye<sup>i</sup> sambhava”*

(‘Exists’ and ‘does not exist’ is possible only with reference to Him)

The position seems to be this : what appears to us to be a contradiction is due to our limited capacity to comprehend. We are bound by the concepts of time and space. God is not. God—

and God alone—is above contradictions. In Him are reconciled opposites such as existence and non-existence ; in Him are resolved all differences. The *Gītā* also says that the Supreme *Brahman* is neither existent nor non-existent.<sup>1</sup> And, according to the *Swetaswara Upanishad*, *Brahman* is :

“With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere” and again, “Without hands and feet he goes fast and grasps ; without eyes he sees ; without ears he hears”.<sup>2</sup>

A logically trained mind is apt to be confused by such contradictory statements. Ma’s priceless aphorisms only confirm and reiterate in Bengali the truths revealed to ancient seers.

#### Clause (v)

#### *Beyond even that*

This clause makes confusion worse confounded. It suggests that the first four clauses are not exhaustive and that one must go even beyond that. But then what is meant by ‘that’ ? In continuation of the line indicated by clauses (i) and (iv) or that by clauses (ii) and (iii) ? Alternatively, along each path, one after another, in succession ? In the further alternative, along some new path ahead, in supersession of those already specified ? Nothing is clear on these points. The mystery deepens. Then, what precisely is Ma’s message as to where such a path lies ? No where ? No, we need not be so cynical as all that. Clause (v) of the second

1 *Gita* XIII

2 *Swetaswara Upanishad* III/16, 19

aphorism, as I have understood it, is not to be construed to mean anything more than a stimulus to march onwards. Once the journey has been undertaken in right earnest, light would come from a source, hitherto unknown, to show the seeker the way in front and to warn him against obstacles to future progress. The source, asserts Ma, is within one's Self. And this is what seems to be embodied in clause (vi) of the second aphorism.

Clause (vi)

*Whatever you say, so is God*

Every seeker is bound by certain limitations. To him the limitless God is, according to this clause, as he considers Him to be. Let us take the example of the limitless sky. Even the immense ocean can reflect only a small portion of the sky. Necessarily it is limited to the dimensions of the ocean below. A tank is also the proud recipient of a comparatively smaller portion of the sky; so also a tiny cup of water. The ocean, the tank and the cup of water can see the sky, each in its own way and the experience helps realization of some truth about the sky, though not the whole truth.

Clause (vi) reminds us that we are born to have a glimpse of the sky and we should straightaway make a beginning with whatever experience of God is available to each of us—be our capacity comparable to that of the ocean or the tank or the tiny cup of water. In any event, let us not despair. This clause inspires the seeker, perhaps frustrated hitherto, to feel that he is justified—even in



'creating' his own God and need not accept a God prescribed for him by somebody else. Without feeling disturbed or condemned, he forges ahead with greater fervour and with buoyant optimism.

Thus, the final clause of the second aphorism is unique, because it offers endless alternatives, one or the other of which is bound to be within the reach, and acceptable to every seeker, whatever be his spiritual status, intellectual capacity and emotional preference.

As a commentary of the first two aphorisms the following saying of Ma is worth quoting :

"He alone knows to whom He will reveal Himself under which form. By what path and in what manner He attracts any particular man to himself with great force is incomprehensible to the human intelligence. The path differs indeed for different pilgrims. To advance in the spirit means for everyone to tread his own path. One's own path is the path that leads to Self-realization, to the supreme, ultimate Goal itself.<sup>1</sup>

This calls for deep meditation.

The main point of Ma's teaching is : There is only ONE and whatever exists or does not exist is of the ONE. Ma's first two aphorisms convey the inexpressible in a most perfect manner. 'Jā tā (Whatsoever—that), the shortest, seems to me to be the best. The second aphorism gives a comprehensive picture of 'Jā tā'.

Ma's message is all-embracing. It rules out the possible claim to monopoly on the part of any

1 *Matri Vani* Vol. II

particular school of thought to the exclusion of any other. It also allows every seeker to follow the track destined for him. Once a beginning is made along any path that appeals to him, Ma is always there to give guidance at the cross-roads so that he may reach the goal in due course in the fullness of time. The ultimate goal is common to all, however divergent the approach may be. It is not Ma's way to disturb any one's predilections or susceptibilities. At whatever point a particular aspirant may find himself, Ma sheds light on the path of his choice, enkindles more and more spiritual aspiration and encourages spontaneous flowering of the buds lying dormant in him.

#### Fourth Aphorism

*"Jemon bajābe temoni sunbe"*

(As you play, so you hear)

This aphorism is Ma's almost invariable answer to a common question as to Her identity and spiritual status. She compares Herself to a musical instrument and smilingly says :

"What you hear depends on how you play the instrument."

Thus, a violin gives out notes not of its own initiative but in response to strokes or vibrations received from outside and the music that is heard as a result depends on the skill of the player, the instrument remaining the same. Indeed, Ma is *Jā tā*.

### Fifth Aphorism

*“Jar Jemon bhāva tar temon lābha”*

(As the approach, so the meed)

This aphorism is a supplement to the fourth. It is in line with the assurance of Lord Krishna : “As men approach me, so do I accept them”.<sup>1</sup>

Ma adds that if the seeker comes one step towards God, God responds by coming ten steps towards the seeker.

It may not be out of place to give expression to some thoughts of mine arising out of the first five aphorisms as a whole in the light of Ma’s other sayings heard on different occasions.

Everything without exception is THAT, the ONE, who is also the MANY in different forms. God is generally believed to have created man. And man, observed a free-thinker, paid back the compliment by “creating” God. The God of an ant is, perhaps, a perfect ant and of an elephant a perfect elephant (assuming that the ant and elephant have the necessary power of imagination to “create” a God). Like some narrow-minded and sectarian human beings, the ant and the elephant may each claim that it and it alone is right and everybody else wrong. God Almighty, perhaps, smiles with indulgence. Ma’s teaching is : such a human being, such an ant and elephant—each is individually right from his particular point of view but wrong to the extent he dogmatically asserts that everybody holding a different opinion is wrong. All controversies of this nature

1 *Gita* IV/11

are totally dissolved by these aphorisms of Ma. The truth underlying them seems to be this : It is not possible to describe the Supreme Absolute Truth through the medium of language. The *Upanishad* also declares that speech, senses and the mind, in search of the Supreme Absolute Truth, come back without attaining It. Thus, words cannot give an objective description of *Brahman* ; but it is open to every aspirant to have some subjective experience or other and then he comes to know what *Brahman* is, so far as he is concerned. Such experience is not negotiable. One who is fortunate enough to have it is in a position to say to himself : "Oh ! this is what my God is like !" In other words, the indescribable Supreme Absolute Truth—call it God or *Brahman* or Ma or by any other name—cannot be equated with anything. A similar example is the sky which cannot be equated with, or compared to, anything else. It is in recognition of the principle explained above that the first aphorism seems to have emanated from Ma—*Jā tā* (Whatever—that). In other words, It is precisely what It is—nothing more, nothing less. Judged from this point of view, one can easily appreciate that *Jā tā* is really not so fantastic as it appears to be on the surface. Indeed, *Jā tā* has a message which travels beyond the boundary of words. This message is all-embracing—it is equally suitable for all, because it gives every individual aspirant full scope to be attuned to his goal—whatever or whoever It or He or She may be—through an appropriate wave-length peculiar

to him. The Guru gives guidance for adjustment of the wave-length.

It is well known that no language exists that can express Truth. The first two aphorisms convey the inexpressible in a manner which appears to me a most perfect one. The third aphorism reconciles the contradictions that appear on superficial reading of the first two. The fourth and the fifth inspire an earnest seeker to turn within and proceed on and on.

(To be continued)

### NOTHING DIES

“Then death, so call’d, is but old matter dress’d  
 In some new figure, and a varied vest ;  
 Thus all things are but alter’d, nothing dies ;  
 And here and there the unbodied spirit flies...  
 From tenement to tenement though toss’d,  
 The soul is still the same, the figure only lost :  
 And, as the soften’d wax new seals receives,  
 This face assumes, and that impression leaves ;  
 Now call’d by one, now by another name,  
 The form is only changed, the wax is still the same.  
 So death, so call’d, can but the form deface ;  
 The immortal soul flies out in empty space,  
 To seek her fortune in some other place.”

—Ovid (5th century), in *“Metamorphoses”*

# THE INNERMOST ESSENCE

NYING TIG

Jigme Lingpa

*From the book "Mudra" by Chogyam Trungpa*

"Jigme Lingpa lived at the time of the fifth Dalai Lama; He was responsible for inspiring many people to study *Maha Ati*, which is the final and ultimate teaching of Buddha.

This teaching brings precise experiences of the awakened state. In fact, it surpasses concepts including the "idea" of Buddha-nature, which has an element of the not yet mature.

The difference between them seems to be that the achievement of Buddha nature is seen as a development, but with *Maha Ati* it is an experience all at once. The image of *Maha Ati* is the *garuda* (eagle) which emerges from the egg fully grown.

I have included these translations in the book even though they are advanced teaching because reading them seems to have inspired many people. There is no danger in presenting them because they are what is called self-secret, that is, one cannot understand what one is not ready for. Also they are incomplete without the transmission from a guru of the Lineage".

This is the Lion's roar which subdues the rampant confusions and misunderstandings of those meditators who have abandoned materialistic attachments to meditate on the Innermost Essence.

The *Maha Ati*, which is beyond conceptions and transcends both grasping and letting-go, is the essence of transcendental insight. This is the unchanging state of non-meditation in which there is

awareness but no clinging. Understand this, I pay ceaseless homage to the *Maha Ati* with great simplicity.

Here is the essence of the *Maha Ati Tantra*,  
The innermost heart of Padmakara's Teachings,  
The life-force of the Dakinis.

This is the Ultimate Teaching of all the Nine  
Vehicles.

It can be transmitted only by a Guru of the  
Thought Lineage

And not by words alone.

Nevertheless I have written this

For the benefit of great meditators

Who are dedicated to the Highest Teaching.

This teaching was taken from the treasury of

*Dharmadhātu\**

And is not created out of attachment

To theories and philosophical abstractions.

First the pupil must find an accomplished Guru with whom he has a good karmic link. The teacher must be a holder of the Thought Lineage Transmission. The pupil must have single-minded devotion and faith, which makes possible the transmission of the Teacher's understanding.

The *Maha Ati* is of the greatest simplicity. It is what is. It cannot be shown by analogy; nothing can obstruct it. It is without limitation and transcends all extremes. It is clear-cut nowness, which can never change its shape or colour.

When you become one with this state the desire to meditate itself dissolves; you are freed from

\**Dharmadhātu* : All-Encompassing Space Wisdom.

the chain of meditation and philosophy, and conviction is born within you. The thinker has deserted. There is no longer any benefit to be gained from "good" thoughts and no harm is to be suffered from "bad" thoughts. Neutral thoughts can no longer deceive. You become one with transcendental insight and boundless space. Then you will find signs of progress on the Path. There is no longer any question of rampant confusions and misunderstandings.

Although this teaching is the King of the *Yanas* (Vehicles). Meditators are divided into those who are highly receptive to it, those who are less receptive and those who are quite unreceptive. The most highly receptive pupils are hard to find, and it sometimes happens that Teacher and pupil are unable to find a true meeting point. In such a case nothing is gained and misconceptions may arise concerning the nature of *Maha Ati*.

Those who are less receptive begin by studying the theory and gradually develop the feeling and true understanding.

Nowadays many people regard the theory as being the meditation. Their meditation may be clear and devoid of thoughts and it may be relaxing and enjoyable, but this is merely the temporary experiencing of bliss. They think this is meditation and that no one knows better than them. They think "I have attained this understanding" and they are proud of themselves. Then, if there is no competent teacher, their experience is only theoretical. As it is said in the Scriptures of *Maha Ati*: "Theory is like



a patch on a coat—one day it will come apart”. People often try to discriminate between “good” thoughts and “bad” thoughts, like trying to separate milk from water. It is easy enough to accept the negative experiences in life but much harder to see the positive experiences as part of the Path. Even those who claim to have reached the highest stage of Realisation are completely involved with worldly concerns and fame. They are attracted by *Devaputra*. This means they have not realised the self-liberation of the six senses. Such people regard fame as extraordinary and miraculous. This is like claiming that a raven is white. But those who are completely dedicated to the practice of Dharma without being concerned about worldly fame and glory should not become too self-satisfied on account of their higher developments of meditation. They must practice the Guru Yoga throughout the four periods of the day in order to receive the blessings of the Guru and to merge their minds with his and open the eye of insight. Once this experience is attained it should not be disregarded. The yogi should henceforth dedicate himself to this practice with unremitting perseverance. Subsequently his experience of the Void will become more peaceful, or he will experience greater clarity and insight. Or again, he may begin to realise the shortcomings of discursive thoughts and thereby develop discriminative wisdom. Some individuals will be able to use both thoughts and the absence of thoughts as meditation, but it should be borne in mind

that that which notes what is happening is the tight grip of ego.

Look out for the subtle hindrance of trying to analyse experiences. This is a great danger. It is too early to label all thoughts as *Dharmakāya*. The remedy is the wisdom of nowness, changeless and unailing. Once freed from the bondage of philosophical speculation, the meditator develops penetrating awareness in his practice. If he analyses his meditation and post-meditation experiences he will be led astray and make many mistakes. If he fails to understand his shortcomings he will never gain the free-flowing insight of nowness, beyond all concepts. He will have only a conceptual and nihilistic view of the Void, which is characteristic of the lesser *Yanas*.

It is also a mistake to regard the Void as a mirage as though it were merely a combination of vivid perceptions and nothingness. This is the experience of the lower Tantras, which might be induced by practice of the *Svabhāva Mantra*.

It is likewise a mistake, when discursive thoughts are pacified, to overlook the clarity and regard the mind as merely blank. The experience of true insight is the simultaneous awareness of both stillness and active thoughts. According to the *Maha Ati* teaching, meditation consists of seeing whatever arises in the mind and simply remaining in the state of nowness.

Continuing in this state after meditation is known as "the post-meditation experience".

It is a mistake to try to concentrate on emptiness and, after meditation, intellectually to regard everything as a mirage. Primordial insight is the state which is not influenced by the undergrowth of thoughts. It is a mistake to be on guard against the wandering mind or to try and imprison the mind in the ascetic practice of suppressing thoughts.

Some people may misunderstand the term *now-ness* and take it to refer to whatever thoughts happen to be in their mind at the moment. *Now-ness* should be understood as being the primeval insight already described.

The state of non-meditation is born in the heart when one no longer discriminates between meditation and non-meditation and one is no longer tempted to change or prolong the state of meditation. There is all-pervading joy, free from all doubts. This is different from the enjoyment of sensual pleasure or from mere happiness.

When we speak of "clarity" we are referring to that state which is free from sloth and dullness. This clarity, inseparable from pure energy, shines forth unobstructed. It is a mistake to equate clarity with awareness of thoughts and the colours and shapes of external phenomena.

When thoughts are absent the meditator is completely immersed in the space of non-thoughts. The "absence of thoughts" does not mean unconsciousness or sleep or withdrawal from the senses, but simply being unmoved by conflict.

The three signs of meditation—clarity, joy and absence of thought—may occur naturally when a



Five hundred miles from the nearest habitation,  
Would develop overweening pride.”

If the meditator is able to use whatever occurs in his life as the Path, his body becomes a retreat hut. He does not need to add up the number of years he has been meditating and does not panic when “shocking” thoughts arise. His awareness remains unbroken like that of an old man watching a child at play.

As is said in a *Maha Ati* text :

“Complete realisation is like unchanging space.”

The Yogi of *Maha Ati* may look like an ordinary person but his awareness is completely absorbed in nowness. He has no need of books because he sees apparent phenomena and the whole of existence as the Mandala of the Guru. For him there is no speculation about the stages on the Path. His actions are spontaneous and therefore benefit all sentient beings. When he leaves the physical body his consciousness becomes one with the *Dharma-kāyā*, just as the air in a vase merges with the surrounding space when the vase is broken.

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# THE TEACHING OF REBBE NAHMAN

## A HASIDIC\* MASTER

Translated from Hebrew

Parvati Alexander

### INTRODUCTION

Nachman of Bratzlav, early 19th century, was one of the greatest of the spiritual leaders within the Hasidic tradition of Judaism. His teachings were given extemporaneously in the Yiddish language and recorded in Hebrew by his disciples. His personality and teaching were unique among the Hasidic leaders and to this day he has had no successor as did the other Hasidic masters, as his disciples await the return of their beloved Master. The following are selections from a collection of his teaching called "*Likkute Mohavan*".

When a man enters into the service of God, the path that is first shown to him is that of '*hitrakhakhut*' (keeping the devotee at a distance). It seems to him that he is continually being pushed away from above and that he is not being allowed to enter into the service of God at all! But, in truth, all '*hitrakhakhut*' is only '*hitkarvut*' (bringing near of the devotee). And one needs a very great strength not to become discouraged when he sees how many days and years have passed that he is yearning with such great longing to truly worship God, and still he is so far away and has not even

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\**Hasidism* A mystical, devotional movement within Judaism which arose in Eastern Europe in the 18th century.

begun at all to enter the gates of holiness. For he can himself see that he is still filled with such grossness and materiality, with so many distracting thoughts and confusions ; and, also, that anything he wishes to do for the service of God, anything at all within the realm of the sacred, he is not being allowed to do. Thus it seems to him that God does not look at him at all and does not even want his worship ! For he sees that he is crying out continuously, falling before God and begging Him to help him in his worship ; yet, despite all this, he is still so very far away. Therefore, it appears that God is not seeing him at all, is not turning toward him and does not want him.

In the face of all this, a man must have tremendous fortitude and must strengthen himself greatly not to pay any attention whatsoever to these trials for, as we have already taught, all pushing away is verily only the means for 'drawing near'. All the '*tzaddikim*' (saints) have themselves gone through these trials. We have heard it from their own mouths that it seemed to them that God would not look at them nor grant them any grace. And if they had not been very firm and determined to disregard these things, they would have remained where they were, at that first level, and would never have attained to what they have attained.

Thus, my beloved and my brother, the essential is to strengthen and fortify yourself with all your power and to remain steady in your worship. Do not doubt and do not be disturbed. Even if it seems that you are distant from Him and that you

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are sinning against Him continually, even with all this and *despite* it, know that such a one who is so very gross, each and every movement that he makes to uproot himself even the tiniest bit, from that grossness and to turn toward God,—that tiniest movement is incredibly dear and precious. For with even this minutest particle that he tears himself away from materiality toward God, with this he can run so many thousands of steps in the upper worlds !

And you must learn well from the story of the *tzaddik*, who was overcome with sadness, that one must be in joy and constantly make an effort to remain joyful, because depression is extremely harmful. Know that at the moment a man desires to enter upon the practice of God's service, then immediately, it becomes a great sin to be depressed, for depression itself is the devil and is hateful to God. (From the *Zohar*).\*

One has to be very stubborn in the worship of God and never abandon one's place, that is to say, even though he may only have just begun and progressed but little, even this he must never leave, no matter what may happen to him. Remember this thing well for you will have great need of it when you are beginning. It takes great tenacity to be firm, to take hold of oneself and to remain in one's place even when one is being thrown down all the time. When one is thrown down from his worship of God, as it sometimes happens, despite

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\**Zohar* The Book of Splendour. A classical mystic text of Judaism, Thirteenth Century, Spain.



this, it is essential that he stick to his own, to what he must do and to continue to do whatever he is able in his worship and never to let himself fall completely. It is certainly necessary to pass through and to overcome these falls, trials, and confusions, before one can enter into the gates of holiness. All the true *tzaddikim* have passed through the tests. And know that sometimes it happens that someone is already very close, right next to the door of 'holiness' and, yet, he has to fall behind due to these confusions. Or it may happen that he is very, very near and at that moment, the 'devil' overcomes him with a great and terrible force and he cannot enter and must turn away. This is the way of the 'devil',—when he sees that someone is so near, just next to the gates of 'holiness', it is just then that he comes upon him with such great force! Therefore, one must strengthen oneself greatly against him. One *tzaddik* himself told us that if only someone had been there to tell him, whosoever it may have been, at that time when he was just beginning; "My brother, be strong and take hold of yourself", then, he said: "I would have run and made great haste in His service". For he too went through all these things but there was no one to encourage him.

Therefore, anyone who wishes to serve God, should remember this well. Be strong and do whatever you are able in the service of God, and with the passing of days and years, you shall surely enter, with the help of God, into the gates of holiness. For God is full of mercy and greatly desires

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your worship. You may be sure that every movement and attempt you make to uproot yourself and with which you are pulled away, even the tiniest bit, from worldliness toward God, all these little bits join together and combine, connecting one with the other to come to your aid at the time of need, when there is any kind of trouble.

And know that man must pass over a very, very narrow bridge,—and the essential thing is that he must never be afraid.

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*Blind as we are we hinder God and stop the current of His graces. But when He finds a soul penetrated with a lively faith, He pours into it His graces and favours plentifully; there they flow like a torrent, which, after being forcibly stopped against its ordinary course, when it has found a passage, spreads itself with impetuosity and abundance.*

—**Brother Lawrence**

# PRAYER : ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND VARIETIES

Acharya Satish Chandra Mukhopadyaya

*Letter No. 4*

## **On the lower Rungs of the ladder of Bhakti.**

Let me now proceed to discuss the higher stages of faith where the man of faith in the Lord has neither attained to the status of a Divine Child, nor even attained to the state of a freed soul, (*Mukta Puruṣa*, one liberated from the bonds of matter, i. e. of identification with matter), and who, therefore is included in the category of fettered *jīvas*. Now the man of advanced faith in the Lord is always dependent on the Lord for what he might stand in need of, and not on his personal self-effort. This sort of faith must not be confounded with the ordinary intellectually reasoned type of faith. For the higher type of faith springs from the depths of the heart and may even be called intuitive, because it is unreasoned, but always undeviating in character. For the heart of the man of higher faith always points unerringly in the direction of the Highest. Having laid down the preliminaries of this problem of dependence on the Lord (begotten of faith), let me proceed to tell you that the *Vaiṣṇava* authorities lay down six categories of such dependence—born of higher faith in the Lord ; among which are the four follow-

ing : (1) 'रक्षिस्यतीति विश्वासः' '*Rakṣisyatīti Viśvāsaḥ*' which means that Bhagavān will most certainly protect me—such must be his assured faith ; (2) 'गोप्तृहे वरणं तथा' '*Goptrīva Varāṇam Tathā*' which implies that the man of such faith will instal Him in the heart as his Protector. Then come (3) and (4) combined, namely, 'आत्म-निष्केपकार्पण्यम्' '*Ātma-Nikṣepa-Kārpaṇyam*'. This is a composite feeling consisting of (3) 'आत्मनिष्केप' '*Ātma-Nikṣepa*' and (4) 'कार्पण्यम्' '*Kārpaṇyam*'. By *Ātma-Nikṣepa* is meant throwing oneself at the feet of the Lord by way of self-surrender : while by *Kārpaṇyam* is meant a particular state of the soul in distress in which the devotee cries out in a state of utter helplessness as follows : "Oh Lord ! Oh Lord ! Do thou protect me, Do thou protect me." This fourfold state comes under the six-fold state of "*Śaraṇāgati*". The other two states which are preliminary are the following : (1) the whole-hearted acceptance of all ways and means calculated to promote the *bhajan*, i. e. the worship, service and adoration of the Lord ; (2) the whole-hearted rejection of all that stands in the way of such *bhajan* or worship, service and adoration. It may here be noted that the bhakta or devotee who takes to *Śaraṇāgati* surrenders himself at the feet of the Lord as a place of refuge from the ills of life. The *Vaiṣṇava* authorities lay down that there are two driving motives for a fettered *jīva* who would throw himself at the feet of the Lord by way of renunciation of worldly *sāmsārik* life. There are first and mostly a class of *jīvas* who, having

tried their best to succeed in life, have failed ; and in this life they have had to experience defeat, depression and dark despair, with the result that they have been stung to a state of both disgust and fearsomeness of *achit samsārik* existence. This fear, disgust and the mental tortures that they have had to suffer and undergo, have produced such a deep impression upon the *Chitta* that the victim is unable to stand on his own feet, and involuntarily turns wholly and absolutely to the Lord for refuge and protection. You may call this a sublimated form of *sakāma* or worldly self-regarding devotion, for the originating motives were likes and dislikes for different forms of *achit* (worldly) existence resulting in frustrations. Nevertheless the point to be noted is that the final upshot of the devotee's previous untoward *achit* experiences has been, not to drag him away from, but to lift him on to the feet of the Lord. It need hardly be said that the touch of the Lord's feet (which means here the feeling of utter dependence on the Lord), however originated, is a gem of the purest ray, serene and must place this type of devotee above the vast majority of *sādhakas* on the *bhakti* path who enjoy the life of the world and seek also in a spirit of prayerful devotion to please the Lord so that He might in due course graciously free them from the trammels of *achit* existence.

The *śaraṇāgata bhaktas* of the class I have just described in the last preceding paragraph must assuredly occupy a high place in the hierarchy of *bhaktas* or devotees of the Lord, although the

originating motives in their case were not those of love for the Lord, but sheer disgust at and fear of *sāmsārik* existence. Having said this, I must ask you to direct your thoughts to another or a different class of bhaktas who also possess the characteristics of *Śaraṇāgatas*. For, these also take refuge at the feet of the Lord as absolutely as the previous mentioned type of bhaktas. Nevertheless the causes of their self-surrender lie outside the range of reactions originating in *achit sāmsārik* life. They do not go to place themselves at the feet of the Lord because of their *sāmsārik* defeats, disgusts, fears or frustrations but they do so because their hearts long to serve the Lord. The instinctive feeling that surges in their hearts is their intuitive belief and conviction that the Lord is the only Person worth striving for, worth serving, worth adoring, worth reaching, for He is the Repository of all that is worth realizing and tasting. This type of *śaraṇāgata bhaktas* give up the life of *sāmsāra* under no external compulsion of *achit* life, but they do so as a matter of powerful, loving urge from within. In the first case the *bhakta* has had to renounce *sāmsāra* under compulsion of *sāmsārik* fate, so to say, and so seek the feet of the Lord. In the second case, the *śaraṇāgata* is irresistibly drawn to the feet of the Lord under a loving compulsion of the heart's longing to offer its all to the Supreme by way of loving *sevā* or service. This superior type of *śaraṇāgata bhakta* has to be differentiated from the other and, if one may say so, inferior type. The superior type of *śaraṇāgata*

*bhaktas* are also known by the name of *akiñchana bhaktas*, the word *akiñchana* denoting that the *bhakta* has naught else in life but the Lord's *sevā* or service as the be-all and end-all.

On the *bhakti* path there are these various stages of higher and still higher faith in the Lord for the *baddha puruṣa*, the unfree *jīva*. Such a *jīva*, I need hardly repeat, is he who has not yet shaken off the "*hṛdaya granthi*" which means the heart's knot, whereby the *jīvātmā* or the *chit* soul of the fettered individual is kept tied on to bodies of matter, the threefold body of matter ; the gross or *sthūla* body, the subtle or the *sūkṣma* body and finally the causal or seed body technically known as *hāraṇa* body.

The path of *niṣkāma bhakti* naturally ends with the face to face *darśana* of the Lord by the *śuddha bhakta*. For him it is not necessary to make any previous effort whether by way of yoga, karma or *jñāna*, for the *hṛdaya-granthi* or the heart's knot to be snapped. The *śuddha bhakta* is freed not because of his efforts whether by karma, yoga or *jñāna*, but he is freed by the Lord as a matter of Grace, because he is wholly dependent on Him. And when the *śuddha bhakta* becomes so freed, he lives endlessly with the Lord in a *chit* body. So the greater saints and sages, e.g., Narada, Sri Rāmakṛṣṇa, Sri Satguru, Guru Nānak, Tulsidas, Kabir and the rest will be living in their spiritual or *chinmaya* bodies for aeons and aeons, lovingly doing their allotted parts at the behest of the Supreme.

I must now conclude by quoting scriptural authority for the conclusion which has been arrived at. The Bhāgavata is the Bible of those who follow the path of *bhakti*, and so I must refer you to it primarily. Thus I must ask you to look up Bhāgavata (1. 2. 21) where it is distinctively laid down that the snapping of the *hṛdaya-granthi* or the Heart's knot, which ties the *jīvātmā* (the *chit*-self or the soul) on to the threefold body occurs the moment the Lord gives the fettered *bhakta* His Divine Vision in his purified *chitta*. The verse in question runs thus :

ভিত্তিতে হৃদয়গ্রন্থিঃ ছিছন্তে সর্বসংশয়াঃ  
ক্ষীয়ন্তে চাস্ত কৰ্মাণি ময়ি দৃষ্টেহখিলাত্তনি ।

I am not giving you the full translation here. My purpose will be served if this verse is accepted by you as a scriptural authority for the statement that as soon as the Lord, gives the *sādhaka bhakta* His Vision in the purified *chitta*, the *hṛdaya-granthi* or the Heart's Knot is pierced or snapped, and the devotee achieves freedom or emancipation from the bonds of matter whereby his *chit*-self or the soul was tied down to matter. There are of course other consequences flowing from this Vision of the Supreme as declared in the same verse, namely that all his doubts are dissolved and all karmas that have been stored up in the *chitta* through the infinite past fall away or fade away. There is also another verse in the Bhāgavata (XI.20.30) where Bhagavān Sri Kṛṣṇa gives the same assurance to the great loving Bhakta Uddhava in almost identical language.



# MĀTRI LĪLĀ IN MY HUMBLE LIFE

Abani Mohan Sharma

*(Continued from the last issue)*

On Saturday 14. 2. 36, Maroni's marriage was performed. From early morning many villagers in bullock-carts started arriving. The news had spread all around that the adopted daughter of Dacca's 'Manush Kali' was to be married that day. A mela sprang up all around, many shops were set up and local food-stuffs being sold. It was cloudy since dawn and now slight showers came down. People felt anxious as there were no canopies and if it rained heavily everything would be spoiled. Sri Ma was at that time lying down on the floor of a room in the dilapidated hut of Siddhashram. Suddenly She rose and, going to the old banyantree under which the imprints of Her feet had recently been placed for pūjā, She sat down. It was raining, so I brought my umbrella and tried to hold it over Ma's head but She waved it aside, saying : "There is no need, let me get a little wet." It was the month of February, a sharp cold wind was blowing. I felt puzzled at Ma's *kheyāla* to get a drenching. Only Brahmara was present with Her. The rain stopped after a few minutes. Ma continued sitting for some time, then went inside and lay down on Her bed. The

sky cleared up now and the various wedding ceremonies could be performed undisturbed.

At 10 p.m., after the couple had been united in wedlock, I came and found Pitaji and uncle Kushari having their dinner on the small veranda of Siddhashram near Sri Ma's room. On the other end of the veranda Didi was feeding Ma with milk and *roti*. In the court-yard in front, Sachida, Brahmara, Babydi and others were about to eat. I took a banana-leaf and sat down between Sachida and Brahmara. Food was not being served as yet. Ma looked at me and said with a smile : "Father what is your name ?" I felt hurt that though She had known my name at my first *darśana*, She now had forgotten it. With a dry voice I said : "Abani". Ma laughed : "I know, but I want your full name." I understood now why Ma had said this, so lifting up the leaf, I stood up. Ma began to laugh and said : "Father, I saw you having a meal at about four in the afternoon ; are you hungry again so soon" ? I said : "No, Ma, I just wanted to keep company." She said : "Come with me" ! When I went with Her, She said to Didi : "Give him something from my bowl." Didi gave me two spoonful of milk and *roti*. I was grateful to receive this unexpected *prasāda* and lapped it up happily. Next day, Monday, was the last of the joyous days at Tarapith. It was arranged that we would go to Sri Rampur via Rampurhat that night. The shopkeepers started breaking up their shops.

Sachida, when he saw that some sweets were unsold, bought them all and placed them before Ma

in a large brass vessel. These were distributed to everyone present as *Matri-prasāda*. It was 9 p.m. After finishing my daily evening prayers I came in. Sachida said : "Where were you ? All the *prasāda* has been distributed." I said : "Give me some of the left over syrup, it is also part of the *prasāda*." I took some of it, then went to Ma, who was sitting surrounded by ladies. I said : "Ma, everyone received sweets. I was lucky enough to get some syrup." She laughed heartily and opened Her right fist in which was a sweet, and said : "I kept this for you." I happily stretched out my arm, but Ma said : "Come nearer." I did and presented both my hands. Ma said : "Open your mouth." She then put the sweet in my mouth as a loving mother does for her child.

The whole day was spent delightfully, singing kirtana and so forth. In the evening the joyous gathering of Tarapith was broken up. We accompanied Ma and, hiring ten or twelve carts, reached Rampurhat at midnight, proceeding by train to Sri Rampur. We stayed there for two days and on the 17. 2. 36, Bhaiji said that they would take the E. I. Rly. and reach Bahrapur the same evening via Nawadip. I took the ferry across the Ganga and reached Bahrapur in the morning. Responding to our prayers, Ma arrived at 10 p.m. with Pitaji, Swami Akhandananda, Swami Shankarananda, Bhaiji, Gurupriya Didi, Brahmara Ghosh, Biren Maharaj, Babydi, Udas' grand-mother and a few others. I arranged at the Kali-Bari of Vishnupur at Siddha Mahatma's Panchamundi

Asana near the Government Sericultural Department for Ma's stay. Here She was to remain for three days and on 20. 2. 36 to proceed to Jamshedpur.

As soon as Sri Ma reached the Kalibari, late at night, Sri Biren Maharaj went to the adjoining villages to make Her arrival known. Sri Ma was fasting on alternate days for the last several months. When She came to the Kalibari, it was Her day of fast. She lay down near the central door of the temple. Those who came with Her took some light refreshments and went to bed. It was late, so I could not introduce my wife to Sri Ma.

Early next morning when Ma was sitting on Her bed, my wife went and offered obeisance at Ma's feet. I was standing at a little distance and heard Ma ask my wife how many children she had. My wife said : "The first two are daughters, the 3rd a son, and then another daughter." Ma : "How old is the youngest" ? "Six". "Do you want more children" ? My wife remained silent. Then Ma said : "No need for more, lead a religious life with those you already have." I was overjoyed to hear Ma's words of blessings. According to my horoscope I was to have eleven children. Ma's words freed me from my anxiety and I mentally offered fervent thanks at Ma's feet.

On Friday 18. 2. 36, as a result of Biren Maharaj's visit to the adjoining villages, people kept on coming for Ma's *darśana* from early morning till late at night. Except for a little rest in the after-

noon after *bhoga*, Ma went on tirelessly attending to everyone and dealing with their problems.

On the 19th, Saturday, was Sri Ma's day of fast. As per Bhaiji's order, *pūjā* and sacrifice were offered in the Kali temple. Pitaji was very pleased. In the morning Sri Ma was taken to some people's houses. She returned with Her companions at about eleven and visited the sericultural farm in the evening. There were extensive fields of mulberry trees, which provide food for silk-worms. In between were some large thatched huts for the culturing of these worms. Ma pointed to one of the huts and said: "What is in here"? On being told that it was empty, She said: "Why did you not put up this body here? It is a beautiful place". When I replied that Bhaiji had told us that Ma liked to stay in or near a temple, and we had therefore arranged for Her in the Kalibari, She smiled and kept quiet. I was burning with eagerness to keep Ma and Her party here at least for one day and night. Kind-hearted Pitaji helped me. He and the others wanted to see the battlefield of Plassy. As the Bahrapur Rly. Station was adjoining the farm, one could take the train at 8 a.m. and return in the evening after seeing Plassy. So Sri Ma approved of the plan.

In the evening Ma and Her devotees visited the Saidabad Kali temple which was near the Vishnupur temple. The old *Pūjārī* was preparing for the *ārati*. When Ma and Pitaji entered the temple, the *pūjārī* called out loudly to his widowed daughter: "Lakshmi, come quickly, Ma has come."

The daughter and others came and did *praṇāma* to Sri Ma and Pitaji. After the *ārati*, the *pūjārī* also did *praṇāma* and with an anxious voice asked : “Ma will you grant me *darśana* again” ? Ma said : “As God wills”. The *pūjārī* told me that he had never before seen Sri Ma, but had heard that She had come to Vishnupur Kalibari. When during the *ārati* he saw Her from behind, he knew for certain that She was Sri Anandamayi Ma. Unfortunately he passed away before he could meet Sri Ma again.

We accompanied Ma to the famous Khagra-bazar, which is near Saidabad. Swami Akhandananda, Didi and Bhaji entered a well-known silk merchant’s shop, while Ma remained in the car, and I stood near the car window. There was a fruit shop just in front. Ma said to Sultan, the shop-keeper : “Father, will you not give some fruits to this daughter of yours ?” Sultan wanted to put a few grapes into Ma’s hand. Ma laughed, saying : “Father, this child cannot eat with her own hands, please feed me !” and opened Her mouth. Sultan put the grapes into Her mouth. Then seeing some Madrasi mangoes in the stall, Ma asked : “How do these taste ?” Sultan said : “Sweet”. Ma said : “Won’t you give one to this child” ? He was a little hesitant, worrying about payment. When I made a sign to him that he would be paid, he offered a mango to Ma. She said : “How can this child eat it unless you feed her ?” He peeled the mango and was going to feed Ma. But She just touched it with Her lips and said : “Taste and see if it is sweet or sour.”

But he put it down. I wanted to pay but he would not accept anything. Swamiji and others now returned, they had bought some silks and Khagrai bowls. We returned to the Vishnupur Kalibari at about 9 p.m. Later we heard that Sultan the fruit-seller had died of heart failure that same night. Whether there was any connection between his death and Ma's offering him Her *prasāda* is a mystery which Ma alone can solve.

On the 20. 2. 36 early morning Sri Ma came to the farm with Her devotees. A telegram was sent to Jamshedpur that Ma would reach there on the 22nd. Akhandanandaji, Pitaji and Didi started for Plassy at 8 a.m. Adjacent to my quarters was the silkworm nursery. Arrangements were made to accommodate Sri Ma and Her ladies in one of the large rooms and the men in another. Visitors could sit on the broad veranda which surrounded Ma's room. Many devotees had already had the good luck of Ma's *darśana* at Vishnupur Kali temple, many more came when they heard that Ma would stay at the farm for two days.

Some well-placed devotees of the *siddha māhātmā* Srimad Dwarka Nath Tapasvi (popularly known as Sādhubaba) had founded on the western bank of the Ganga an ashram dedicated to him. Sādhubaba used to come there for a few days once or twice a year to give *darśana* to his devotees. On learning that Sri Ma would stay at the farm, these devotees came to request Sri Ma to spend a day at their ashram. The Khagrai Rly. Station was very close to this ashram from where it would be

most convenient to catch the train at midnight and reach Howrah at 8 the next morning. So Ma said : "Most people have come and met this body, so why return here again, we can proceed from there". Thus She granted their request.

After bhoga Ma rested for a while and spent the remaining hours in spiritual discussions with the devotees. Then taking Brahmara with Her, She started walking and passing the southern gate of the farm, entered the race-course and crossed over from the eastern to the western side. Bhaiji, myself and some others followed Her and sat in the middle of the race-course. After some time Ma waved to us, I ran to Her. Ma said : "If you find anyone waiting for me under the neem-tree near your house, bring him here." I went there and found Sri Brajendranath Bagchi sitting on the top of a big well near the neem-tree. He was a devoted Vaisnava and the disciple of Srimad Kuladananda brahmachari, a wellknown torch-bearer of the great saint Srimad Bijoy Krishna Goswami. As soon as he saw me, he said in a pathetic tone : "Brother, I am not lucky enough to have the *darśana* of your divine Mother. I came here with the aspiration to sing kirtan at Her feet and be blessed, but in vain." I replied : "Brother, you actually are the most blessed person at present, your sincere and holy wishes have stirred Mother's heart. Hence I am here to take you to Her on Her behest." My friend was so excited that he started running, I followed him. As he approached the southern gate of the farm, he



clapped his pockets and not having found what he searched for, began to beat his head. I enquired : "What's wrong ?" He said : "Though I came with such a keen desire to sing to Mother, I forgot to bring my pair of cymbals." Very strangely a little later another friend, Sri Durga Banerjee, came with a pair of cymbals and gave them to me. He was on his way to my house to attend the daily kirtan and had heard our friend's lamentations.

Brojenbabu now ran towards Mother and started dancing and singing *Mahānāma* kirtan in an intoxicating melody. Mother was awaiting his arrival on the grassy meadow, sitting with Bhaiji and others under the open evening sky. In the lonely extensive meadow the kirtan went on for an hour. Ma sat with closed eyes like a statue. After the kirtan Brojenbabu lay flat on the ground, doing obeisance devotedly ; then he walked backward and left. Mother raised Her kind eyes and looked at him unflinchingly, watching him in the mellow light of the approaching evening, till he was out of sight.

(To be continued.)

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*"The virtue of truthfulness is most important. If a man always speaks the truth and holds to truth tenaciously he will realize God, for God is Truth."*

—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

# MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH MA

Tara Kini

I have often been tempted to write about my associations with Ma, but have hesitated to do so till now, mainly because every encounter with Ma is a sacred memory, a precious treasure which I was reluctant to put into words. In one issue of *Ānanda Vārtā* (July '80, Vol. 27) there was an article called '*Ahaituki Kripa*' by Lekha Sengupta. Reading the sincere narrative of her experience with Ma, I was deeply moved. I realised how much such articles help devotees of Ma in sharing the similarity of their feelings towards the Universal Mother. It has inspired me to write this article.

I first saw a picture of Ma in Sri Lalit Mohan's house. Both he and his wife are a deeply religious couple who have known Ma for over two decades. They are our family friends of long standing, but I came to know them intimately only because of satsangs. We had started a group study of the Bhagavad Gita and other scriptures and both Uncle Lalit Mohan and Aunty were regular participants. I was very impressed with their sincerity and faith. Gradually I heard about Ma from them. In November '72 when I was studying in my final year at college in Delhi, Uncle and Aunty were preparing to go for annual *Samyam Saptah* to be

held at Kankhal that year. They described the unique week-long function to us and I found myself strongly tempted to participate. My father also was interested but he had never driven long distances alone and was hesitating to do so now. Providentially his brother turned up and volunteered to drive us to Kankhal, when he saw how keen I was to go. By then I was so set on the trip that any excuse hindering it made me feel very upset. It seemed strange that I should have such a strong desire to see a person I had never met.

As soon as we reached Kankhal and entered the premises of Maha Mandaleshwar Brahmananda Giri's Ashram where the function was held, we saw Ma. She was walking briskly down the compound to supervise the serving of a meal to a 102 year old sādhu who was an honoured guest. This is how I saw Ma for the first time. I was impressed by Her agility as She bustled about organising details of arrangements with a truly maternal air. I was surprised to note that Ma's hair had not begun greying though she was nearing eighty years of age.

We soon got into the spirit of the Samyam Saptah and though the rigorous fasting had seemed terribly difficult at first, we found ourselves doing it without any strain. I realised it was Ma's influence. Permeating the entire atmosphere was a peace I had never felt before. I found about five hundred people sitting still during meditation for an hour at a time, chanting *bhajans* and verses out of scriptures, listening to lectures from *pandits*

and *samnyāsis*, with perfect discipline. It was possible only because of one factor, Ma's presence.

During the Mātri Satsang hour I strained to catch Ma's words. Her sweet laughter and simplicity of manner, her childlike conversation in the presence of sādhus, so rich in meaning, began to seep into my mind, revealing slowly that what I beheld was nothing other than an embodiment of Love.

On the last day of the *Saptah*, Brahmachari Nirmalanandaji spoke about his first experiences with Ma. I have heard him speak very well several times later, but never has he revealed his feelings for Ma so frankly and movingly as he did on that day. He spoke of his student days at St. Stephen's College in Delhi, and how he finally joined the Ashram. After the turmoil of making the all important decision to join the Ashram, he described the scene when he walked into the Ashram worn out physically and mentally, late at night. All were asleep and he went in wearily. Just then Ma came out and said, "Have your meal and go to sleep"—and the Brahmachari wept as he remembered the tremendous affection contained in that one sentence. This speech coming from Nirmalanandaji who had lived in Ma's Ashram for the past several years, made a lasting impression on me. I saw how many others like him had abandoned worldly lives to solely engage in *sāadhanā* after coming into contact with Ma's radiantly divine personality.

It is Ma's overwhelming love that conquers even the hardest heart and turns it Godwards. I

remember that what finally made me understand the cause of the inexplicable attraction that pulled me constantly towards Ma, was a sentence from my father as we drove back to Delhi. "Ma's love is so totally unselfish—She only gives and wants nothing in return." I was thoroughly moved by this overflowing ocean of Love, which gave infinitely whether one deserved it or not. I was totally ensnared by Ma whether I wanted it or not and have now found that it is the most worthwhile thing that has happened in my life.

The actual 'ensnaring' occurred a year later. Uncle Lalit Mohan had built a house in Vasant Vihar and when Ma came to Delhi for the *Janamashtami* function he requested Her to bless his house with Her presence for three days. He came to me and said, "I must make you sing before Ma and I'll introduce you to Her personally." For both these things I am eternally grateful to him for they opened up an entirely new life for me.

On the second day of Ma's stay a continuous reading of the Tulsī Rāmāyaṇa for twenty-four hours had been arranged by Uncle. Somehow the regular singers did not turn up. So I sat with the Rāmāyaṇa which I had never before read right through and lead the singing for seven hours. I was amazed for I had never thought that I could read with such fluency the verses which were so unfamiliar. It was all Ma's grace. During the reading Ma threw a tulsī garland round my neck. The next morning during the completion of the reading we were asked to sing *bhajans*. My mother

and I sang a couple of Bengali songs on the Divine Mother. Ma was immensely pleased and as I heard her praising our music I was reminded of my grandfather's words, "Take one step towards God and God takes ten towards you." Next evening Ma asked me to sing again. Her gaze, so full of grace and love enveloped my being as I sang.

On the day of Her departure from Uncle's house She called me to Her room and gave me a saree. As She patted my head and praised me, I couldn't hold back my tears. "Ma, she's crying", one of the Ashram girls said. "They are tears of joy", Ma said, smiling at me.

And how right She was. The joy that flooded the very core of my being has remained with me to this day. My associations with Ma have shown me the true meaning of life, the only Real Aim. Every time I meet Her the zest of pursuing the Goal is renewed. The awareness of Divinity and the existence of the Truth hidden by mundane activity is brought to light. Meeting Ma is like a mirror which reflects one's true Self stripped of the outer crusts which we usually believe we are. Each moment with Ma is a flight into the realm of endless happiness, a taste of divine joy, one sip of which remains permanently in the memory, reminding one of the richness of Reality and the futility of worldly pursuits. Encounters with Ma are sufficient to carry us across this worldly ocean—this is my firm belief.

Jai Ma !

# SRI SRI MA

Chaitanyaben Divatia

In January 1945 I had my first *darśana* of Sri Sri Ma at late Kantibhai Munshaw's place and at Samartheshwar Mahadeva Mandir in Ahmedabad. I saw my own mother in Her. It was not mere imagination but actual reality for a few moments, hardly one or two minutes. But these precious moments had a profound effect on my mind and heart. From that day onward, whenever Mataji visited Ahmedabad, which happened at intervals of two or three years, I without fail would go for Her *darśana*. Each time I felt greatly attracted and experienced a deep love and joy which I can't describe in words.

Several times I had the chance of talking to Mataji in private. Her superhuman qualities, Her powerful eyes radiating boundless love, completely captured my mind. In those days circumstances did not permit me to visit Sri Sri Ma's Ashrams. But although I was engaged in various types of mental and physical work, Mataji possessed my inner self. I remember distinctly how in a private interview, She gave me the following advice : "As soon as you get up in the morning, pray to Mā (*Devī Bhagavati*) : 'Let me do all my work today not of my own volition but as an instrument in your hands.' And when you go to sleep at night pray to Her that you may sleep in Her lap."

These words Sri Sri Ma spoke to me with so much love and motherly affection that I made it a rule to regularly carry out Her instructions to the letter. This was only the beginning.

A few years later, when reading some books on Mataji's life and "Ānanda Vārtā", I learnt that during *Mahā Sivarātri* Mataji's presence had a wonderful effect. I at once wrote to Her for permission to attend this festival and Mataji replied that I should come. But unfortunately or fortunately I was unable to leave and so, greatly disappointed, I wrote again and asked Mataji how to perform *Siva pūjā* on *Mahaśivarātri* at home as I had already been observing *Śivarātri* at my home for several years.

Mataji sent Her reply in one or two sentences : "There is no need to perform *pūjā*. Just practise *japa* of Śiva's name the whole day without a break." She asked me to keep it secret and not to speak about it to anyone.

I carried out Her instructions with deep faith. The result cannot be imagined without one's personal experience ! Who is Ma ? What is Her Grace ? Her compassion ? How can I explain it ? Ma Herself told me not to.

My father was an ardent devotee of Rama-krishna Paramahansa. He used to read from the Gospel of the Master every day. I too would sit by his side and read the *Kathāmrita*. While doing so I often used to wonder whether I would ever in my life find a God-like (*Brahmaniṣṭa*) Guru. I also went with my father for Mataji's *darśana* and it



pleased him greatly to see my faith and my devotion to Sri Sri Ma.

God heard my heart's prayer. I found my Guru at my very first *darśana* of Sri Sri Ma—the Goddess in person. After that I began visiting Her ashrams regularly. Even though Mataji is all-knowing and all-pervading, we cannot know or understand Her with our human limitations. For Her those who go to Her ashrams and those who don't are alike. Sri Sri Ma has come to us in human form as Mother. She imbues us with a rare strength by Her Grace and Her compassionate glance.

We should pray to Her so that we may become worthy to deserve Her Grace and Blessing. Sri Sri Ma is *Nārāyaṇī* (the Goddess) incarnate. If one is able to receive and absorb even a particle of the deep peace and the radiant light that Mataji emanates, one becomes transformed. Slowly but steadily Her grace works upon us and gradually changes our hearts, our minds, our very nature. The greater our faith the more are we able to receive. As Ma says : “According to your playing you hear the sound.”

Ma ! Bless me with the grace of your glance and the power of your touch. Receive me unto yourself totally and in all ways. Be in me so that only your thought remains ! May I think of you day and night and never forget you for a single moment to the very last—this is all that I pray for !

# MA AS SEEN BY A SEEKER

Swami Murugananda

The real purpose of human life has always been something higher than what is presumed by the majority of mankind. Though many of us may be said to enjoy life, the real significance of our existence has not been grasped due to the inherent erroneous notions that we entertain in our minds. But the ancient sages and mystics always stressed that the ultimate purpose of existence is to know and realise the unchangeable Reality—the Supreme Lord. In other words, they want us to lead a life spiritual. What is spiritual life? Is it confined to temple or church going, or doing some *japa* of any mantra, or meditating on an ideal at fixed hours? Though all these form part of a life dedicated to the search after Truth, they are not everything. Spiritual life signifies more than merely these observances. It is the affirmation of the spirit at all times, a life of wholeness and completeness, and the beauty lies in its great promise. Spiritual life entraces and yet transcends moral and aesthetic life, it exhibits life in its fulness. This is exactly for what Ma stands, for the spiritual uplift and highest blessedness of each and every sincere seeking centre of consciousness.

Though moral life forms a fine fabric of our being, spiritual experience has in it something which is unique. The holiness and joyousness that

we behold in Ma, are invaluable and should find a place in spiritual life. The life spiritual is the fullest unfolding of life, and where it has its finest expressions, there the chords of life sound in perfect harmony. It touches the very core of our being and transcends all. It is something which is neither merely intellectual nor merely emotional. It includes these, and yet goes beyond them. The discovery of this "something" is the unique privilege of the seeker after Truth. This "something" is so near and intimate that it escapes our observation.

Wealth and pleasure always hide the essence. Unless the seeker can successfully resist these, the visit of the living soul does not take place.

*Moksha* or liberation has been the catchword of spiritual life to indicate its aim and promise. Generally non-attachment to life and its achievements is associated with *Moksha*. And our systems, accepting the ideal of *Moksha*, have been accused of denying life its struggles, its defeats, and its successes. They are accused of advocating escape from life and running away from responsibilities. This is a travesty of the truth. It is neither the teaching nor the ideal set forth by the Upanishadic seers. The ideals of detachment and renunciation of the claims of life have been used, not to deny and avoid life, but to invite a better and fuller life. This is man's divine privilege.

This fullness is verily Ma. She teaches us to be brave enough to forego temporary delights in order to enjoy the fullness of life. The courage

to put this into action dawns suddenly upon receptive souls. Constant watchfulness helps the soul to be receptive to the subtle expressions of life. It also makes it responsive to the currents, revealing life's divine orientation. Now the seeker is reborn, a great claim of spiritual life—a unique perfection. Knowledge is here intuitive and one is freed from the trammels of the subconscious and the conscious and revels in the superconscious. This is what Ma calls "*kheyāla*". It is the freedom gained by the silence of the mind. This silence becomes an accomplished fact. It is not the silence of the conscious urges alone, not even the silence of sleep. The former is artificial, the latter natural. But this supreme silence transcends both. It is the permanent silence hidden in the hearts of all. The life of the human soul is best enjoyed when one feels the dignity of this silence. The constant agitation of our psychic being hides the truth from us, and the greatest sacrifice is necessary to realize this highest Truth. And this is the sacrifice of the ego, for who can ever dream of the attainment of Truth with the claims of the little ego set prominently before us. Our ego covets many things and takes us away from the sublime. We always find an excuse and try to justify our actions. We never allow the Divine Will to function through us, mistaking it for an obstruction. Be it not so is the silent teaching of Ma, through Her Life.

Revelling in our tiredness, joyous in our exhaustion, blissful in spite of fatigue, we shall still work on, inspired by our endless love for the Almighty

who is thrilling us into performance from within. To be receptive to Ma's grace we have to sacrifice the ego.

This supreme sacrifice gives supreme peace and silence. Peace is the greatest activity and silence the greatest eloquence. Happily Truth is more powerful than error, and once the Supreme Truth has been realised in the heart of our being, it never leaves us anymore. The beautiful comment by Schopenhaur goes thus, "The conquest of Truth is slow and laborious, but once there is victory, it can never be lost again". Towards this supreme Goal let us march on by surrendering totally to Ma, who is guiding us very carefully. Ma is not the type of teacher who always tells us everything, though She occasionally does. A teacher teaches and a Master makes. Such a Master is Ma. By Her love, compassion and care She leads all Her children on the path to realize THAT.

Are we not blessed to have such a Mother in our midst ? Yes, we are. With your presence Ma, we have no worry to cross the barrier.

Jai Ma !



# AT THE GATEWAY TO SIVA

Caroline Rosso Cicogna

In 1980, the birthday celebrations of Sri Sri Anandamayi Mā took place on the 3rd and 4th of May in Hardwar, at the foothills of the Himalaya. Since the hour of Her birth falls between 3 & 4 a.m., the function itself continues until dawn, with the singing of kirtans, the celebration of a solemn *pūjā* amidst the perfume of finely scented incense and the pleasing sight of variegated flowers.

But, what is really important to recollect on an occasion like this one? The external details of the event or the inner reflections one is blessed to take away in one's heart when one slowly leaves the Ashram as dawn is breaking on the peaceful town of Hardwar and on the Ganges flowing there eternally? So charged with the spiritual vibrations of the night, one can hardly go to sleep even if one feels some physical strain and one is rather inspired to go and sit on the banks of the Ganges, still envelopped in dawn, Usha, gazing at Her Lord the sun, Surya, sending forth its first rays on the universe.

Here, below our feet, before our eyes, rushing forth in Her mighty course to the ocean, is the divine Ganga, the Holy Mother of the Hindus. And, especially here in Hardwar, "the Gateway to Siva", the Ganges acquires a vertiginous speed and power carrying along in its stream all that is

worldly, impure, petty and transitory to ultimately purify it in the all-embracing contact with the ocean. Here one feels this deep and intimate union which is said to exist between Ganga and Siva, the two in ONE for ever united : it is a concept which baffles the human mind, it is of the domain of the transcendent, beyond human limitations and it is only to be grasped by a total surrender of our being.

At the gateway to Siva, Ganga plays with Him in a frenetic and sublime manner. In all Her divine power, She flows unceasingly, unperturbed by what is happening on Her banks, under the placid and loving glance of Siva.

And for us, spectators, what else is left to do but to aspire to be taken up into this all-mighty current which is endless and beginningless ? At that precise moment, our thoughts flow to worshipful Mā whom we have left in *samādhi*, in the satsang hall of the Ashram where only one hour ago we were all assembled. But have we really left Her ? Is She really there ? Is She not also this flowing Ganga and can't we, by Her Grace, be taken into the current as well ? We do not feel that we have left Her now that we are sitting on the banks of the holy River. Is it not all ONE after all ? And, as our reflections deepen, we ask ourselves what is the profound meaning of celebrating the anniversary of a birth. The birth, is it not the point in which the Transcendent and the Immanent meet in a manifested expression ? Spirit has fecundated Matter and the driving force of

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karma starts its play giving form to events, situations, characters which all conjure up what we call a life. And death itself, is it not simply the Immanent resolving once again in the Transcendent, leaving no trace of what was on the manifested empirical plane, but being ever-present nevertheless? And then again, Transcendent and Immanent are but two facets of One Reality transcending them both.

And is not Ganga the supreme symbol of this endless flowing of innumerable lives passing through the gateways of birth and death? Is it not the powerful Current that never stops flowing until it reaches the Ocean? Our lives are just droplets, small waves of this Powerful Flow and our only salvation is to pray to be immersed in the ONE stream. The Scriptures say that of all the rivers, Ganga alone will continue to flow till the time of dissolution of the world. The flow of Ganga is eternal. And in this very thought shines in all its splendour the symbolic celebration of revered Mā's birthday. Like Ganga, She lives eternally. Has She not said Herself that She had no former birth nor will have one in future? She is only in the Consciousness that She IS. And, isn't that the most comforting thought for us? —To know that all our lives are attached to a string which has no beginning and no end and which supports them all, ever-existing. It is a blessing indeed to be a witness to the celebration of such a Birthday. The Mother's birth, is it really a birth in our limited human sense? No, it is not. The Gita says—:



“Of the non-existent, there is no coming to be and of the existent, there is no ceasing to be.”

How sublime is this incarnation of Divine Love on this Love-thirsty planet of ours! And how could She ever die then? Her mortal coil She may leave but Her existence is external. She appears in time and space but actually She is beyond time and space. This obscure and elusive play of the Beyond with the manifested is the only question man has to answer during his life-time on earth. This is his highest duty and it is the most captivating mystery. It is an enchanting play, a divine *līlā* and when one is seated peacefully on the banks of the Ganges, absorbed in such thoughts, one can only pray that the glimpses of this play may transform themselves into everlasting Reality.

How this will happen, and when, this is only for the Eternal and Ever-present Guru, to say.

JAI GANGA! JAI MA!

“You must submit and allow God to do what He pleases with you. Reconcile yourself to the situation in which He places you. Do not try to change it. Do not get disturbed under any circumstances.”

—Swami Ramdas

# THE ATI RUDRA MAHAYAJÑĀ AT KANKHAL

R. K. Banerjee

If we take a close look at Ma's activities through the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha to uphold and perpetuate in this problem-stricken twentieth century the highest ideals of our Sanātana Dharma, we find that a prominent place has been allotted to orthodox yajñas as performed by Rishis in the days of yore. The meticulous care with which sacrificial fires have been kindled and kept burning in some of our Ashrams is a significant pointer in this direction.

Yajñas are an integral part of most of our religious functions : sacred thread ceremony, marriage, installation of Deities, Śakti pūjā, Ma's birthday pūjā, Chandipath, Bhagavata Saptah, etc. By Ma's grace I was able to take part in the seven days yajña performed in 1959 before the Śiva Linga installation in the Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun.

In the Gītā (IV, 23-24) Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that those who perform yajñas wholeheartedly, thinking of the Brahman, eventually merge with the Brahman. Yet again the Lord declares (X, 25) that among all the various sacrifices the yajña of japa is supreme.

So why was so much stress laid on carrying out this most difficult Ati Rudra Mahayajña with its

eleven *kundas* (Fire pits)? About a year ago a somewhat similar yajña on a smaller scale had been accomplished, not strictly under Sangha auspices. This time this complex task was entrusted to a small group of Ma's fully trained, dedicated, senior brahmacharinis under the capable leadership of Dr. Padma Misra as President of the Ati Rudra Mahayajña Committee, a very senior retired Professor of the B. H. U. who is the Vice-President of our Kanyapith. Brahmacharini Purnananda bore the brunt of the work as secretary of the Committee and official *Jajman*, representing the Ashram in the yajña. What an excellent job this group of girls, inspired by Ma, made of it!

The site of the yajña, being in the vicinity of Daksheshwar Mandir adjoining our Ashram, was thus quite close to where the famous Daksha yajña is said to have been performed. The spacious mandap occupied a bounded space to the south of Ma's bungalow. Two small pandals—one for ladies, the other for men—with a wide, covered passage for Ma in Her chair, were just behind Ma's abode. To the south of the mandap, leaving enough space for *parikrama* (circumambulation), another simple pandal facilitated the gathering of priests when they were not engaged in *havana* and was used by guests at other times. A pucca store to the west of this pandal contained the various essential articles needed for the yajña, such as sacrificial ghi, ingredients for pūjā, wood, etc.

From the four corners of the mandap the roof rose by layers to a high, pointed summit, decorated

with saffron flags and buntings. Each successive roof layer allowed exhaustion of hot rising fumes for ventilation. Wind and rain were sought to be kept out by roofing composed of layers of straw lined with plastic sheets.

There were five kundas in a row from north to south along the center of the mandap and two parallel rows of three kundas each on either side. Ma's couch was placed at a convenient point in the north-west corner.

On May 5th the mandap was open for devotees for the last time, to see for themselves the beautiful pictures hanging on the pillars, the elaborate decorations of the five vedis etc. Thereafter the mandap was strictly out of bounds for all except those officiating in the yajña and invited mahātmās.

An āchārya of unique calibre, Dr. Vamadeva Misra, Ph. D., Vedāchārya, from Varanasi, who mastered his subject thoroughly, led the 135 pandits, all well versed in the four Vedas—Rik, Jajur, Sāma, Atharva. Each had his respective part to play at the right juncture.

On the 5th evening they went in procession to Ma's cottage to be introduced to Her officially. A number of them had obtained their doctorates under the guidance of Dr. Padma Misra. Later that evening Dr. Vamadeva Misra made a personal appeal to the priests during a thorough briefing in the hall, exhorting them to remember their respective roles and play their parts at the right time in the right manner, following his lead through the loudspeaker.

On May 6th was *Akshaya Tritiyā*. At early dawn Km. Chhabi led the Usha Kirtan, circumambulating round the mandap. Later Ma and some mahātmās entered ceremonially. At 11 a. m. all the priests assembled in the hall and were, in the presence of Ma, officially vested with new robes and presented with religious books, fruit, etc. They had been put up at the Nirvani Akhara and were served their meals there under the supervision of two senior brahmacharinis.

On the 6th afternoon preliminary pūjās were performed in the mandap. On the 7th morning an elaborate main pūjā was carried out by all the pandits, and the five specially decorated vedis were worshipped with full rituals. The 7th evening witnessed an elaborate ritual called "*Jal Yātrā*". The pandits went to the Ganga at Daksheshwar Ghat to fill their vessels ceremoniously with holy water and bring them back to the mandap in procession, preceded both ways by the Ashram kirtan party. This was an exhilarating experience, particularly the solemn period when the vessels were being filled amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras.

On May 8th, Sri Adi Shankaracharya's birthday, which is considered most auspicious the ceremonial lighting of the sacrificial fires (*āgni sthāpanā*) took place in Ma's presence. A special type of hard wood is used for the purpose. Prolonged friction of two pieces of this wood produces sparks which are utilized to put fire to cotton wool or the like. With great care the fire is built up and then

carried round to the kundas amidst the chanting of mantras. At the crucial moment Ma stood up, as if to invoke all the elements, and amidst the blowing of conches and singing of kirtan by Km. Chhabi and Ashram brahmacharinis, the first spark was struck in a flash, visible to some even outside the mandap. Special pujas and havans occupied the rest of the day.

A brief account from a concise but clear booklet in Hindi by Dr. Vamadeva Misra, explaining the gist of the Ati Rudra Yajña Mahotsava, would perhaps be appropriate here.

The great yajña was performed at Kankhal for eleven days between 6th & 16th May for the welfare of the whole world. The time fell within Ma's birthday celebrations (May 2nd to 23rd), which had a very special significance for the devotees.

The entire universe represents a continuous yajña carried out by Nature under the Creator's jurisdiction. Sun, moon, stars rise and set each day, the tides ebb and flow at regular intervals in the ocean, clouds are formed through evaporation of earthly moisture by the sun's rays and are duly condensed into beneficial rain for the growth of crops to feed mankind and all creatures.

Yet another kind of yajña is celebrated according to vedic rites, worshipping the creator by oblations of *havi* obtained from pure cow's milk, the most perfect edible product from natural sources. This kind of yajña is very necessary from time to time to remind man of his obligation to

dedicate to his Creator a small part at least of what he has received from Him.

To behold God in *Agni Deva* (God of Fire) is to behold Him as Rudra, and to behold Him as *soma* (the moon) is to consider Him as Śiva, the Supreme Benefactor of mankind. Both are actually attributes of the Paramātmā—the Supreme Being.

The Rishis used to divide Creation into its constituents, namely earth, water, energy (*teja*), air, sky, sun, moon, lightning (totalling eight sub-elements) and the three aspects of fire—its burning, destroying and cleansing properties—making a total of eleven. In fact Rudra Deva possesses infinite attributes, but eleven is a symbolic number to facilitate ritual worship. This worship can take the form of japa, or recitation of appropriate mantras or ritual worship or *havana* (offering of *ahuti*). The simplest form of yajña involves 202 *ahutis* (oblations), a more detailed version 1818 oblations, the next 19998 *ahutis*, the penultimate version or Maharudra yajña eleven times  $19998 = 21,9978$ , and the ultimate or Ati Maharudra Yajña eleven times  $21,9978 = 24,19,758$  *ahutis*.

Since those inside the mandap were vested with the full responsibility of execution, what was our duty? Ma said: “Just *darśana*, try to imbibe the sense of everything you see and hear.” Ma also stressed that *parikrama* (circumambulation) of the mandap with bare feet was an important duty for all without exception. 108 *parikramas* spread over the entire period of the yajña was the ideal number to be attempted, but at least one was the minimum

for everyone. We were told to walk round the yajña in silence, with covered heads, folded hands, without touching anyone and to do japa as far as possible while walking round.

All great yajñas are subject to obstacles—both natural and otherwise. Even in ancient times, whenever special yajñas were performed by Rishis, both gods and demons would be afraid of the consequences. It is related in the Purānas that even Indra (the god of thunder and lightning) and rākshasas tried to destroy great yajñas.

Ma must have foreseen the obstacles looming large on our horizon, because on the 7th morning, while being carried in Her chair to the mandaps, She suddenly halted in the passage and quietly and authoritatively exhorted all to keep extremely calm and collected during the coming days, even in the face of severe provocation, and to observe self-restraint both in spirit and in behaviour.

In spite of Ma's repeated and clear-cut instructions we must have failed, for Ma's health deteriorated on the 9th night and Ma did not come to the hall for the evening *ārati* for two days as She needed complete rest.

The programme of Ma's birthday celebrations from May 2nd to 23rd included daily recitation of 108 Hanuman Chalisas besides perpetual japa throughout the whole period. Because of Ma's indisposition, Hanuman Chalisas were increased to 1008 per day, i. e. over hundred people reciting in unison eleven times every day. Uninterrupted singing of Ma's name was also started with as many



participants as possible. Mataji's āraṭi was performed daily at 4-30 a.m. on Her veranda and on most evenings inside the enclosure in the hall, in full view of the assembly, at about 8 p.m. Thereafter, whenever the time could be spared, the Achārya or one of the pandits would speak on some aspect of the yajña. Ma graced the afternoon satsang at about 5 p.m. whenever Sri Vishmashram or Sri Narayān Goswami spoke. In connection with the Mahayajña, Kumari Puja of 108 Kumaris was celebrated one morning in the hall, when Ma moved about them in an excellent mood.

On the 10th evening rain came down in torrents, preceded by a gale. Soon there were puddles in the mandap. Fortunately the eleven *kundas* were effectively protected by corrugated iron sheets at roof level. Even so there was fear that the blasts of wind and the torrents of water might cause catastrophe. Over and above, electricity failed due to the storm. However, Ma's succour was implored and sure enough wind and water abated. Repairs were carried out in the night and all was peaceful and normal next morning.

Throughout the yajña we were regaled with the purest vedic chanting.

On the 13th morning His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya Abhinava Tirtha, Pithadhīsha of Dwarka Nath, arrived from Delhi. Full honours were shown to him at the station by our Ashram as well as by leading samnyāsis of the Niranjani and Nirvani Akharas. The Ashram kirtan party was present in full force in an open truck with a

loudspeaker. The procession was headed by a caparisoned elephant followed by samnyāsi outriders on horseback with drawn swords in front of the open, decorated land-rover of the Shankaracharyaji. The President of our Sangha, Sri B. K. Shah and Dr. Triguna Sen led the volunteers on foot, followed by cars.

Mataji was waiting in the hall to welcome the honoured guest before the statue of Adi Shankaracharya, where āratī was performed. The Shankaracharyaji was allocated a cottage in Ma's compound.

A grand assembly of twenty-four Mahamandal-eswaras officially welcomed the Pithadish of Dwarka at 11 a.m. in the hall and were later entertained to a feast. A wonderful spectacle, reminding of the installation of Adi Shankaracharya's *vigraha* a few years ago. Among those present were : Sri Rama Swarupa Maharaj, President of Vedanta Sammelan, Sri Saccidananda Maharaj, head of Bhola Giri Ashram, Sri Shyam Sunder Maharaj, Sri Brahmananda Maharaj of Surat Giri Ashram, Sri Prakashananda Maharaj of Jagat Guru Ashram, Sri Vareshananda Maharaj of the R. K. Mission, Sri Brajo Kishore Puri Maharaj of Geeta Bhavan, Sri Girdhar Narayan Puri of Daksheshwar Mandir, Sri Brahma Hari Maharaj of Sri Chetan Deva Avadhuta Ashram.

The mahātmās were presented with gifts including sacred books, cloth and a beautiful, large medallion with the effigy of Śiva on one side and the words : “*Namāmi Sivam Śiva Kalpatarum,*

*Kankhal 1981, Ati Rudra Mahayajña*” on the other side in Devnagari script as a souvenir.

Sri Shankaracharyaji opened the proceedings by enlarging on the uniqueness of the Ati Rudra Mahayajña. Then Sri Brahmanandaji emphasized the reasons why the Daksha yajña had failed : Daksha’s object had been to insult Siva, and Sati had tried to atone for her father’s sin by sacrificing her life. Whereas here Śakti Herself was personally directing the yajña to worship Siva so as to bring peace to all mankind. How then could this yajña fail to succeed.

Sri Brahma Hari Maharaj, a most eloquent speaker, on a subsequent occasion dealt with the question whether in these days of high inflation the profuse use of pure ghi for a yajña was justified. Sri Brahma Hariji explained that since it was the duty of the householder to offer one tenth of his income to God, it was surely fitting to spend on large scale yajñas which were of immense benefit to the whole country and to the world at large.

Sri Vidyananda Maharaj of Kailash Ashram, our host during the Samyam Vrata in 1980, visited Ma and the yajña on the 11th. Swami Akhandananda Saraswati, in spite of indifferent health was present for the lighting of the fire on the 8th and the Pūrṇāhuti on the 16th.

Swami Chidanandaji, head of the Divine Life Society, came several times. His simple dignity, humility and ascetic bearing always create a profound impression as spontaneous manifestation of the highest bhakti and shraddha.

Every evening at 6 p.m. Sri Shankaracharyaji gave impressive talks on the yajña, on Adi Shankaracharya, and on the 16th he spoke on Ma. On the 16th at about midday, Sri Shankaracharyaji, followed by Ma in open vehicles, led the procession to Brahmakunda for the ritual bathing (*Yajña antha snāna*) of the priests after completion of the yajña.

While Shankaracharyaji was in residence in our Ashram we were encouraged by Mataji to visit him and offer pūjā to his famous *chandramouleshwar sphatica* (crystal) *Śiva linga*, said to be inherited directly from the Adi Shankaracharya.

No sooner had the yajña been completed with the sprinkling of *shanti jal* from the Brahmakunda on all present and putting holy ashes on their foreheads, than Ma's birthday celebrations were commenced.

The memory of the Ati Rudra Mahayajña will remain alive with all who had the wonderful opportunity to witness this unique function the like of which has rarely been celebrated since pre-Mahābhārata days.

At Ma's request Chhabi Banerjee sang Meera-bai's famous song "Yogi, *mat jao* (don't leave)" before Shankaracharyaji's departure on the 16th evening.

Three scenes from Ma's birthday celebrations stand out vividly in my mind :

(1) Ma sitting graciously in front of the brilliant array of Mahamandaleswaras occupying the raised stage of the Rāsa līlā on the 20th morning.

(2) Ma sitting with folded hands in divine splendour on the banks of Ganga at Brahmakunda on the 21st evening with the backdrops of the Himalayas behind Her, and the illustrious City Fathers of the Ganga Sabha worshipping Ma and the Ganga simultaneously before *ārati*.

(3) Ma's electrifying burst of "Krishna Nāma" during the last satsang on the 22nd when Name and the Named became one in the truest sense.

May Rudra Deva be pleased with the celebration of the Ati Rudra Yajña at Kankhal and may Śiva's blessings pour forth in abundance for the welfare of the whole universe through Ma's kheyāla in the days to come !

"Jai Rudra Deva, Jai Ma."

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*Satsang means keeping company with the Lord who is Truth Itself. So long as you dwell in the company of the Wise and Holy, reflecting on Truth, listening to spiritual discourses—so long as you remain in this atmosphere—you are progressing on your pilgrimage toward Self-revelation.*

**Sri Anandamayi Ma**

# MĀTRI LĪLĀ

(April-June 1981)

Mataji arrived in Kankhal from Vrindaban via Delhi on April 7th. On the 9th a Bhagavata Saptah started. A very senior Bhagavata Acharya, Pandit Nathilal Shastri of Vrindaban was in charge of the exposition in Hindi. Ma came to the hall at 2-30 p.m. to make sure that all arrangements were perfect and remained for a whole hour after he started. She praised the 80 years old Acharya who had been the teacher of the younger pandits who expound the Bhagavata nowadays.

The next morning four teachers with thirty-two pupils arrived from a girl's school in Darjeeling for Mataji's darśana. She received them on Her veranda and talked to them at length, asking them to devote some time every day to the thought of God and to live pure and dedicated lives. She made contact with every one of them, blessing them and distributing fruit with Her own hands. The whole party was simply delighted.

On the 11th afternoon Mataji followed an invitation to the "Vedanta Sammelan" at Purnananda Ashram. On returning She sat in the hall for the Bhagavata. A party from Sivananda Ashram, headed by Swami Madhavananda arrived. A few of them gave short speeches until quite late.

Rāma Navami, Sri Ram's birthday fell on April 12th. Ma's āratī was performed in the morning.

After midday Mataji sat on Her veranda and in person distributed a large spoonful of *khier* to everyone who came along.

On April 13th Didima's Samnyāsa Utsava was celebrated as usual. In the morning Mataji attended the special pūjā in Didima's Samadhi Mandir, then sat in the hall for some time. Later She was present for a while when Mahamandalleswaras and sadhus were served a feast.

On April 14th, the Bengali New Year's day, devotees besieged Ma's room from early morning. At about 10 a. m. Ma sat in the hall when Sri Krishna's birth was described from the Bhagavata. Mataji did not attend the end of the Bhagavata on the 16th nor the havan on 17th as Her health was indifferent.

A few days later, the recitation of the Rāmāyaṇa for nine days started. Mataji graced the opening and the completion with Her presence.

From the beginning of May a regular stream of guests began to pour in. Mataji's birthday was celebrated from May 2nd to 23rd, followed by Nama Yajña till the 24th evening. A detailed account of the Ati Rudra Mahayajña and a few glimpses from the birthday celebrations have been given in a separate article. The programme was similar to those of former years. Rāsa līlā was enacted every morning in a special pandal under the banyan tree in the large courtyard. There satsang was also held on occasions when the hall was required for sādhu feeding, kumārī pūjā, etc. Mataji daily attended the brilliant talks of the

many mahātmās. Only on one evening She replied to questions in public, but She sang most inspiringly two or three times, improvising new words and new tunes.

The attendance was enormous. 1200 guests were accommodated all over Kankhal and Hardwar and a special bus service had to be arranged. Local people also came in large crowds. Mataji was extremely busy throughout, although Her health was not always up to the mark.

On May 28th She motored to Dehradun and remained in Her cottage at Panchavati in the compound of Mr. & Mrs. Khaitan, adjoining Kalyan Van until June 26th. There She could enjoy much needed rest in very quiet, beautiful surroundings. Every evening from 6-7 satsang was held on the terrace of Her house which commands a magnificent view over the foothills of the Himalayas. First brahmacharinis recited from the Rāmāyaṇa, then Swami Saccidananda expounded the Rāmāyana, followed by silent meditation for ten minutes. At the end Km. Chhabi or others sang bhajans. Mataji gave darśana sometimes for the whole hour and more often for part of it. The peace of the place is tangible and everything proceeded in perfect order. Devotees from Dehradun and visitors from Rishikesh and Hardwar, including a good number of foreigners, availed themselves of this rare opportunity and departed deeply impressed.

On June 12th Mataji moved to the Kishenpur Ashram where some boys from Calcutta were invested with the sacred thread. In the evening She



proceeded to Raipur for 24 hours, returning to Kishenpur on the 13th. Akhanda Ramayana was held there until the 14th midday. On the 15th Mataji returned to Panchavati.

The Prime Minister had paid a visit to Mataji at Kankhal and came again in Dehradun on June 8th. Swami Cidananda came on two evenings from Rishikesh and each time gave a delightful talk at Ma's request. Mahantaji also came twice from Kankhal.

From June 26th to July 2nd Mataji stayed in Kankhal in Her old room opposite Didima's samādhi mandir. Darśana was only by looking up from downstairs.

On July 2nd Mataji took the night train to Naimisharanya. A Bhagavata Saptah is to be held there from July 5th, the consecration of a new Siva Mandir on the 13th, and Guru Purnima will be celebrated on July 17th. Then Mataji is expected to proceed to Gujarat for some time. From Sept. 6th a Bhagavata Saptah will be held in Vrindaban. Durga Puja, Kali Puja at Divali and Samyam Vrata in November are to be observed in Kankhal.

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*“Ever to keep the mind poised in the Self, wide awake in the current of Reality, where the unfathomable, the One-without-end is ever revealed in His Infinity—this must, with the intensity of an obsession be your one and constant endeavour.”*

**Sri Anandamayi Ma**

*The Lord dwells in the hearts of all. Who then is His devotee? He who dwells in Him with his whole soul, heart and mind. Such a devotee not only sees God in his own heart and realizes his oneness with Him, but he sees the same Lord in the hearts of all, and serves God in all mankind, knowing His oneness with all. “Love your neighbour as yourself”, because your neighbour is your self.*

**Swami Prabhavananda**  
a disciple of Swami Brahmananda  
(Rakhal Maharaj) who was a direct  
disciple of Sri Ramakrishna

*“You must submit and allow God to do what He pleases with you. Reconcile yourself to the situation in which He places you. Do not try to change it. Do not get disturbed under any circumstances.”*

**Swami Ramdas**

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