



MA in Dacca.

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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SRI SRI MA'S UTTERANCES

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

Question : On some days the mind can concentrate very well at the time of japa and meditation ; but on other days it is completely out of control. Why should this be so ?

Mataji : This may be due to various reasons. There is surely something in your way of living that distracts the mind and prevents it from concentrating at the time set apart for the practice of japa. For instance something you may have eaten or seen or someone whom you have touched or held conversation with—anything like this may have agitated your mind without your being aware of it. This is why I say, if someone wants to advance in *that* direction it is imperative for him to keep away from society and to live in solitude.

In the beginning one must constantly be watchful to avoid everything that may divert one's thoughts away from God. Of course, for those who live in a family it is not possible to shun the company of others. They should, whenever practicable, seek satsang and talk about divine things. By keeping company with saints and sages and by reading about them the mind is purified and this helps to progress in the direction of God.

One's actions of former births also exert their influence. Due to them different moods or tendencies come to the forefront at different times. If one

practises the presence of God by constantly remembering, “whatever work I am doing is His service”, then just as when new leaves sprout on a tree the old ones fall off, so worldly attachments will fade away and the longing for God will grow strong—outer interests will weaken and give way to the search within. This is the natural course of events. Then again, the old leaves that have fallen off provide manure for the tree. So you see, nothing is wasted in the divine economy of things.

* * *

Question : Ma, it is quite impossible to steady the mind. By what expedient can it be made calm ?

Mataji (laughing) : Suppose there is a vessel full of water. So long as it is moved about, the water will also remain in movement. But when the vessel is kept in one place for some time you will notice that the water has become motionless. Similarly try to keep your body quite still for some length of time ; the longer the body can remain perfectly still in one position, the more will the mind calm down. If it is natural for the mind to flit about restlessly, calm and concentration are its nature as well. Endeavour to sit absolutely still for as long as possible, repeating God’s name. And though your mind may wander here and there, don’t relax your efforts. If the mind does not give up its dharma, why should you abandon yours ?

* * *

Question : What is called *samādhi* ?

Mataji : Bābā, I should say the complete resolution or cessation of thought, feeling and action is

guish one seed from another, you perhaps may not know what kind of seed you have received. But if you wholeheartedly take care of it, you will most certainly come to know what kind of seed it was after it will have grown into a tree and developed flowers and fruits. If one has no idea what kind of seed has been put into the earth but provides it with all the nourishment it needs, will it not thrive and develop into a tree? Similarly regardless of who the Guru may be, if you tend the seed in keeping with the prescribed rules, you will surely reap the fruits.

MOTHER'S DARSHAN

Ma Das

MA has Herself said, "The Atma of this body is everyone's Atma."* All around, everywhere, all the time, the manifestation is all of Ma alone. What we have to do is to "look at MA" and not Her garb.

If we do that, we are filled with joyous surprise at what even these three words 'look at MA' reveal. Representing the pleasant emotion by a note of exclamation and the unified vision by unified words 'at' and 'MA' we have :

LOOK ! ATMA

This is Mother's darshan.

*Matri Vani, Vol. II, P. 289.

MĀTRI SATSANG

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

(Translated from Bengali)

(Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata at Kanpur continued)

15th November, 1958

Question : Is there any special reason for observing *Samyam Mahavrata* during the month of Kartika (Oct-Nov.)?

Mataji : The *Samyam Saptaha* has begun, so this body has arrived just like everybody else. Jogibhai will reply to this question. (Mataji had given this name to the late Raja Durga Singh of Solan).

Jogibhai : There is no hard and fast rule for observing *Samyam Saptaha* in the month of Kartika. A few times it was performed in other months as well.

Question : Is there any tradition for *Samyam Saptaha* as laid down by the Rishis ?

Mataji : Only a short while ago the subject of *Samyam Saptaha* has been discussed. An invitation has been received to hold the *Samyam Saptaha* in Calcutta next year. It was also suggested that the *Samyam Saptaha* should once be held in Naimisharanya because in ancient times some 88,000 Rishis had gathered there to perform *Yajñas, Satsang, etc.*

Question : Why is the *Samyam Mahavrata* limited to one week ?

Mataji : Ask Jogibhai to reply !

Jogibhai : When Mataji's birthday was being celebrated in Khanna (Punjab), it was suggested that it would be a good idea to hold a *Samyam Saptaha* once a year in Ma's physical presence so that we could perform our meditation, *jāpa*, *satsang*, etc. in front of Her. When this proposal was put before Mataji She agreed to it. It was decided to limit it to seven days so that it could be carried out without obstacles. If many days at a stretch are devoted to such strenuous tasks, there is danger of obstacles arising. Once at Vindhyachal Ashram *Samyam Vrata* was performed for nine days. So there is no definite rule that it should be restricted to seven days. When *Samyam Saptaha* was performed at Saptarishi Ashram near Hardwar, some people made a request to hold *Samyam Saptaha* twice a year. However once a year appears to be best, as too much of a good thing leads to deterioration of its value.

Mataji : It is also difficult to digest it. This body has come to sit here just like all these Babas. (She points to the Mahātmās all around.)

Question : What is the significance of *Namaskāra* or *Praṇāma* ? What is the underlying meaning ?

Mataji : The pandits will be able to furnish an explanation according to scriptural laws. But this body speaks in a higgledy-piggledy fashion ! Did you not mention yesterday that two days of the *Samyam* had elapsed—so would I now point out the mistakes that had been made ?

First it has to be determined how much time should be devoted to talks on knowledge, how much to devotional subjects and how much to discourses on action. You have come here to practise self-restraint, so why should you concern yourselves with questions as to why discussions

should not be held on subjects like knowledge or action? You are here to learn self-mastery, therefore whatever is provided you should thankfully accept. That is, take in whatever is suitable for you and leave what you cannot assimilate. But what is not helpful in your *sādhana* must not be rejected in antagonism. Just do not listen to what is not congenial to you. However, once a topic has been started, be it on Advaita Vedāntā or on the path of devotion, remain in your place and listen calmly. Furthermore, you should cultivate the feeling, “my own *Iṣṭa* (Divine Beloved) is the world’s *Iṣṭa* and the world’s *Iṣṭa* is my Beloved.” Whatever topic is being expounded, whatever opinion is being expressed, you must understand that it concerns your own *Iṣṭa*, that your Beloved has appeared to you in this guise.

Question : So when other sects are being discussed, we have to engage in our *japa* ?

Mataji : Rather should you listen to it gladly, thinking, “my own *Iṣṭa* is being praised.” *Samyam* means the action in which *Svayam* (He Himself) is present. Another meaning of *Samyam* is He Himself (*Svayam*) in the shape of self-control (*yama*).

My fathers and mothers are amused at the playfulness of their little daughter because she speaks out everything without hesitation, since she is conversing with her own fathers, mothers and friends. *Samyam* is a path leading to the death of death.

And now listen to the explanation of *Namakāra*.¹ “*Yatra jīva tatra Śiva, yatra nārī tatra*

1. By this quotation the fact that the divine aspects of *Śiva* and *Śakti* are present in every human being is expressed.

Gourī.” “Wherever a man is, there is Śiva, and wherever a woman, there is Gourī.” Nobody exists except Hari, none else but Lord Krishna. Call It Śiva, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Mā or Ātmā, it is all One in essence. To think of God as being far away is foolish.¹ You must get rid of this foolishness during *Samyam Vrata*. People read and listen but they have no direct experience (*bodha*). By listening again and again, the thought arises : “From where have I come ? What exactly is God ?” God is nothing finite, God is whole, integral in Himself. God is not far away from us. As soon as you think of Him as being at a distance, there will be distress and hardship. The mahātmās declare that it is God alone who exists everywhere.

Once there was a discussion with Gopinath Kaviraj on the correct manner of performing *Namaskāra*. When this body went through the play of *sādhana*, a definite ritual came about during *namaskāra* which I described to the savant, who confirmed that it tallied with what was written in the *Śāstras*. But let us leave alone what happened to this body. I am now referring to the topic raised by you. I shall tell briefly whatever occurs to me.

When you perform *praṇāma* to God or Guru, you should, while meditating on His form, let your glance wander slowly from His feet upwards to his head. While doing so, either mentally or physically, try to feel that in the act of beholding His feet, God’s *śakti* (power) is flowing into you and

1. A pun on the words *dūra* (far) and *durbuddhi* (foolishness).

transforming you. Slowly, slowly gaze from the feet to the heart and from there to the face so that all His limbs are embraced in your glance. At the same time control your breathing. While inhaling let your eyes wander from the feet to the head. Have *darśana* of His face and fix your eyes on it for as long as you can gaze steadily. Then let your eyes descend from the face to the feet and finally place your head at His feet. The meaning of all this is that just as a vessel is first washed with Ganges water before being filled with it, so by inhaling while doing *praṇāma* you have acquired the capacity to worship God. When you place your head at His feet, feel that His power is flowing from His feet into your head. Then when exhaling during *praṇāma* imagine that you have surrendered your all at His feet. After having done *namaskāra* to God in this manner perform your meditation or *japa* fully. Some people assert that by correctly doing *praṇāma* you become capable of carrying out worship, meditation or *japa*.

I have given the broad outlines of all this but there are many details. Now to another point : the question is sometimes asked, “why should *praṇāma* be performed with the head ? Where is the necessity to do obeisance with the head ?” Consider only an ordinary happening : If some day you don’t get enough sleep, do you not say : “My brain is not working. I am not feeling fit.” In the head lies the root of the whole body. Just as the roots of a tree are under-neath the earth, so are the roots of the body on top of the head. When

the roots of a tree are cut down, it withers away, so also if the head is cut off, the body cannot live. By placing one's head at the Lord's feet there is a transmission of power from His feet. Through this transference of power you will be fulfilled. You will gain whatever can be derived from God's power. Just as electricity flows through the fingers of a human being, so does power flow from the Lord's feet. But performing *namaskāra* your ego will come down. Deposit your ego at the feet of the Guru. Where do you go when you fall asleep? To your own Self, but unconsciously; this is why you are not aware of it.

For what purpose do you execute all your worldly tasks? In order to be happy. But worldly happiness is merely relative. Where happiness is relative, genuine happiness cannot exist. There one is imprisoned in duality which engenders conflict, grief and death. So long as you remain entangled in duality supreme happiness cannot be attained. Not to depend on anything at all gives real, lasting happiness and joy. So place your head where supreme bliss may be obtained. By practising *samyam* in your daily life vanquish death and set out on the pilgrimage towards immortality—that is, on the pilgrimage to the realization of your Self.

It is easy to explain the relationship between form and formlessness. It may be compared to ice and water. What else is ice but water? So meditate as the Guru has instructed you. Surrendering yourself at the Guru's feet become egoless!

Aspire to the unobscured revelation of God. If the recitation of God's name does not appeal to you, at least sit completely still and motionless and think of God's name with each breath. Everyone must practise whatever he or she likes best. Where Rāma is there is ease and well-being, where Rāma is not there is discomfort and disease.

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16th November 1958

Question : Ma, I do not know how to worship, nor do I know any mantras. So please hold my hand and guide me !

Mataji : How can it be ? The Māhatmās have been preaching to you daily. Have you not retained anything ?

Questioner : Ma, please, let us hear your own flute !

Mataji : This body is like a gong. As you sound it so you will hear.

Question : I have heard it said that when Mahātmās used to perform *tapasyā*, God Indra would send his *apsāras* (heavenly nymphs) to tempt them away from their austerity. Is there no Indra nowadays ? Don't these *apsāras* appear to destroy our *tapasyā* ?

Mataji : So you wish to see *apsāras* ? (Everybody laughs.) Everything is still possible, this is of course very true.

Question : When we try to meditate, do bodiless ethereal beings appear ?

Mataji : Both those with bodies and bodiless beings appear. Just now there is no *kheyāla* to speak on this subject. But something has to be said : Wherever God is talked about or His name

is sung, it is definitely a fact that God Himself is present. Those whose eyes have been opened can behold.

Question : This is all assumption. Please tell us about what can be perceived directly !

Mataji : Those who have no wish to see speak of assumption. This is of course true.

Question : Is it perceptible to the eye ?

Mataji : There is no *kheyāla* at the moment to pursue this subject. But it cannot be said that nothing at all has happened.

Questioner : So please tell us to-morrow !

Mataji : Then you will have to ask me again.

Make an effort to behold God. It is His nature not to remain invisible. But one must have eyes to see. All and everything are God's forms. Everything is proceeding according to plan, like a machine. Is he not actually visible in all this ? Is your desire to behold him genuine ?

Questioner : Certainly.

Mataji : What is the sign for real longing ? "Without God I cannot possibly live !" Have you arrived at such a state ? Certainly not.

Questioner : You make everything seem more complicated.

Mataji : You are His offspring, His server. God is in fact eternally visible. But he cannot be seen because there is a curtain between Him and us. Just as you teach your child until he grows up. You bring him up in such a way that he should not waste his inheritance on coming of age but preserve it carefully. Similarly you must also

teach him to keep away from sin and to think of God. What is God ? What is the significance of *samyam* ? God plays with his own *māyā*. What is God's dispensation ? See how, when you have not found Him, you are utterly restless for Him ! In God's empire He is also present in the shape of yearning for Him. If one is single-minded in one's life of self-mastery, God will certainly be realized. Therefore continue with your spiritual practices and do not concern yourselves with the results. God's causeless grace is always at work. Don't get entangled in sense objects. *Viṣaya* (sense object) means *viṣ*—poison ! If one takes poison one dies and the poison of sense objects is slow poison. Sense enjoyment leads to death. Why should you, the immortal Self, the offspring of the Immortal, proceed in the direction of certain death ?

Originally you were one, later you became two and from the two you have become five or ten. Taking all your burdens on your shoulders, continue steadily your *sādhana* for spiritual wealth and thus attain to your real inheritance. A *samnyāsī* is also called Mahārāj or Swamiji. Swamiji means *swayam ami*—the Self am I.

Question : If God can be realized by our own efforts, what then is the necessity of your presence ?

Mataji : From where does this question arise ? You have not reached that stage. You are engaged in worldly business. That is why you speak in this fashion. So long as there is finiteness your burdens will remain heavy. The sense of "mine and yours" causes the burdens. You must either see

everything as "I" or surrender everything to the "you."

Questioner : Please make us do it !

Mataji : All these are my fathers and mothers. Since He has appeared in the guise of desire, He will surely also manifest as fulfilment. The pilgrimage to the realization of God has commenced.

Question : It is you who are actuating this.

Mataji : It is you yourselves. To realize your own Self you are yourself striving. Enjoyment or fate—God is Himself fate, it is He who apportions destiny.

Question : How should we meditate ?

Mataji : Exactly according to your Guru's instructions.

Questioner : You are the Guru !

Mataji : I am only a little girl—for all times a little girl ! You have placed the little girl on a high pedestal.

Question : I want to learn which *sādhana* to adopt.

Mataji : How does the breath make its exit at the time of death ? It is the Guru who teaches *sādhana*. The breath leaves your body through the *sahasra* on top of the head. It can also emerge from the eyes or the nose.

Once upon a time two yogis got together. This is a tale about yogis. The two yogis started exhibiting their yogic skills to each other. The first one tried to cut off the other one's hands with his sword, which did not even touch. The other one

then struck the farmer with his sword but his body remained unchanged. Such a body is called "*Vajradeho*" (i.e. as strong as the sword of Indra). Yogis say that the last breath can leave the body by any exit. No two human beings are alike. Even two leaves or flowers are not exactly the same. Each one is born with his own particular tendencies. This is why this kind of body is called "*bhogadeho*" i.e. a body for experiencing joys and sorrows "*Deho*" (body) means "*deo, deo*" (give, give!) in other words, continuous wanting. So long as there is identification with the body the sense of want can never be stilled. When God will be revealed then the sense of want will be blotted out. God is one, but the paths leading to the realisation of Him are manifold. Just as all of you have come here from your homes along different routes, while here you are assembled in one place. Similarly human beings pursue various paths towards God, each to his or her own liking, but all of them have to reach God.

The question you asked, how to practise *sādhana*, has to be dealt with in private. As you play the instrument so you will hear the sound. This body never says : "I shall do it."

TEN APHORISMS OF MA AS UNDERSTOOD BY ME

Anil Ganguli

(*Continued from the last issue*)

Let me now place before the reader some other aphorisms of Ma for the guidance of the common man preoccupied with worldly duties and lacking the time and opportunity necessary for spiritual pursuits.

Sixth Aphorism

“*Ulat jāo*” (Take an about turn)

Ma’s teaching is : Turn yourself from things worldly towards a target which is beyond the world. We are suffering from a chronic malady of a serious type called *bhava roga*, a dangerous symptom of which comprises clinging to things of the world. Indeed, the world is too much with us. *Ulat jāo* is Ma’s radical prescription for complete cure of that fell disease. She lays emphasis on a drastic revolution in our views and attitude from worldliness to inwardness, from material prosperity to spiritual attainment, from man-centredness to God-centredness. In short, *Ulat jāo* is Ma’s positive directive for complete transformation of the spiritual aspirant from pleasure of the flesh to *Ānandam* of Being.

What is it that stands in the way of our tasting such *ānanda*? Ma’s answer is : “*Do mé dukh*” (In duality lies the root of sorrow). “To perceive

duality means pain, conflict, struggle and death.” She has also observed : “Where the *Brahman* is, the One-without-a-second, nothing else can possibly exist. You separate duality from non-duality, because you are identified with the body, which means you are in a condition of constant wanting”.

The question naturally arises : How to find the One ? Ma’s answer is : “It is by crying and pining for Him that the One is found. In times of adversity and distress as well as in times of well-being and good fortune, try to seek refuge in the One alone. Keep in mind : whatever He—the All-beneficent, the fountain of Goodness—does, is for the best”.

Seventh Aphorism

“*Hāte kāma mukhé nāma*”

(Work with your hands and repeat the name
of God with your mouth)

Ma does not necessarily ask the spiritual aspirant to turn away from his worldly commitments or to renounce the world. In fact, action cannot and need not, be avoided. This aphorism only recognizes the principle laid down in the *Gita* that we cannot live for a moment without work. “Verily, no one can remain, even for a moment, without doing work... everyone is made to work, by the impulses of nature, in spite of himself”¹ and “Even the bare maintenance of your physical life will not be possible if you remain inactive”.² In

1. *Gita* III/5

2. *Gita* III/8

its concluding chapter The *Gita* emphatically declares : "It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to abstain from work altogether."¹

So work we must. But work usually leads to bondage. Hence the antidote prescribed by Ma—work with the hand should be invariably accompanied by repetition of God's name with one's mouth. God's name says Ma, is God Himself. His *Nāma* acts both as a curative and preventive of the disease known as bondage, usually a concomitant of action, as stated above. Constant remembrance of God, through repetition of His Name, turns work into worship and ensures deliverance from attachment to things of the world.

Let me quote some of Ma's sayings for elucidation of the aphorism "*Hāte kāma mukhē nāma*" :

"By whatever Name you may invoke Him, your effort will be crowned with success. The main thing is to cling to the Name with constancy."²

"Whenever you possibly can, sustain the flow of a sacred Name. To repeat His Name is to be in His presence. If you associate with the Supreme Friend, He will reveal His true being to you."³

"The Name and the Named are identical ; for He Himself appears as Name. If the Name that appeals most to a person is constantly repeated,

1. *Gita* XVIII/II

2. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 184, No. 246

3. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 188, No. 251

one arrives at the realization that all names are His Names, all forms His Forms. Furthermore, that He is without name and form will also by and by come to light.”¹

“Endeavour at all times, to remain merged, plunged in the Name. Solely for the sake of God must His Name be repeated.”²

Eighth Aphorism

“*Ek niswāsar viswās néi*”

(One can't be sure of the next breath)

This aphorism is supplementary to the preceding one. It pointedly reminds us that in the midst of life we are in death and, therefore, we must not allow a single moment to be wasted. Breath is the symbol of life which is so transitory ; indeed, one cannot be too sure that the present breath would not be the last one.

It has been laid down that practice of religion must be based on the conviction that death has caught the spiritual aspirant by the forelock. The consequence of departing from this world without preparing one's self for the next has been mentioned in the *Isopanishad* as follows :

“Whosoever slay the Self, departing hence, goes to demoniac worlds, enveloped in blinding darkness.”³

1. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 192, No. 256

2. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 196, No. 263

3. *Isopanishad* 3

Here is Ma's word of caution and sage counsel :
 "The day that is gone returns not. To be a human being means to be Self-aware. Do not squander invaluable time. Beware of becoming a 'Self-murderer' ; realize that you are none other than the immortal Self."¹

The seventh aphorism ("Work with your hands and repeat the name of God with your mouth") and the eighth aphorism ("One can't be sure of the next breath"), if steadfastly observed, give priceless reward. Thus, Lord Krishna has given this assurance to Arjuna :

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः
 तस्याहं सुलभ पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः

"He who constantly thinketh upon Me, not thinking ever of another, of him I am easily reached...."

Ninth Aphorism

"Tapasyā māne tāpa sahā"

"*Tapasyā*" is austerity. "*Tāpa*" meaning "heat", is a symbol of suffering. Let me try to explain the metaphorical meaning of "*tāpa*" as I have understood it—it seems to stand for the trials and tribulations inevitable in the storm-tossed sea of life. For every individual there are in store some spells of distressing rain, some dreary days of

1. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, pages 61-62, No. 80

unbearable heat. “*Tapasyā*” consists in facing these eventualities with patience and fortitude and with one’s heart fixed on the goal.

Let me quote one of Ma’s sayings on “*tapasyā*” : “The kingdom of God is a whole, and unless you are admitted to the whole of it you cannot remain content. He grants you just a little, only to keep your discontent alive, for without discontent there can be no progress. You, as a scion of the Immortal, can never become reconciled to the realm of death, neither does God allow you to remain in it. He Himself kindles the sense of want in you by granting you a small thing, only to whet your appetite for a greater one. This is His method by which He urges you on. The traveller on this path finds it difficult and feels troubled, but one who has eyes to see can clearly perceive that the pilgrim is advancing. The distress that is experienced burns to ashes all pleasures derived from worldly things. This is what is called *tapasyā*. What obstructs one on the spiritual path bears within itself seeds of future suffering. Yet the heart ache, the anguish over the effects of these obstructions, are the beginning of an awakening to Consciousness.”¹

To a weak *sādhaka* suffering is usually a stumbling block ; to a strong one it may be a veritable stepping stone leading to a higher level. Most people are overwhelmed by suffering, some face

1. *Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma*, p. 15

it with fortitude, only a fortunate few can turn it into an asset.

The philosophy of suffering, as understood by me in the light of Ma's sayings and the Scriptures seems to be a panacea for all ills if we can live up to it. The starting point of such a philosophy is that our so-called suffering is the creation, not of God, but of man. For a *sādhaka* who can lift his mind above all things worldly, suffering ceases to have its pinch. One who cannot, has to remember that what he feels as suffering is due to his *prārabdha karma* (results of past actions which cannot be averted). What cannot be cured must be endured. This is a poor consolation for the *sādhaka* who has not seen the light. In most cases he helplessly suffers misery but with bitterness in his sub-conscious mind. Ma teaches that suffering, however unbearable, is nothing but God's gift. She goes a step further—suffering is not only a gift of God but God Himself in this particular guise, because there is nothing—there can be nothing—which is apart from God. This philosophy may be too high for ordinary men for whom Ma has a sweet message, put in an interrogatory form, which soothes all who are heavy-laden and grief-stricken. “Why do you,” She asks, “unnecessarily choose to bear the burden which He bears on your behalf?” This challenge from Ma puts the *sādhaka* to enquiry. If he is alert, he starts self-searching; if he is introspective, he realizes that the root of his suffering is his ignorance of the fact that God is always there to relieve

him of all his burdens. Then he discovers that all his life he has behaved like a foolish passenger in a moving train who carried his luggage on his head because he feared that the railway might carry him to his destination minus his luggage. The upshot is this : suffering proves to be a burden only if we lack faith in God.

Tenth Aphorism

Jā hoye jay (Let what happens happen)

Apart from the literal meaning of "*Jā hoye jay*" mentioned above, it appears from Anandamayi literature that the implication of this aphorism has been variously expressed in English as :

- (1) "Events take their own course"
- (2) "Come what may" and
- (3) "Whatever happens is equally welcome."

Each of these three versions brings out some aspect of the Bengali text which has a profound message, covering all those aspects and conveying something more.

First version : "Events take their own course" means that what is destined to happen cannot but take place, and the pronoun 'their course' implies that events occur according to some course or plan which cannot be stopped nor altered by us. It is God's will that always prevails ; not ours. To quote Ma : "God is not your order-supplier."

Jā hoye jay in the sense that events are controlled not by man but by God is supported by the *Gita* :

“The Lord,” observed Lord Krishna, “dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings, by His *māyā* to revolve, (as if) mounted on a machine”¹ Radha Krishnan’s commentary on this saying in the *Gita* is quoted below. It sheds light on Ma’s aphorism under discussion.

“The power that determines events is not a blind, unfeeling, unthinking will to which we give the name ‘Fate’, ‘Destiny’ or ‘Chance.’” The Spirit that rules the cosmos, the Lord who presides over the evolution of the cosmic plan, is seated also in the heart of every being and will not let him rest. The Supreme is the inmost Self of our existence. All life is a movement of the rhythm of His life and our powers and acts are all derived from Him. If, in our ignorance, we forget this deepest truth, the truth does not alter. If we live consciously in His truth, we will resign all actions to God and escape our ego. If we do not, even then the truth will prevail. Sooner or later we shall yield to the purpose of God but in the meanwhile there is no compulsion. The Supreme desires our free co-operation when beauty and goodness are born without travail and effortlessly. When we become transparent media for the light of God He uses us for Work.”²

Thus, it is our ego that makes us blind to the fact that events take their course according to God’s plan at His pleasure. It misleads us to

1. *Gita*, XVIII/61.

2. *Bhagavad Gita*, edited by S. Radha Krishnan, P. 374.

believe that actions are done by us. Lord Krishna gave Arjuna a warning : "He whose soul is bewildered by the self-sense, thinks 'I am the doer'."¹

Second version : "come what may." With reference to events that happen, the first version of *Jā hoye jay* mentioned above seems to lay emphasis on their inevitability at the instance of God ; the second on the attitude prescribed for the *sādhaka*, that is to say, it enjoins the *sādhaka* to remain unperturbed by the course of events, whatever these happen to be.

Jā hoye jay, understood in the second sense, may be treated as a commentary in a nutshell, on *Sthita prajña* and *karma yoga*. Thus, it is the quintessence of the following principles elaborated by Lord Krishna in the second chapter of the *Gita*.

(a) He whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrow and is free from eager desire amid pleasures, he from whom passion, fear and anger have passed away, he is called a *sthita prajña* (of settled intelligence).

(b) He who is without attachment of any side, who does neither rejoice nor feel dejected at good or evil, is well poised in wisdom.

(c) Fruits of action should not be desired, nor should you be attached to inaction.

(d) Fixed in Yoga, do thy work, abandoning attachment with an even mind in success and failure.

A *sādhaka* relying on the first version of *Jā hoye jay* knows that there is no escape from undesirable

1. *Bhagavad Gita*, III/27.

events and helplessly puts up with them. His surrender to Divine Dispensation seems to be passive. It has every chance of being accompanied by bitterness. After all, he has a negative attitude which gives him light but not necessarily joy. Ma's aphorisms invariably combine light with delight. Judged by this standard, the third version of *Jā hoye jay* most effectively brings out the spirit of the Bengali aphorism welling out of Ma's mouth.

Third version : "Whatever happens is equally welcome." Why should we welcome everything that happens ? Because whatever happens in life or in the world has the sanction of God's Will and secondly, God's Will is strictly in accordance with the demands of justice, and truly auspicious.

Let me quote Ma on this subject :

"Perfect resignation gives the deepest joy of all. Accept it as your sole resource. Whatever God does at any time is wholly benign. If you can bear this in mind you will be at peace."¹

"In everything and in everybody is but the One Himself. Try to be constantly aware of the fact that whatever is perceived at any time, in whatever way, are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being."²

Questioner : It is said that God is all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful. Why then does He allow so much sorrow and grief to continue in the world that is His creation ? If He were all-

1. *Matri Vani*, Vol. I, No. 21.

2. *Matri Vani*, Vol. I, No. 121.

knowing and all-loving, but not all-powerful, one could understand, or if He were all-loving and all-powerful but not all-knowing ; or even if He were all-knowing and all-powerful but not all-loving. How can He be endowed with all these three attributes and inspite of it let the misery of the world run its course ?

Ma : Everyone has to reap the fruit of his actions. The suffering is for your own best. A mother occasionally gives a slap to her beloved child for his own good, in order to keep him on the right path. God cleanses you by what you call suffering from the effects of your actions committed life after life. When a fond mother gives her baby a bath, the child may scream desperately, but the mother will not let the baby go until she has thoroughly washed and scrubbed him. Then she will carefully wipe the child, dry his tears and take him on her lap. Likewise, when you have been cleansed, God will comfort you and take you into His arms. Whatever happens in this world is His *Līlā*, His pleasure.

Questioner : Pleasure at our misery ? Where then is love ?

Ma : Who is it that loves and who that suffers ? He alone stages a play with Himself ; who exists save Him ? The individual suffers because he perceives duality. *Duniya* means *du-niya* (based on duality) and it is duality which causes all sorrow and grief. Find the one everywhere and in everything and there will be an end to pain and suffering.

The enigmatic aphorism, *Jā hoye jay*, appears to be the most wonderful among those often repeated by Ma. It is constantly illustrated in Her outer manifestation from day to day. Thus, the truth underlying *Jā hoye jay* is taught by Ma not only by precept but also by example. She has formulated the principle in Her characteristic telegraphic style and has given practical demonstration thereof in all spheres. The aphorism applies equally to all matters big and small. Incidentally, to Ma nothing is too big and nothing too small.

Jā hoye jay, faithfully followed, bridges the gulf between God and man and gives the latter a taste of other-worldliness in the midst of his worldly life.

“The whole essence of the spiritual life consists in recognizing the designs of God for us at the present moment. All reading that is chosen by us apart from God’s designs is harmful to us ; the designs and will of God are the grace which works in the depths of our hearts through the books we read as through everything else we do.

Apart from God, books are merely useless externals, and being devoid for us of the life-giving power of God’s plan they succeed only in emptying the heart by the very satisfaction which they give to the mind.”

—*Jean Pierre de Caussade*

MA—OUR REAL SELF

Ma Das

1. *For the Select Few*

The ONE who always is,
Indeed, with us, is MOTHER ;
She dwells within our hearts,
And no one lives without Her.

Not apart from us is MA,
Nowhere goes She either.
See Her, yes ; Tho'search Her not,
For none there is beside Her.

But whom to see when none's there ?
Only MA—the blissful Seer ;
She sees Herself, in fact, alone,
On land, in sea and air.

Then where're you and where we,
When all is limitless light ?
Nought exists as ever separate,
Anywhere, day or night.

Forget all ; it's all illusion,
What is heard and what is seen.
Tranquil be, for MA—the ONE,
Is in thy heart, unheard, unseen.

Love MA in the quest of ONE,
Renounce desire, self and pelf ;
Illusion gone, now see and hear
Everywhere, MA—Thy Self.

2. *For us Common People*

But hard it is to give-up self,
And have no thought of any self ;
I love MA and love Her well,
And with pleasure, this I tell.

Any hope for one like me,
MA and only MA to see,
All the time, everywhere,
Within, without, here, there ?

O yes, there is another way,
Since love's there, as you say ;
For, love is the key,
To unravel mystery.

No doubt they say and rightly too.
That what we see is all illusion ;
We can never see MA here,
She is beyond worldly vision.

But also true that none exists,
Apart from blissful MOTHER,
MA and MA alone is here,
Whom we see and whom we hear.

MOTHER DIVINE, in playful mood,
In disguise, in million ways,
Is calling us in colourful plenty,
Without exception all our days.

3. *Our Sādhanā*

The call comes from every corner,
In disguise and many a guise.
All is MA and all is Her's,
Let's not fail to recognize.

ONENESS see with eyes of heart,
 Morning, noon and night ;
 Friendly be with one and all,
 On thy left and on thy right.

In every form, in fact, is She,
 Serve Her ever tenderly.
 Demolish thoughts of high and low,
 And seeds of loving action sow.

Remember MA unceasingly,
 In thy heart adoringly.
 Repeat Her NAME, for Name is She,
 Our Lord and Master, conscious be.

NAME alone is everything,
 We are Zero—we're nothing.
 MA commands, let's obey,
 The part She wants, let's play.

Let's surrender to Her will,
 Feeling absolutely nil,
 Seeking Her compassionate grace,
 To behold Her cosmic face.

4. *Revelation*

Moved by our faithfulness
 To NAME, and one-pointedness,
 MA's grace'll finish 'I-ness',
 All attachments, all the 'My-ness'.

With veil removed, we shall find,
 The source of all, 'Ma Das', behind
 Our mind and flesh and blood and bone,
 Our Real Self—our MA, our own.

MĀTRI LĪLĀ IN MY HUMBLE LIFE

Abani Mohan Sharma

(Continued from the last issue)

(Translated from Bengali)

Yesterday it was decided that Sri Ma along with Her companions would spend the day at Srimad Dwarkanath Tapasvi's Ashram at Nihalpara on the western side of the Ganga. Later in the evening She would catch the train from Khagrahat Railway Station, crossing Howrah to reach Jamshedpur the next day.

Early next morning at seven, arrangements were made for having Sri Ma's photos taken. The best photographer of Bahrapur, Sri Vibhuti Bhushan Mallick, had come and began setting his camera. Dangling Her holy feet Ma sat on Her *āsana* in a sober mood. Sri Vibhuti said imploringly, "Ma, please smile!" Ma replied: "Father, show this little girl how to smile." So saying She again put on a sober face. Anyway, Vibhuti Babu took some snaps, some of Her alone and others in a group with Her devotees. Now that it was about eight o'clock and since the members of Sadhubaba's Ashram were becoming restless, constantly requesting Pitaji and Bhaiji to take Sri Ma to their ashram, She started for Her destination without further delay.

Having traversed half a furlong of straight road that led to the farm gate, She along with Her companions was about to board the horse-carriage which stood on the main road, when my own mother, wife and children were heard to cry loudly. My two eldest daughters started calling out to Sri Ma, weeping desolately. Anyway, later at about eleven, I escorted them to Ma's presence.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, She was sitting on the ashram veranda, surrounded by Her devotees. Just at this time one of sādhu-baba's devotees, Dr. Pande, with his wife and grand-child were crossing the river in an open boat. As the boat reached mid-stream, Sri Ma suddenly exclaimed: "Look! The boat is capsizing." Actually the water in the river was not very deep, so Dr Pande stood in the water, picking up the child from the water. He and his wife crossed the river in their wet clothes and came to Sri Ma, *praṇāming* to Her. They shed tears of gratitude. Ma said: "God has saved you today! Father, yesterday when you were requesting me to visit your ashram, a picture of your impending danger appeared before my vision, so some such words came from my mouth: "We have met everyone here, so why arrange to cross the Ganga again?" All were thunder-struck to hear the World-mother speak thus.

In the evening kirtan began. Ma sat as usual. Akhandanandaji was staying in the next room. There was a huge gathering around Sri Ma. Bhaji, Bhramara, Babydi and myself were sitting

in a comparatively shady corner. While enjoying the kirtan, we were also drinking in the bliss of Sri Ma's presence. Suddenly my seven years old daughter came running to tell me : "Father, come quickly, there is a light coming out of Jai Ma's forehead." So saying she ran back to Mataji. I stared at my child, overcome with joy at the good fortune of this child, who was lucky enough to have this divine vision.

Now that it was eleven in the night, Ma along with Her companions and disciples came to Khagraghat Road station and started on Her journey to Howrah. Silently, with sad hearts and tearful eyes we returned. The next day photographer Sri Vibhuti Babu came to me in a dejected mood, complaining : "Brother, why did your divine mother put me in such a sorry plight? Within the last so many years of photographic experience such a strange thing has never happened to me. I find that the photo plates of Her which I took have retained only a shadow in them instead of Her image." On hearing this I felt disappointed as I had hoped to get a good photograph of Sri Ma for my daily pūjā, Unfortunately, due to some karma this holy intention remained unfulfilled. Vibhuti Babu then consoled me by promising to take out Sri Ma's picture from the group photo which had come out nicely and give it to me. Next day he did so. Though it did not satisfy me wholly, I used it for my pūjā.

In the year 1935, Holy Mother's birth-date fell on the 19th Vaisakh. I felt an urge to collect Her

devotees from the near vicinity such as Bahrapur, Murshidabad, Lalbagh, Nasipur, etc. to celebrate the holy advent to the best of my ability. I still did not feel satisfied with the picture of Sri Ma which I had on my altar. But wonderful is Her kindness. While I was working in my office, the peon came and handed me a registered parcel, 2×2 feet in size. The sender's name, Sri Sashibhushan Das Gupta, photographer of Chittagong, was on the packet. Eagerly I opened it and found an enchanting and unique liking of Sri Ma. (A copy of this has been enlarged and hung up on the wall of Sri Annapurna Devi temple behind the throne of Mother Annapurna). I was overcome with joy to find that my Mother, the knower of my innermost desire to possess a good photo of Her—in Her extreme graciousness fulfilled my wish in this extraordinary manner. Sashibabu and myself belong to the same village. I had earned his love from my childhood. He was also a near relative of Bhaiji. He had learnt from Bhaiji that two months ago Sri Ma had graciously visited Bahrapur at my earnest request, two days after I received the photo.

On the 19th of Vaisakh, the holy day of Sri Ma's birth, I received his letter. This was his first letter to me; previously there had been no correspondence between us. He wrote: "Brother, I learn that you have taken refuge at the lotus feet of Sri Anandamayi Ma. A few years ago Sri Ma had also drawn me into Her shelter. I guessed that you would surely celebrate Her birthday, so I sent

you a copy of Her photograph. In future I shall send you card-size copies of all the photos that I have taken of Her, so that your puja-room may be well decorated." I regret to say that a short year after Bhaiji had given up his mortal frame at the feet of Sri Ma, this friend of mine also left his body.

As in the case of Vibhuti Babu when he tried to take Mataji's photos, a similar complication had also arisen with Sashibabu's attempts. This has been mentioned in Bhaiji's book "Matri Darshan". I pay my homage to his memory with this incident.

After Sri Ma left for Her destination, Sri Brojen Bagchi came to me and said : "Brother, I feel that since Ma's *daršana* my life has been blessed. Ma, by my Guru's grace, understood my heart's intense desire to have Her *daršana* and She gave me full satisfaction. What better luck can one have ?"

In my incoherent language I here end my narrative of Sri Ma's first visit. Later She visited Bahrapur on five occasions and named the place 'Brahmapur'.

"Where are you searching for God, leaving aside what is right in front of you in many forms. He who loves others, that man serves God."

—Swami Vivekananda

YOUR QUEST*

Swami Ramdas

What is your quest ? Peace and bliss.

God is eternal peace and bliss. Think of Him, meditate on Him, surrender yourself to Him, and you will realise Him within your own heart : there you will attain everlasting peace and bliss. Seek not this peace and bliss in the objects of the senses ; if you do, you will only be inviting care and pain and misery.

Your happiness or misery depend upon yourself, upon the state of your mind, and not upon your external conditions or circumstances. When your mind, impelled by desires, flits from object to object, craving for possessions and enjoyments, it lives in a state of restlessness, which itself is a misery. After possession of the object come cares and anxieties ; after its loss follow grief and pain. The small amount of happiness you derive here is like a tiny flickering light in a thick, vast mass of darkness : it dies out in a moment, only to envelop you in a worse enthralling gloom. Know this, that the object you crave for is perishable and transient in itself. How then can lasting peace be derived from it ? Hence, when the mind wanders in the midst of this ever-changing, impermanent medley of forms and things, it experiences nothing but pain and sorrow. Now, then, direct your vision inward and behold God within, that eternal seat of all peace and bliss.

*Reprinted from "The Vision", Vol. 48, No. 10, (July 1981).

Stop all the desultory activities of the mind and concentrate it upon Him. There you attain peace and bliss that never fade. Reach Him through love. He is at once peace, bliss and love. Love Him with all your heart and soul, and, thereby, direct your otherwise restless mind to Him. As it wavers, rein it in and firmly fix it on Him. Let all your emotions be worked up, to attain Him. Plead, pray, appeal, cry and weep and finally surrender yourself to Him, until you become one with Him, until you realise Him. He is eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing Truth. To realise Him is to become *immortal*, i.e. not only to enjoy immortal bliss and peace but also immortal power and knowledge. That is your goal. Then you will discover that the whole universe you see is only the manifestation of the grand Truth you have realised within yourself. Through love you then reach all and become one with all, or in tune with the universe.

Your life is now blessed indeed ! You swim in the very ocean of peace and joy. You live, move and have your being in God. Sin cannot touch you, pain cannot affect you, no outward condition or circumstance can ruffle you. Your knowledge (really ignorance) that you are the body has vanished. You are the immortal soul, ever free, over blissful and free from all pairs of opposites and the three qualities and free from all passions. Divine Knowledge has now rent asunder the veil of ignorance that hitherto clouded your soul. You are ever free—free, eternal God.

SRI SAMARTHA RAMADASA SWAMI AND HIS CODE FOR DEVOTEES

Dr. T. Sreenivasan Ramadasa & Anandalata Pandit

Sri Swami Samartha Ramadasa, who left his earthly abode almost three hundred years ago, in 1682, is looked upon by many as an *avatāra* of Sri Hanuman—especially in Maharashtra and in the South. Not only was he a great spiritual guide and guru, possessing extraordinary learning, but also one who understood the need of the time. He was, besides, endowed with great political insight, and it was due to his grace that the great national hero, Chhatrapati Shivaji, was able to vanquish the Moghul might and establish his vast kingdom—thus accomplishing a task that had seemed impossible to many.

Sri Swami Samartha was born in a village near Aurangabad in April 1609, on Rama Navami day and was named 'Nārāyana' by his parents. It is said that when he was barely seven years old, he had Hanumanji's *darśana*. Not only did Hanumanji appear himself, he also enabled the young Narayana to have Sri Rama's *darśana*! It is believed that Sri Hanuman gave Narayana his *dīkṣā* and mantra, and Sri Rama Himself changed his name to that of Ramadasa.

Sri Samartha left his home at the age of twelve and performed intense *tapasyā* for the following twelve years. Standing upto his waist in the waters of the Godavari, he used to perform two thousand *Surya Namaskāras* every day. He repeated the “*nāma mahimai*” Rama mantra of श्री र.म, जै राम, जै जै राम (Om ! Sri Rāma, Jaya Rāma, Jaya Jaya Rāma)—the mantra which gives *Ātma Balam*, *Mano Balam* and *Buddhi Balam*¹)—thirteen crores of times. This rigorous discipline had given Sri Samartha remarkable powers of the mind, and his body glowed with an inner light.

After this period of *tapasyā*, Sri Swami Samartha travelled widely. He visited all the sacred shrines of the north as well as of the south, and was able to study and understand the pitiable condition of the people and of the Sanatana Dharma, under foreign domination. For the uplift of his country, and to keep its ancient and glorious Dharma alive, Sri Samartha taught the importance of practical religion—a religion covering all aspects of man’s life, personal, social and national. Sri Samartha’s own life was a practical demonstration of what he taught, so much so, that his very name became a guide to the people, and his life, the ideal of *sādhakas*. In order to keep the spirit of our ancient and glorious religion alive, Sri Samartha Swamiji started, in a grand manner, the nine-day celebration of Rama Navami—Sri Rama’s birthday in the Maruti temple. He made it into a group function and a universal

1. Strength of soul, mind and intelligence.

festival, and it is due to him that Rama Navami is celebrated with so much devotion every year.

Sri Samartha's goal in life was to practise *Rāma Nāma*. He lived in Rāma, with Rāma, for Rāma, to the very end, and had already demonstrated, through his own direct experience, that the Lord's *darśana* was possible through *Nāma Japa* itself; that the *Nāma* mantra, whether thought of, meditated upon, or sung, could relieve man of all his worry and anxiety. For, it is a well-known belief that Sri Hanuman has himself vowed to protect all who have Rama's name on their lips or in their hearts. Hanuman is also the embodiment of obedience, perfect self-control, devotion and self-less service. Swamiji had inherited all these qualities, thus proving himself to be a true incarnation of Lord Hanuman.

At the instigation of Sant Tukaramji, Samartha Swami Ramadasa became the spiritual preceptor of Chhatrapati Shivaji and gave him his initiation in 1649 A.D. It was Sri Samartha who inspired Shivaji to work for India's solidarity and unity, from the North to Cape Comorin, and to save it from the clutches of foreigners. To instil moral courage into their soldiers, Hindu leaders, who fought from time to time for the freedom of the country, adopted the well-known slogans of "*Jai Bajarangi*" ! and "*Hara Hara Mahadev*" as their battle-cry. Sri Samartha, who was the *Ātmā* Guru not only of Shivaji the Great, but of many other devotees too, may thus well be regarded as the *Rashtra Guru*, the Saint-Saviour of India in the

17th century, and the founder of modern, free India.

Sri Samartha Swamiji contributed many invaluable writings—both in Sanskrit and in Marathi—to the spiritual literature of the world. *Sri Dasabodham*, *Atmaramam*, *Manacha Slokam*, *Karunashatakam*, *Rama Mantra Slokam* and *Sri Bheema Roopi Stotram* are but a few of his numerous works. The '*Dasabodha*' is the greatest of these and is in some respects like the Bhagavad Gita—which contains teachings suited to all men, notwithstanding their varying levels of attainment. The *Dasabodha* is treated by the Hindus with the same reverence as the Bhagavad Gita.

The *Dasabodha* is a collection of Sri Samartha's extempore discourses, and consists of twenty *dasakas*, each *dasaka* being further subdivided into ten *Samasas*. These two hundred *Samasas* which make up the book are like two hundred independent lectures. In them Sri Samartha deals with the principles of *Swami Śāstra* and *Vedanta Śāstra*, at times as *siddhanta* or established truth, and at times as dialogues between disciple and master. In the *Dasabodha* Swamiji has dealt with complex problem concerning *prapancha*, and *paramārtha* with clear, forceful and well-tryed arguments and yet with such simplicity and lucidity that few other writings can compare with it.

Religion and Politics

1. (For the people to remain united) first and foremost come the worship of the almighty Lord,

and spiritual understanding ; next comes the observance of correct political conduct ; and next constant alertness in all matters.

(Dasabodha 11.5.4)

2. One should be always attentive to all matters relating to Godly things and to spiritual knowledge. One should also understand political problems clearly. Unless matters are seen in their proper perspective, everything is fruitless.

(Dasabodha 12.2.29)

3. Wicked persons should be sought out but on no account be exposed and humiliated. They should, on the other hand, be praised even more than those who are good.

4. Our life should be infused into the lives of others ; our soul must mingle with the souls of others : their hearts should be the object of our constant contemplation.

(Dasabodha 15.1.5)

5. No reward is own without hardship, no kingdom without labour : little is ever achieved without effort.

(Dasabodha 18.7.3)

6. We must be happy in the happiness of others, and pained at their sorrow. We should win over all human beings to our side by sweet, truthful words.

(Dasabodha 12.10.7)

7. Call not a mad man mad: expose no secrets. This alone will help to justify your position as *Mahanta*.

(Dasabodha 13.10.26)

Let me ever be in communion with Thee. In Thy divine service may my life end. Forsake me not, O Gracious Lord! O *Raghu nāyaka*, grant me this favour.

Family-life and day-to-day living :

As regards family, Sri Swamiji says that one should have "not a purely selfish family outlook, but one of universal love and service."

And about man's day-to-day living, he says :

"Mature thoughts and practical wisdom, hard work and an active life are required."

"Work hard yourself and do not be lazy. Do not leave it to others to act with due regard for morality and justice, to fear God and listen to the voice of conscience."

"Give the greatest respect to parents and elders, and do not be jealous of or full of hatred for anybody."

"Give absolute obedience and loyalty to God and to the Guru."

"Respect all but worship only the One."

"Listen to all but follow only the One."

"To revere the Guru and worship him with flowers is undoubtedly good, but it is far, far better to follow his teachings, obey his orders, and spread his message to one and all."

It is evident from the above that Sri Samartha stressed the importance of personal, spiritual discipline as much as of moral, social, lingual, community and regional discipline for the integration of the nation. An alert awareness of one's duties, a consciousness of selfless service, a well-integrated life, are most important for both spiritual and material welfare.

Many scintillating *Acharyas* on the spiritual front, and many brilliant leaders—such as Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhiji, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Radhakrishnan and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru—on the national front, have served as twin beacons of light to guide our country on its path. Once again, their light, their supreme values, are the need of the hour. May the sterling values set before us by Sri Samartha Swami Ramadasa, his graciousness, guide us in all respects and earn for us all the blessings of Bhagvan Sri Rama and of Hanuman.

More than five decades ago, Swami V. K. Panthulu Adarsha Ramadasi established the Sri Rama Samartha Premi Mandal at Madras for Indian solidarity and unity, and became an ardent devotee of *Dharmasamsīlāpaka Avaiārapuruṣa*, *Lokadhāraka*, Sri Samartha Ramadasa Swami of Maharashtra.

Sri Samartha's Dasa Navami Utsava is widely celebrated in this part of the country every year, in the months of January and February. Discourses, Bhajanas, Samkirtana, Go-Puja (cow-worship), feeding the poor (*Daridra Narayana Seva*) and similar activities, form an integral part of the celebrations.

It is felt that a suitable temple should be constructed and the portrait of the great saint, Samartha Ramadasa, installed for the benefit of all bhaktas and the devotees of Sri Samartha. This would, perhaps, fulfil the cherished ambition of the late Swami V. K. Panthulu Adarsha Ramadasa, who was the Founder-President of the Sri Rama Samartha Premi Mandal, and attained *Mahāsamādhi* at the feet of his great master Guru Samartha Ramadasa, in the month of October, 1978.

*SARVA JANAH SUKHINO BHAVANTU
SAMASTA SANMANGALAM BHAVANTU*

SELF-RESTRAINT

'Once body and mind have been brought under control, the desire to know one's Self is kindled spontaneously. If one does not remain lukewarm but gives one's heart and soul to the Supreme Quest, the discovery of the Self becomes easy. So long as one's consciousness is centred in the body it is impossible to achieve anything without action. It is imperative ever to keep in mind that unless one is strict with oneself as a miser who amasses wealth or as a bee that collects honey, one cannot make headway on the spiritual path.'

—Sri Anandamayi Ma

THE IMAGE OF DAKSHINA KĀLĪ

B. C. Bose

Public memory is proverbially short. The commotion created by the publication of a poster of Kali depicting Her wearing a garland of human skulls and devouring a Five Pound note, by the British Safety Council more than two years ago,* has subsided. People dismissed the contention of Mr. James Tye, Chairman of the British Safety Council, as born of ignorance. But his lack of proper knowledge of the significance of the Image of Dakshina Kālī was more than compensated by the knowledge or supraconsciousness revealed to Sister Nivedita and to Sir John Woodroff (Arthur Avalon), the great British exponent of Tantra Śāstra. Both the above mentioned were initiated into the spiritual domain by their Gurus. In the case of Sister Nivedita, it was Swami Vivekananda and Sri Sri Ma Saradamani who accepted her as a white lotus brought for her by Naren. There is, however, no positive proof that Sir John Woodroff also was formally initiated by Siva Chandra Nyayaratna. But any sādḥaka, blessed by a Sat-Guru, will feel convinced that without Guru Śakti, no one could have translated and interpreted the mystic Tantric science in the way he did. While we

* Reported in the Statesman.

comfort ourselves with the idea that Mr. Tye is ignorant, inspite of his claim of knowledge of Hindu mythology acquired during his stay in India,—how many of us ever try to know about this great Image ?

“The Kāli-image”, writes Sister Nivedita, “is not so much a picture of the deity, as the utterance of the secret of our own lives.” Historically speaking the popular image of Dakshina Kāli whose significance will be attempted to be explained in short in the following paragraphs is as the Mother was revealed to a great Tantric of undivided Bengal known as Krishnanda Agamvāgish, who was not only a contemporary of Sri Chaitanya Deva but his classmate in the local ‘*Tol*’ (School of Sanskrit Studies at the house of the Teacher.) From this, the readers should not conclude that Śakti cult did not exist before that. Śakti cult is as old as the Vedas. Uma-Haimavati, mentioned in the Upanishads, is an indication of this. Science of Tantra is described as “*Tanoti Vedārthā iti Tantra*”—the science which explains the meaning of the Vedas. In fact, the Śakti cult may be even older than the Vedas. At least, the worship of Śiva with the bull can be traced to the Mohenjodaro and Harappa Civilization.

The name Kāli signifies ‘*Sakti of Mahakāla*’. She created time as She is not within time ; She is timeless. That is the reason why *Sādhaka* Ram Prasād sang—“When there was no universe, where did you get the garland of human heads, oh Mother ?”

The colour of the Goddess is generally black or deep blue. According to Dakshina Kalika Stotram (hymn), She is beautiful like dark blue clouds. Just as dark clouds, by shedding nectarlike rain, cool the earth parched by the sun's rays, so She too sheds the nectar of Her grace and thus gives immortality to *sādhakas*, tormented by the three types of suffering. "She is dark with the refulgence of a million suns and is cooling like a million moons", says Arthur Avalon. Rama Krishna used to say, "Is Kālī dark? She is at a distance that's why She appears dark. The sky is blue, as it is far beyond. Near at hand, the sky has no colour. The water of the ocean is blue, take a little bit of it into your palm, it has no colour." The Mahāśakti is formless and black. According to Rikveda, "*Tamamāsīt Tamasā Ghuramargreh*"—at the beginning there was darkness. She existed before creation. That is why She is *Adya-Śakti* and of the colour of darkness.

She is "Digambari" that is to say space-clad. She is not restricted from any side, nor is She veiled by *Māyā*, illusion or ignorance.

She is "*Tripura Harabadhu*". Mythologically, She is the *Śakti* of Śiva, who destroyed the *Tripurāsura*. But in the real sense, She is the controller of the three 'cities' (bodies, gross, subtle and causal). She is the *Śakti* of Him who grants liberation from these bodies. As the powerholder and His power are one, it is She who is the grantor of liberation (Arthur Avalon).

She is “*Mukta-Keshī*”, with dishevelled hair. This is interpreted in more than one way. In one sense, She is free from all the “*vikāras*” such as the passion for arranging the hair and so forth. In another sense, this cluster of hair acts as a curtain obstructing our view of the life beyond death.

The Mother has four hands ; with the upper one of the two on the left She holds a sword, and with the lower one a severed human head. The sword is knowledge (*jnāna*) by which the bonds of ignorance of a desire-free *Sādhaka* are severed. The restless Kamala Kanta sings not in a very polished language, (the language of a child) “OH, YE, the Destroyer of everything have devoured all my good and bad deeds by Thy sword.” The so-called uneducated soul becomes Self-realized. From Her right upper hand, She grants ‘*abhaya*’—freedom from fear. Sings Ramprasad—“Whom do I fear in this world, the Ruler of which is the Great Mother”. The right hand grants blessings to devotees.

She has a fearful face—“*Karālabadanam Ghorām,*” but at the same time ever smiling—(*Sukha prasanna badanam*). These two diametrically opposite aspects can coexist only in the *Akhanda Parama Brahma*. She has three eyes. Mahanirvāna Tantra says that the Goddess surveys the entire universe, which is the product of time, with three eyes—The Moon, The Sun and the Fire—*Ichha, Kriya* and *Jñāna Śaktis*. The swelling breasts and hips are emblematic of Her great Motherhood. “In the Aryan Home”, says Nivedita, “women stand sup-

reme. As wife in the west—lady and queen of her husband—as mother in the east—a goddess thronged in her son's worship—She is the bringer of sanctity and peace.”

The Mother has two ear-rings (things very dear) made of two dead bodies of two *sādhakas* who are like Maheśvara and simple as boys ; that is, child-like simple-*sādhakas* who have true knowledge are dear to Her.

The Mother has a red protruding tongue with blood beautifying her lips on either side. But the tongue is held tight with a set of pearl-like white teeth. By this posture, the Mother teaches the *sādhakas* to suppress *rajagūṇa* (signified by blood), with *śudha-satvagūṇa*, indicated by the power of the white teeth ; white represents *satvagūṇa*.

The Mother has a garland of human heads—fifty in number, representing the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. This *varnamāla* is the outward expression of “*Śabda Brahma*”. A *sādhaka* of very high calibre only can dive deep into the significance of this garland of human heads. The Mother has a waist-girdle of arms. These human arms indicate the *karma śakti*. The fruits of all karmas take refuge in the womb of Mahākālī. Rebirth is due to the results of the karma of previous births. “Those who call it horrible”, says Nivedita, “may well be forgiven. They pass only through the outer court of the temple. They have not arrived where the Mother's voice can reach them.”

The Mother stands with Her right foot on the chest of Śiva, depicted as *Mahā-padma pretāsana*,”

and Her left foot slightly touching the body of Śiva as “Śava”—(corpse) in a dancing fashion. In one sense, the Image symbolises the Sankhya system of philosophy. The Mother is the life-force, energy or *chaitanya* (*Chetanetyāvidhiate* of *Saptasati Chandī*). The entire universe is full of life as energy is coming from the great Power House of Brahman. It also indicates simultaneously that, if the foot is lifted, i.e., if the energy or life force is removed, the matter of the universe becomes lifeless : Śiva becomes śava (corpse).

This *Mahāśakti*'s abode is the cremation ground or where the corpse lies. That is the place where the “*jīva*” rests after experiencing the fruits of his actions. In fact, we have to rest in the Mother's lap every night after the day's toil is over. All our fatigue, pain and sorrow are forgotten in *Susupti*—deep slumber. For a *sādhaka*, the heart is converted into a cremation ground (*Śmashān Karacci Hridi*) ; when the heart is desire-free, it becomes the seat of the Mother in all Her glory.

All we can do is to sing in the same tune, as Ramprasad did :

“Tho' the Mother beat him
The child cries : “mother, O mother.”
And clings tighter to her garment.
True I cannot see Thee,
Yet I am not a lost child,
I still cry, “Mother, Mother.”

THE TEACHING OF REBBE NAHMAN

Translated from Hebrew

Parvati Alexander

(Continued from the last issue)

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 is a selection from a collection of his teachings called *Likkutei Mohavan*.

Know that one must always judge every being to be innocent. Even when it appears that someone is completely unrighteous, nevertheless, it is necessary to search and to find in him at least some minute bit of goodness in which there is no evil at all. For by the very deed of finding out the good in another and judging him as innocent, one can actually raise him to a state of innocence and cause him to "return" (the Hebrew word 'T'shuvah' translated as 'Repentance' literally means a return).

This is the meaning of the verse (psalm 36:10) :
"Just a little while longer and there will be no evil ; You will look for it in its place, but it will be no longer."

The first part of the verse refers to that little bit of good (the Hebrew 'v'od m'aat' means 'just a little while longer' but it can be interpreted, as Nahman does, as 'a little bit') without any negativity for which one must search. For although a man may be unrighteous, how is it possible that there could not be even a little good in him, how could it be possible that he has never in all his days done some good deed? The second part of the verse "you will look at the place where it was, but it will no longer be there" refers to the transformation of that person. By bringing out that little good, he has been transformed. So that when you seek for him at his former level, he will no longer be at that place. By finding the good in him and judging him accordingly, you have actually caused a change within him.

Similarly, one must always look for the good in *oneself*. It is well known that it is essential to remain in a positive frame of mind and to keep depression at a great distance. Even when one begins to look within oneself and finds that there is nothing worthy and that one is filled with impurities, he should realise that the 'devil' is trying to make him fall through depression and black despair!—But it is *forbidden* for him to fall due to this. Rather must he then make every possible effort, searching deeply within himself until he finds some minute particle of goodness. How is it possible that, in all his life, he has no good deed to his credit? And when he has begun to search out that good, he may find that even that is filled with

defects, he sees that even the good deed or holy act which he has merited to do, even that is imperfect due to doubts and distracting thoughts at the time of its performance ; thus, even that act has not been done wholly and with a perfect intention. Nevertheless, it is impossible that there is not some good in his act and so one must continue to search and to find out that good in order to revive oneself and bring oneself to joy. In this way can he raise himself from a state of guilt to one of innocence and thus be able to truly 'return'.

This practice is absolutely essential to prevent one's falling completely ; rather it revives a man and makes his soul joyful. In this way must one go on—always finding out still more good and though that too may be filled with dross, he must separate out the good and go on gathering more and more bits of goodness. It is through these bits of good that the '*niggun*' (sacred melody) is created in just the same way as he who plays a tune on a musical instrument. This is a gathering of the pure ether (spirit) out of the spirit of sadness and depression. (It is known that the sacred melody is very high and that its essence is created by meaning of the separating out of goodness from evil, that is, by collecting portions of goodness away from the power of the negative forces.)

And it is by this means that one does not allow oneself to fall but rather gives oneself new life by separating out the pure from the dross and uplifting it, thereby creating sacred melodies,—that it becomes possible for one to pray, to sing and to

praise God. For it is a known fact that when a person falls in his own estimation due to worldliness and evil deeds and can see only how very far he is from holiness, he cannot, at that time, pray at all; he cannot even open his mouth due to the great sadness and despair that overcomes him when he perceives the immense distance between himself and God. But when he inspires himself by means of the advice given here, then he becomes joyful. And certainly it is right that one increases one's joy very greatly with each particle of good from the holiness which one finds within oneself so that one is able to pray and to sing and to praise God as in the Psalm :

“I shall praise the Lord with that strength which is within me.” (psalm 146)

“Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is the love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation.”

—Ramana Maharshi

PRAYER : ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND VARIETIES

Acharya Satish Chandra Mukhopadhyaya

Letter No. 5

(Fifth letter dated 24th October 1940 addressed by S.C.M. to S. K. Jha of Sodepur.)

Sakāma Bhakti in its Higher Aspects

Ordinarily Bhakti is understood to signify faith in and devotion for the Supreme for the sake of the Supreme. Where *bhakti* is of such a character it is termed *Niṣkāma Bhakti* or devotion ; *Niṣkāma* literally meaning,—untouched by the taint of personal *achit* or worldly desires. Therefore the man of *Niṣkāma Bhakti* has no worldly *achit* i.e. material ends to seek and gratify through the favour of the Lord. On the contrary such (*Niṣkāma*) *Bhakti* is wholly directed to the Lord, with a view to getting rid of whatever *achit* or material desires are still lodged in the *sādhaka's Chitta* or sub-conscious mind. Such is the primary ingredient of *Niṣkāma Bhakti* and the faith associated with such Bhakti. But the man of *Niṣkāma* faith and devotion aims still higher. His aim is not merely to rid himself of all worldly egoistic desires that clog his *Chitta*, but he feels that even that is not enough ; his conviction is that until he reaches the feet of the Lord, he may any moment fall away from Him

and be dragged down into the mire of *achit* material life and desires. So the ultimate aim of *Niṣkāma Bhakti* is to live in the company of the Lord for all time while engaged in loving service and worship.

Just the reverse is the case with the man of *Sakāma* faith and *Bhakti*. For here the *sādhaka* seeks the favour of the Lord not to gratify his spiritual i.e. *Chit* desires, but seeks His help in order that He may help him to achieve some worldly *achit* ends. But the point to note is that although the man of *Sakāma* faith and *Bhakti* hankers after worldly ends, still his faith may rise on occasion to lofty heights as measured by the extreme forms of sacrifice or *tapasyā* the man of *sakāma* faith is able to make. You will note that the Lord Shri Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (VII-16) speaks of four types of faith and *Bhakti*, of which the first two come under the category of “*sakāma*” or self-regarding. Devotees who have such *sakāma* devotion are declared by the Lord either as *Ārta Bhaktas* or as *Ārthārthī Bhaktas* (*Gītā* VII-16). Now the fact that these are *Sakāma Bhaktas*, or *Jīvas* who seek worldly or material *achit* favours at the Hands of the Lord, is likely to mislead some. But in the view of the Lord both the *Ārta Bhaktas* and the *Ārthārthī Bhaktas* are genuine devotees. Why? Let me explain in some detail.

Who is an *Ārta*? Shortly he is one who feels himself mentally or physically in utter distress in respect of a certain matter of *achit* life. So also the *Ārthārthī*, the fortune-seeker. Apparently these

two types do not seek the Lord for the Lord's sake nor do they aspire after *Atmā-Sākṣātkāra*, i.e. soul-realisation or realisation of soul life, as the '*Jijñasu*' and the '*Jñānin*' mentioned in the same verse do. These latter are *Niṣkāma Bhaktas*; yet the Lord places the first two who are *Sakāma Bhaktas* along with the last two who are *Niṣkāma Bhaktas* in one common category. All the four are declared to be '*Sukṛtinaḥ*', i.e. people possessed of great spiritual merit and further are classed together as His worshippers. Here then is a riddle which has got to be solved. How can we style the first two viz., —the '*Ārta*' and the '*Arthārthi*' both of whom seek *achit* favours at the Hands of the Lord as His genuine worshippers? The answer is the following—

The 'health-wrecked' *Ārta* is a worshipper, because in his case he has arrived at a stage when he cannot conceive of anybody else as having the power to rid him of the disease from which he is suffering except the Lord Himself. So he feels himself utterly isolated in this world and dependent wholly and solely on the Lord as his Protector in his state of utter misery and affliction. This sort of utter dependence on the Lord for succour, to the utter exclusion of every other form of external help, is of course a concentrated state of devotion to the Lord, the *Ārta's* whole life centering on the Lord and His help. So in the case of a 'fortune-seeker' if he is a 'fortune-wrecked' man and feels himself helplessly struggling in the sea of life unable to find a foothold, notwithstanding all efforts on

his part or those of friends and relations, he does also come under the category of an *Ārta* as above described. But there may be fortune-seekers who are not *Ārtas*. They are not 'fortune-wrecked' but are otherwise well-off, but nevertheless covet wealth and the power that wealth gives. A man coming under this category may take to self-effort to gain his object. But if he thinks that no self-effort would be enough to reach the heights of his ambitions along the lines of self-aggrandizement, then he would seek to throw himself wholly and absolutely on the Power of the Lord and set about propitiating Him. Such a man would go in for the severest forms of *tapasyā* or asceticism and would worship the Lord with an unparalleled *sakāma* devotion. Witness the case of Ravana, when he sought to gain the favour of Mahādeva by years and years of hard *tapasyā*, and had chopped off nine out of his ten heads and was about to chop off the tenth as an *arghya* i.e. sacrificial offering to the Lord, when Lord Mahādeva was so very pleased that He prevented Ravana from cutting off his last remaining head and granted him the boons he had coveted. Here was a case of *achit artharthī* who wholly and absolutely depended on Lord Mahādeva for granting of certain *achit* boons, and proved by his hard *tapasyā* that his *Sakāma Bhakti* was capable of even the severest forms of self-sacrifice. Hence it is clear that such uttermost forms of *Sakāma* devotion must be regarded as genuine forms of worship.

So it comes to this, that there is a type of devotion or *bhakti* which is not *niškāma* because it is not directed to the worship of the Lord for His sake and His sake alone. Nevertheless *sakāma* worship of the Lord of a certain extreme type although for the purpose of achieving personal *achit* ends, must be called Bhakti. Why? Because the devotee in this case is the repository of a very advanced form of faith which makes him wholly and absolutely dependent on the Lord and on none else than the Lord for his success, although the end for which he seeks His favour is *achit* or material in nature and not at all spiritual i.e. *niškāma*. Now coming to your proposition, in the type of cases to which you have referred, the same *Sakāma* or personal *achit* ends are sought, but with this difference. The Bhakti is more or less superficial, because it has not that absolute character where the devotee feels it easy and natural to eschew from his mind all desire for outside help while seeking the favour of the Lord by way of propitiation. In such a case the *sādhaka* praying for the Lord's favour is not in his heart of hearts dependent wholly and absolutely on Divine help. In other words the class of people for whom you plead and who pray for Divine favours have not developed that advanced type of faith in the Lord which roots out from their *chitta* all desire for every form of help not vouchsafed by the Lord and Lord alone.

Sd. S. C. M.

P.S. I should ask you to pay special attention to the whole series of five letters. I am of opinion

that a proper consideration of the said five letters would help to advance our faith in the Lord. For all Bhakti is dependent on the intensity of the *sādhaka's* faith in the Lord as the All-powerful, All-regulating, All-supreme Agency. The one thing needful is therefore for us and all fettered *jīvas* to cultivate this all-powerful faith in the Supreme. As soon as one advances along the path of this faith, all his faith in his own self as a self-acting *kartā* would go on diminishing till at last he would come to the conclusion that the Lord is the one Agent who manages the entire business of the Universe, and that all that is necessary for the *jīva* is to eschew all faith in the power of his personal I, his *kartāship* and be dependent on and obedient to the All-Supreme.

Sd. S. C. M.

“A good deed done without love goes for nothing, but if anything is done from love, however small and inconsiderable it may be, every bit is counted. God considers what lies behind the deed and not what is actually done.”

—Thomas ā Kempis

THE VALUE OF SORROW

Amiya Kumar Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

The great saint of Bengal, Sri Ram Prasad used to say: "You are all proud of your good luck, but I boast of my sorrow." These words seem meaningless to worldly people. In fact, to understand the significance of such a saying is rather difficult for us. We would say that Ram Prasad being a specially blessed devotee, there must be a deeper and divine meaning to his utterances, so his words could be understood only by a highly evolved, spiritual personality like himself.

Nevertheless if we analyse our thinking with deep inner judgement, then no doubt the real meaning of his saying will become somewhat clear to us.

In the great epic of the Mahābhārata we read that when Sri Krishna was very pleased with the unwavering devotion of Kunti, the saintly mother of the pandavas, he wished to grant her a boon. This noble woman asked him to bestow on her never-ending affliction. Her reason was, that only sorrow would keep her constantly close to God. Because being in trouble always would make her remember Him and keep Him in her heart unceasingly, and this would give her complete satisfaction. She was apprehensive of the possibility, that in happiness she might not remember God uninter-

ruptedly and this would plunge her into greater and greater unhappiness.

That sorrow comes as the result of our *Prārabdha*, in other words actions done in previous births, and points to a joyous future in store for us after experiencing pain—is a teaching which Sri Anandamayi Ma has explained many times in many ways in Her immortal sayings. If we seriously ponder over what we are, from where we come and whither we are going, we shall find that in this passing world our body of flesh and blood, our outward existence, are just things which hide our real being. If we can accept the teachings of our *Sanātana Dharma* as axiomatic truths, we shall come to understand that we are constantly passing from one birth to another.

Is there any limit to the wrong and foolish actions that we commit over and over again in the battle-field of life? It stands to reason that our sinful actions will result in sorrow and we shall have to suffer the consequences of our misdeeds either in the present or in some future life.

Scientists declare that “every action has an equal and opposite re-action”. Thus Ma Anandamayi comforts us by saying that since sorrow is a result of our *Samskāras*, brought over from previous births, (the fruit of our misdeeds), we have to accept it. She also says that we must take solace in the thought that, since sorrow is an atonement for our previous wrong-doings, it helps to remove obstacles and thus brings us closer to God. If we can keep this line of thought firmly in

our minds we shall be able to refrain from wrong actions in our present life and bear our troubles and tribulations in a dignified manner.

In this connection I quote a story from the Mahābhārata, which has a deep meaning and deserves to be pondered upon. Dhritarastra once, out of curiosity, asked Sri Krishna that since he could remember one hundred of his previous births, he knew that he had not committed any sins within hundred lives, why then was he born blind any why did he have to bear the acute suffering caused by the death of a hundred sons. Sri Krishna answered that in a life before those hundred births Dhritarastra had committed a heinous crime. He was then a person who made his living by killing animals and birds. Once when passing a Rishi's ashram, he observed that the saint had strewn some grains into his courtyard, which the birds were eating happily. This gave him an idea. So next day, during the absence of the saint, he came and threw some grains for the birds. When the birds began eating without any suspicion, he aimed and blinded a bird with his arrow. Thus, Sri Krishna explained how even after so many births retribution catches you up.

Again, an incident from the life of Surdas, the blind poet saint of North India, is worth mentioning. It is said that one day while walking alone, he suddenly fell into a well and had to remain in it without food for seven days. Even though faced with such acute trouble he did not get upset, and spent his time inside the well singing God's name

devotedly. On the seventh day Sri Krishna appeared and wanted to grant him his eye-sight. But Surdas refused to accept this boon saying that if he got back his vision he might not love God as deeply as he did without it. So he asked Sri Krishna to grant him deeper devotion instead. It shows that through the medium of sorrow one can become deeply attracted and devoted to God. That Surdas had gained supreme bliss and joy through his love of God can clearly be felt from his songs.

Through these discussions we learn that though it is difficult for us worldly men and women to accept sorrow willingly, yet realising the fact that ill-luck comes without fail as the just consequence of our wrong actions of previous births, the burden of inevitable sorrow becomes bearable. If, keeping this trend of thought in our mind, we can surrender at the lotus feet of God, then no adversity will be able to disturb us and make us bitter. Divine bliss and deep peace will then fill our hearts to the brim.

Jai Guru ! Jai Ma !

“Whatever thou lovest, that become thou must,
 God if thou love God, dust if thou love dust.
 If thou dwellest on the lowest, then the lowest must
 thou be,
 Fix thy thoughts upon the highest and the highest
 thou shalt be.”

—English Poets

A TRIBUTE TO DIDI GURUPRIYA DEVI FROM KANYAPEETH

An impending calamity suddenly cast its ominous shadow over the Ashram in Varanasi, and it wore a grim look. The morning of September 15th, 1980 was fraught with dark forebodings, the air was heavy with suspense and everybody's mind hovered between hope and fear. On hearing that our beloved Didi Gurupriya Devi had been lying critically ill in Bombay, Sri Ma rushed there from Vrindaban and with doctors and nurses in attendance, brought her here in the small hours of September 15th, 1980. She returned to Vrindaban shortly after midday to attend the Bhāgavata Saptaha which was being celebrated there. An air of agonizing suspense hung over the Ashram ; doctors and nurses fought valiantly, but all their efforts proved futile. Surrounded by the revered *Samnyāsīs* of the Ashram, her near relatives and dear Kanyapeeth girls, Didi breathed her last at 8-53 A.M. on September 16th, amidst the singing of Kirtan and recitations from scriptures by the inmates of the Kanyapeeth, which had been going on continually since her arrival. A pall of gloom descended all over the place—a hush poignant with mute grief.

Sri Ma revealed after Gurupriya Devi's death that she had been given *Samnyāsa* by Her—her *Samnyāsa* name being *Gurupriya Ananda Giri*—and under Her instruction “*Jala-Samādhi*” (immersion in water) was arranged for Didi. On hearing the news of Didi's death, Mataji arrived in Varanasi in the early hours of September 17th and went straight to Her room in the Kanyapeeth where She stayed till Her departure for Vrindaban shortly after the completion of Didi's *Jalagamādhi*.

On September 17th the day dawned on a most touching scene. Didi's mortal body which had been preserved in ice, was brought down in the morning from her room near the Gopal Mandir and placed in front of the Chandi Mandap. One of the senior girls of the Kanyapeeth worshipped her and did *Āratī*. The grief-stricken girls paid their final homage to her and bade her tearful farewell—a solemn and fitting finale to the life of one who had been the guardian angel of the Kanyapeeth. Her body was then taken down to the Ganga where, after a ceremonial bath, it was draped in new clothes and decorated. Eventually, after appropriate religious rites and Pūjā by Swami Chinmoyananda, it was placed on a Bajra (boat) by which Didi set out on her final journey. The immersion ceremony took place at 8-15 A.M.

Thus ended the colourful and, in many respects, unique career of one who braved many daunting challenges of life and always presented an image of indomitable courage, prodigious energy and selfless service.

The Kanyapeeth owes a deep debt of gratitude to Gurupriya Devi, lovingly called 'Dadabhai' by the Kanyapeeth girls—a name given to her by Mouni Ma, a woman of saintly character. An apt name this—conveying, as it does, the idea of manly qualities tempered with tender affection of which she was an emblem. Though the idea of founding an institution like the Kanyapeeth originated from Bhaiji, it was Didi who gave it a tangible shape. What is more, she animated it with the spirit of service and dedication which is the keynote of the institution.

The land on which the Varanasi Ashram stands was involved in a complicated legal dispute and Didi had to fight against enormous odds to secure it. She harnessed all her energies, resources and talents to the task of building up the Kanyapeeth. She did not hesitate to beg from door to door to collect money for the purpose, and the phenomenal energy, initiative and drive that she brought to bear on the task of procuring from different parts of the country building materials which were scarce at that time, were indeed a marvel. Incidentally we may mention that she was also instrumental in founding Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth, Mata Anandamayee Hospital and the Ashrams in different parts of the country. All these are a standing monument of her organizing capacity and constructive ability.

To return to the Kanyapeeth. She cradled it with infinite care in its infancy, nursed it in its childhood, kept a sleepless vigil over it in its

adolescence and youth, and piloted it through many a storm till it reached its maturity. Such was Gurupriya Devi whose voice still seems to echo from the walls of the Kanyapeeth. We shall not see her like again.

The inmates of the Kanyapeeth will fondly treasure her memory. In their hearts she will live forever and, we fervently hope, in their lives too.

The life of Gurupriya Devi was a saga of sacrifice, service and surrender. She was born on February 14/15, 1899 (*Maghi Samkranti* day) in a respected and affluent family of Dacca, her father the late Dr. Sashanka Mohan Mukherjee (later known as Swami Akhandananda Giri) being a Civil Surgeon. She was given in marriage, much against her will, at the age of eleven, but she refused to live in her husband's home—an act of daring defiance, inconceivable in the context of the conservative society of the time. This was not due to perversity—it was the spontaneous reaction of a born Brahmachārini. Not for her were the joys and sorrows of a housewife : unknown to her, a higher destiny awaited her.

She remained with her parents and served them with all the devotion of a dutiful daughter. She abjured the luxuries of life and spent her time studying at home. Though self-taught, her knowledge of the contemporary Bengali literature was very wide. She wielded a facile pen, and the volumes that she later wrote on Sri Ma describing all the minute details of Her daily activities and varying moods are a priceless mine of information

for scholars doing research on Mataji's life and philosophy.

Several years later Sashanka Mohan happened to come in contact with Sri Ma and was so attracted by Her charm that, one day in December 1925 or early January 1926, he brought his daughter along with him to have a *daršana* of Mataji. As soon as Gurupriya Devi saw Her, she came under Her spell—in fact, it was a case of love at first sight—and both Ma and Gurupriya Devi felt as if they had been waiting for each other all those years. Thenceforward she became Mataji's prime *Sevika* and life-long companion. The love that would have been confined within the narrow limits of a domestic home was transmuted into veneration for, and surrender to, Ma ; it widened into warm affection for all of us, and in no time she made her way into our lives as our beloved Didi. It may be noted here that her original name Adarini Devi was changed into Gurupriya Devi by Sri Ma who used to call her Khukuni and also Didi.

Didi followed Mataji everywhere like a shadow. Mataji was the very breath of her life and Ma's slightest little hint was a command to Didi. The unquestioning obedience and the fervid zeal with which she carried it out to the letter and the passionate, almost fierce determination with which she defended Sri Ma's interests have passed into a legend. She was a terror to anybody daring to disturb Mataji's peace or to upset Her routine, and Didi's wrath fell upon him or her with remorselessness of an inexorable destiny. Hers

was a loyalty that never wavered, a courage that never faltered, a devotion that never waned and a love that shone like the flame of a steady light at the feet of Sri Ma. She was truly cast in a heroic mould, her greatest act of heroism being the total surrender of her ego at the altar of Mataji.

It was a formidable task to keep pace with Sri Ma's multi-dimensional activities and Her unscheduled programmes made up on the spur of the moment, but Didi was equal to it, ever ready to train her course to Mataji's *kheyāla*. Out of a shy, a little self-willed girl, Ma forged an instrument of invincible strength to carry out Her purpose.

A woman of imposing presence, she evoked strangely mixed feelings of resentment and love. Her forbidding exterior concealed a kind and sympathetic heart, ready to render help to those in distress. Behind the facade of her sternness lurked a generous hostess who rejoiced in entertaining guests to sumptuous feasts. Her frowning look, which sometimes kept people at arm's length, now and again wreathed in smiles of disarming simplicity carrying a gesture of warm welcome.

She was struck down by a serious illness in 1954, which kept her confined to bed for some years, but such was her devotion and spirit of surrender to Sri Ma, that she cheerfully accepted it as a gift from Her and bore the protracted agony with remarkable fortitude and resignation : what was an unbearable wrench to her was the enforced

separation from Mataji that it entailed. The illness robbed her of much of her former activities, nevertheless she was by Sri Ma's side whenever possible, ready to carry out Her wishes.

Didi's life unfolds before us an endless vista of wide-ranging activities. A towering personality, bending before none but Sri Ma, she dominated the scene for more than five decades, and has now passed into the beyond. With her has passed away a shining symbol of service and surrender that will remain an undying source of inspiration to all.

Till a few years before her death, she remained the picture of wheathered but enduring, though a trifle subdued vigour. During her declining years, her aggressiveness gave place to a measure of tenderness, the blazing heat of the noonday sun shading off, as it were, into the mellow tints of the sunset. All in all, she bestrode the stage like a colossus over the years, and with her departure the curtain has been rung down on a colourful panorama.

May her soul rest in peace !

"The vision of the Lord is granted to the simple, but is denied to the proud of purse, position, learning."

—Sadhu T. L. Vaswani

IN MEMORIUM

Bhadra Shukla Saptami Tithi (Sept. 16th 1980)

Bithika Mukerji

It is with a deep and undiminishing sense of irreparable loss and profound reverence that we remember today our beloved 'Dadabhai', more familiarly known to others as Sm. Gurupriya Ananda Giriji, or simply as Didiji. It is a day of remembrance and also of celebration for us, because on this day last year, although she became lost to us physically, she attained to the goal of her own life—to abide forever in the region of Grace where she will know no more any separation from Mataji, her one and only source of anguish in this life. Her one steadfast, one-pointed and unswerving aim in life was to remain in close proximity to Mataji, doing Her bidding and carrying out Her *kheyāla* as best understood by her. In this connection we may recall a significant incident which took place many years ago :

Didiji was once asked by Abhayada if in her long association with Sri Ma she had ever seen Her overcome by sleep while sitting for many hours in a Satsang ? This question took Didiji by surprise. She had never before given it any consideration because nobody had ever seen Mataji being overcome by hunger or sleep. So she answered in growing awe and wonderment, 'Never ! I have never seen Her look drowsy

or sleepy even if She has been awake for more than two or three days and nights at a time as has happened more than once. But I must confess that no sooner am I in a Satsang than I am overcome by sleep! It is my ambition that Ma should see me attending Satsang and not be busy with other matters while Satsang is going on, but alas, she always finds me sleeping! What can I do? As long as I am sitting up straight and listening to the discourse, she never happens to glance at me, but no sooner am I slumped in sleep I jerk up to find Her gazing steadily at me.

While the others joined Didiji in her laughter against herself, a rarely given explanation came from Sri Ma who also was smiling. Her appreciation of the point made, she said: "You see, her one-pointed thoughts are, in general, always directed toward 'this body', (Ma); when she is overcome by sleep the link is snapped and my *kheyāla* is immediately drawn to her."

This is how we remember Didiji: nothing mattered to her except to be ever ready to work toward the fulfilling of Mataji's *kheyāla* in the light of one's own limited powers of the mind and heart. This is the reason that Didiji became the beloved sister of all those who also had reverence in their hearts for Sri Ma.

This is also a day of solemn dedication for us. We remember today that Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth came into existence and has assumed its present structure only due to

Didiji's inspired vision, untiring zeal and unremitting dedication toward its establishment. It was her dream to make secure a suitable place for such young girls and young women who may choose to tread the path of a life of dedication to the service of Mataji. For these special girls she wished to create a haven of peace where one may engage in *sāadhanā* toward the ultimate goal of Self-realization. Together with *sāadhanā* the inmates would preoccupy themselves with the study and the teaching of suitable religious literature. It seems a fitting occasion for placing on record a few details of the Kanyapeeth which was a concretization of Didiji's dream of such a place.

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth is a residential school for young girls, located in our Ashram situated on the holy river Ganga at Varanasi.—The School section of the Kanyapeeth was recognised by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in 1962. It is affiliated to Sampurnananda Sanskrit University. Every year, students sit for the various examinations of the University from the *Prathama* to *Acarya*. Many students have received academic distinctions e. g. a Medal for obtaining first position in *Acarya* in 1978 and a research degree of *Vidyāvāridhi* in 1979. The students are taught vocal and instrumental music also and some of them have appeared successfully at the examinations conducted by the *Prayag Sangit Samiti*.

Extra curricular activities like debates, enactment of plays in Sanskrit and Hindi of a religious

nature, *antakshari* etc. are regular features of the Institution. Many have no doubt on suitable occasions heard the inmates of the Kanyapeeth speak in Sanskrit on profound topics before large gatherings.

The residential aspect of the Kanyapeeth is structured on the ideals of spiritual discipline and moral excellence. The students have a large dormitory, a beautiful temple-room, a big kitchen complex, a hall for study and a library. There is also a sick room with facilities for medical attendance.

The style of life sought to be inculcated is wholesome and reasonably comfortable with emphasis on self-discipline and friendliness toward each other rather than a rigid regimentation or hard asceticism. From time to time in answer to our questions, Sri Ma in Her Indulgent Grace towards us has spoken of the ideal way of life for young students, who seek to achieve not only academic results but also an enrichment of moral and spiritual values. All these sayings are used by us as guidelines for our daily routine which provides for congregational prayers as well as individual *Sādhana*, time for helping in housework, regular school hours, time for homework and reading in the library and time for play.

It is left to the choice of the student and her guardians to decide whether she would like to continue in the Ashram after completing her schooling or to go home and engage in further studies or get married and lead the life of an ideal

housewife. Over the years many students have elected to stay in the Ashram and many have gone home. These old students continue to visit the Kanyapeeth, their erstwhile home, with their new families and friends.

The Kanyapeeth is a Charitable Institution. While Didiji was with us we had sheltered under her magnanimous sponsorship. Now we seek help and guidance from all those devotees of Mataji, who hold the memory of Didiji dear to their hearts. We would welcome questions from such devotees or new devotees (who have not had the occasion to meet Didiji), regarding further information about the Kanyapeeth. We shall be glad to supply details of our Institution in order to create a feeling of mutuality and sharing of the experience of working toward an advancement of a cause which we believe is uniquely fashioned to approximate to Sri Ma's sayings regarding the way of spiritual life. We hope and pray that we shall for ever remain constant to the ideal of one-pointed and unswerving attention toward Mataji, and that She, in Her indulgent Graciousness (*ahetuka kripa*) will ever keep Her *kheyāla* on us.

“The humble man knows continual peace but in the heart of the proud there is jealousy and discontent.

—Thomas ā Kempis

MĀTRI LĪLĀ

(July—September 1981)

On July 2nd, Mataji left Kankhal for Naimisharanya by the night train. A Bhagavata Saptah was held there from July 5th to 12th. On the 13th morning a small, but very lovely Śiva Mandir was consecrated in Ma's presence. There had been a bel tree in the Ashram compound. A few years ago Mataji saw Lord Śiva sitting under that tree playing his *śringa* (bugle). After some time the tree had dried up. This is the site of the new temple.

Mataji was in an excellent mood. After the ceremony she sat on the veranda of the hall for about four hours. The sky was overcast with clouds, so everyone could sit in the open and enjoy Mataji's darśana and Her animated conversation to their hearts' content.

On July 17th, Gurupurnima was celebrated. 400-500 devotees, many from far off places such as Calcutta, Ranchi, Bombay, Delhi and of course from nearby Sitapur, Lucknow, Kanpur etc. had assembled to pay homage to Mataji on this special occasion. With considerable difficulty they were accommodated all over Naimisharanya, some at great distances. Quite a few devotees from foreign countries were present as well on this auspicious day.

On July 21st, the Prime Minister, Sm. Indira Gandhi, came to inaugurate the *Institute for Vedic and Puranic Research and Study*. Sri Ma also graced the function and drove back to our Ashram with Indiraji who spent some time with Mataji and took her lunch in our Ashram. This was broadcast by All India Radio and Television and reported in the papers.

Mataji was to leave Naimisharanya before the end of July, but due to flooded roads and railway lines She prolonged Her sojourn. On July 31st there was a solar eclipse. At 4 a.m. Mataji called the Brahmacharinis and asked them to start kirtana at 5 a.m. and continue throughout the eclipse. Later in the day Ma sat near Her window upstairs and gave darśana to thousands of pilgrims who had come to bathe in the holy waters of Chakra-tirtha. On August 7th, the anniversary of Didi-ma's *Mahasamādhi* was celebrated near the *tulasi mancha*. Mataji drew the attention to two butterflies who were circling round and round the place as if in circumambulation. Throughout Her stay Mataji gave *darśana* every evening. Almost daily Ministers and other Govt. Official arrived from various places. Almost daily a Bengali sādhu from Sri Naradananda Ashram used to come and Mataji had the *kheyāla* to tell him about Her play of sādhanā and early days.

On August 11th, *Jhulan Ekādaśi*, Mataji left for Delhi, alighting there on the 12th morning, *Jhulan Dvādaśi* the anniversary of Bhaiji's *Mahāsamādhi* in 1937 in Almora. This is commemorated every

year in our Ashrams by special *satsang* and *sādhu* feeding. Thus, although Mataji had alighted at the residence of Sri Virendra Saxena in the morning, She spent a few hours in our Ashram at Kalkaji, leaving for Baroda the same evening. There She was received by the President of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Sri B. K. Shah and his wife Sm. Lilabehn. Mataji was put up in a new house for a few hours' and then left for Porbander at the invitation of Swami Ashishananda who hails from this town. Mataji remained there from 14th to 18th August. Accommodation for Mataji and Her party had been arranged in a Birla Resthouse, right on the seashore, with an invigorating sea breeze blowing day and night. Mataji kept good health in those salubrious surroundings and was in a communicative mood. Satsang was held daily in a public hall, where Mataji was taken by car. She responded to questions very freely. On August 15th, *Jhulan Pūrnimā* was celebrated in the hall by a swing and pūjā ; midnight meditation in Ma's residence. During Her visit to Porbander Mataji also followed an invitation to the *Kanya Gurukul* (Girls' School), where She was shown all the activities of the institution and the girls sang beautiful kirtana. It all took about two to three hours. One day Mataji was taken through Porbander in procession in an open car.

On August 19th Mataji stopped for two hours in Ranavav on Her way to Morvi. Dr. Somani of Bombay, had several years ago built there a Rama Mandir and rooms for Mataji and Didima

as well as a Satsang Hall. He and other Gujrati devotees were there to welcome Ma.

The Rajmata of Morvi had earnestly requested Mataji to grace with Her august presence a *Maharudra Yajña* which was held for several days in a *Yajñasālā* of the old palace for the uplift of her deceased son's soul. Mataji attended daily for some time. On August 23rd, *Janmastami* (Sri Krishna's birthday) was celebrated very solemnly by midnight pūjā. The Rajmata, her eldest daughter and son-in-law also performed Sri Ma's pūjā. The next morning *Nandotsava* (the joy of the cowherds over Sri Krishna's advent) was observed as customary. Mataji was in a great mood and threw curds into everybody's mouth. Gujerati girls performed various garbha dances on both days. In the old palace, called Darbar, there is an old temple of Ashapuri Devi, the family Deity. A Śiva Linga was installed there in Ma's presence. One night, after midnight, Mataji heard distinctly the fervent call of the soul of a deceased person, urgently clamouring to be liberated from all his desires. Then Ma saw a bright light coming out of the subtle body (pinda) of the soul passing through Devi and finally merging into the Śiva Linga. Ma said: "*Śiva tatwa*". On the last day, the Rajmata, her daughter and son-in-law, presented their sword and the Rani's golden crown and the chamar to Mataji, who accepting them, returned them to their original owners for custody.

On August 27th, Mataji left Morvi and reached Vrindaban on the 29th morning.

On Sept. 5th, *Bhadra Sukla Saptami*, the anniversary of Gurupriya's passing a year ago, was celebrated by Sadhu feeding and *Daridra Nārāyana* feeding and recitation of the entire Bhagavad Gita in Vrindaban as well as in our other Ashrams.

From Sept. 6th to 14th a Bhagavata Saptah was held. A number of devotees, eleven in all had requested the recitation of the Bhāgavata and shared the expense. Several pandits recited in Sanskrit, while the Hindi commentary was done by Sri Vrindaban Behari, a local pandit. He spoke daily from 8 to 10 a.m. as well as in the afternoon. From 10-11 a.m. Sri Swami Akhandananda Saraswati very graciously supplemented the explanations of the pandit by his lucid talks. Mataji attended every day for sometime, especially Swami Akhandananda's talks.

A *Nāma Yajña*, (uninterrupted kirtana) was performed for 24 hours from 19th Sept. evening by our Delhi Kirtana Party. Mataji was present at intervals. On the 19th a cow was donated to the Ashram with due ceremony by a devotee from Ahmedabad in memory of her deceased mother. Mataji watched the ritual from Her terrace on the first floor.

On Sept. 24th and 25th, Dr. Gaurinath Sastri commented on the Chandogya Upanishad for half an hour in Sri Ma's room. Swami Paramananda contributed a few remarks at Dr. Gaurinath's request. On Sept. 27th a *Laghu Rudri* was held in the Siva Mandir, arranged for by a devotee. The same afternoon, Mataji left Vrindaban by car for

Delhi where She boarded the train to Hardwar, alighting in Kankhal on the 28th morning. *Nava Rātri* (nine days before *Dussehra* dedicated to Devi) started on the 29th. *Kumārī Pūjā* of one *kumārī* was performed in the hall daily from that day onward and Mataji was present on the first day. The *Devi Bhāgavata* was recited in Sanskrit by a pandit every morning and explained in Hindi every afternoon. After 6 p.m. Mataji gave *darśana*, the first 3 days on Her veranda and then in the hall as the attendance had grown very large. Silent meditation from 7-45 to 8 p.m. in Mataji's presence had been observed in Vrindaban almost daily on Her terrace and this was continued also in Kankhal, first in Mataji's cottage and then in the hall.

Durgā Pūjā will be celebrated from October 4th to 8th, Lakshmi Pūjā on the night of Oct. 13th and Kāli Pūjā during Diwali night on Oct. 27th, all in Kankhal.

The *Samyam Mahavrata* will be held from November 4th to 11th also in our Ashram at Kankhal.
