



# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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“He that cleaves to wealth had better cast it away than allow his heart to be poisoned by it ; but he who does not cleave to wealth, and possessing riches, uses them rightly, will be a blessing unto his fellows.

It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life, wealth and power.”

—*Gautama the Buddha*

“The Guru should be regarded as the direct manifestation of God. Only then can the disciple have faith in the mantra given by the Guru. Once a man has faith he achieves all.”

—*Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

“If there is one endearing term in human language, more lovable than any other, it is the word ‘mother’. The very thought that God is our mother brings us very, very close to Him, and our goal in life is to approach this Mother as swiftly and as easily as possible. Therefore, to consider God as our supreme Mother is the easiest way to approach Him.”

—*Swami Ramdas*

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# SRI SRI MA'S UTTERANCES

(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi", Vol. VIII.

A lady asked: "Ma, why should the Gods be worshipped? What does one gain by doing pūjā"?

*Mataji*: God Himself is attained by reverence and worship of gods.

*Question*: Then how should I perform this pūjā?

*Mataji*: Follow the instructions given by your Guru.

*Question*: But I have no Guru and I do not know whom to choose as Guru?

*Mataji*: Choose the person to whom the heart surrenders in love and reverence.

The lady's husband was at that time in jail as a political prisoner. She was therefore specially concerned about him.

*Mataji* therefore said "Look, nowadays you are worrying about your husband day and night, because you are his wife. Before you married him he was a stranger to you and you had no occasion to think about him. Similarly one must first of all establish a relationship with God by means of worshipping any one of His forms which may capture one's heart. This bond of familiarity will grow in intensity and fill you with thoughts of God Himself. Through this husband (Lord)\*, *pati*, happiness comes to you as well as sorrow. But

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\* The word *pati* means 'Lord' as well as 'husband'.

from that Supreme Lord (*pati*) bliss and bliss only is derived and no sorrow. However, even your husband is a form of that Supreme One, so if you think of him constantly as such you will be thinking of God. All are His forms, He alone IS.

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*Question* : Is it not possible to destroy the effects of bad karmas by engaging in good actions ?

*Mataji* : Look, this body is like a musical instrument. You hear the tune that you play on it. You ask questions and the answers are elicited also by you. I have nothing to say. However, it is a fact that there are certain actions by which the effects of previously done actions can be annulled. For example a child is in ignorance. On being educated his state of ignorance is dispelled. Or, suppose a mirror is dirty ; by being polished it becomes clean and shiny. There is another opinion that even the liberated (*Jivan-mukta*) has to experience the effects of his *prārabdha*\* karma. This is to be endorsed as well. Yet it may also be said that on the dawning of knowledge (*jnāna*) no vestige of karma can remain. The fire of knowledge which consumes everything, would it leave a little bit of karma untouched ?

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A sadhu asked : "How to get rid of sorrow ? There is no cessation of the sense of deprivation."

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\* *Prārabdha Karma* That portion of one's past actions which are found to fructify in the present life and cannot be averted. It has brought about the present birth with its particularities of time, place, family, disposition, etc.

He meant that even a state of voluntary mendicasy could not dispel the sense of want and bring about a feeling of self-sufficiency.

*Mataji* : Because you are an alien in a foreign country, you suffer from restlessness. In one's own country one is at peace. Search for your 'own country', your own Self. Because of multiple desires one creates a foreign atmosphere for oneself. When one belongs to oneself, realizes the One Self, then one is at rest. No sense of want disturbs one because one is at home.

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### Self Surrender

Resigning ourselves to God in all aspects of our being constitutes real self-surrender. This is achieved by following a path of self-dedication in which we recognize God's will as supreme. Resignation of our will to God's will is the first step in our struggle on the path. This means that we take whatever happens to us as willed by the Divine for our good, because God is all love, goodness, peace, joy, compassion and forgiveness. From such a God no evil can come to us. In this staunch belief we take whatever He determines for us as meant for our good.

—Swami Ramdas

# MĀTRI SATSANG

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

(Translated from Bengali)

(9th Samyam Mahavrata at Atma-Vijñāna Bhavan, Rishikesh from April 15th to 21st, 1959.

*April 15th, 1959*

*Question* : Why have we come to Rishikesh ? What is the particular virtue of Rishikesh ?

*Mataji* : What is called Rishikesh ?

*Pandit Sundarlal* : The Lord of the senses is called 'Hrishikesh'.

*Mataji* : This is a place for Rishis in peaceful surroundings, a place for *tapasyā* ; how many ascetics have not performed their spiritual practices here in the past, are doing so now, and will continue to do so in the future. On coming here the mind automatically becomes tranquil.

*Question* : Have you noticed anything out of the ordinary on this first day of the *Samyam Saptaha* ?

*Mataji* : I have no *kheyāla* to speak now ; but wherever this body may go something or other like this keeps on happening. Here also this has been the case. What am I to say ? Shall I disclose it ? The *kheyāla* to tell everything does not always come. Although in the eyes of the world this may be misunderstood as timidity on my part, yet here everybody is my father, mother or friend, so the question of shyness cannot arise.

On the first day this body had sight of a Mahātmā as clearly as you all are being now seen by me. There was a huge crowd, and in the midst of this multitude the Mahātmā was present. He showed much loving-kindness for this body—after all it is a tiny little girl. But it does not occur to me to disclose everything. He did not fondle me as one usually fondles an infant, still he showered his affection on me. This body was lying on a bed without any covering or rugs ; but he let me lie down on his bed, a beautiful bed, the like of which this body had never used before.

He was a famous Mahātmā, I asked him : “Baba, is this your bed ?” He replied : “Yes, this is my bed.” We talked of highly spiritual subjects. The next day a *bhandāra* (feast) was being given. So he fed me with choice morsels, just as one feeds a child with loving attention. There is a lot more to be said but there is no *kheyāla* to speak out.

*Question* : Please tell us which spiritual subjects you discussed !

*Mataji* : There is no *kheyāla* at present to talk about this.

*Question* : What was the appearance of the Mahātmā like ?

*Mataji* : Very beautiful, clad in saffron robes. Rishikesh is a very special place.

*Question* : Have you the direct experience of what Rishikesh really is ?



*Mataji* : Rishikesh itself is an experience, a very special place. One can hear the uninterrupted music of Ganga and gaze at the Himalayan range that towers like a yogiraj; the atmosphere is hushed, serene, solemn. Whether you are bent on it or not, your mind will become tranquil of itself. Just as the sun shines on all without distinction of place or object, so does the influence of Rishikesh affect everybody without exception. There is no similar inspiration in other towns. The atmosphere of this place is very wonderful. If you come here you will fall within the orbit of Mahātmās who have forsaken everything and gone out in search of God. Whether you desire it or not, you will have to obtain the vision of God. The sublimity of Ganga will certainly have a calming influence. Moreover the devotion of all bhaktas is also prevalent here. It will affect your thinking. Here you are bound to gain something or other. Once you have seen this place, even the memory of it will be beneficial to you.

*Question* : During meditation sleep overcomes me. During *satsang* as well I feel drowsy.

*Mataji* : Just as when you touch fire you will naturally be burnt, so when you come here this place will exert its inherent influence on you. This spot is ideal for *samyam*. At this time it is specially beautiful; wherever one looks only *vratis* (partaking devotees) can be seen. There are no other crowds here. Keep your mind as open as you possibly can and absorb what you get. This body always asserts that God's grace is incessantly

pouring down. Keep your vessel the right side up and it will surely be filled.

*Question* : Yesterday there was *darśana* of a mahātmā. Was there any *darśana* today ?

*Mataji* : There is no *kheyāla* at present to talk about it.

*Question* : In Somnath in Saurashtra, in front of Śiva temple, everybody took photos from outside. As light fell on the face, all the hair on the head came out white.

*Mataji* : It is you who took the photos, you should be aware of what happened.

*Question* : Where did the light come from ?

*Mataji* : Now also everything is present, even the sun. Where the opposites of seeing and not seeing have remained, there will be "yes" and "no". Everywhere all kinds of things may happen in all kinds of ways. Just as you are father, husband and son all in one, all things exist at the same time. Surely, what you just mentioned must have been Śivaji's *līlā*.

*Questioner* : Ma, you make everybody dance to your tune ! (General laughter.)

*Mataji* : Pitaji has learnt even how to surpass the Guru. This body never makes any one dance to its tune. You all are full of love, affection and compassion and so you have come here to give *darśana*. How gracious you are to listen to this little girl's talk ! This body does not even know how to perform service. Making others dance one watches the fun. But here (with Ma) there are no "others," nobody is separate. All are my fathers,

mothers or friends— all are mine, nobody is distant. This body does not even know how to talk properly, it does not observe the laws and canons of language. How can there be any fear before my fathers and mothers ? There is nobody here to make me dance. It is you who dance and make others dance. Everyone and every thing are but *vigrahas*<sup>1</sup> of God, nothing else exists. This is why this body says, it is you who perceive others as separate ; but here there simply are no others.

*Question* : Is there any possibility of quarrels arising ?

*Mataji* : It is your job to perform *japa* and meditation. Don't worry about disagreements. Endeavour to be absorbed in your own thoughts, which means thoughts about God, thoughts concerning Supreme Truth, be engrossed in your Self. Sorrow arises from the sense of separateness. Where duality has remained there only quarrels and disagreements arise. Why think along those lines ? Be content to stay with yourself, within your own Self. When life is based on duality in this dual world, fears and dread come into being. This is very true indeed. You are your own veil of ignorance. Is it not so ? Admit it !

*Questioner* : I do not understand all this.

*Mataji* : Egoism, the sense of "you" and "I", this is the covering veil.

*Question* : But the devotee and God are certainly two, so there is duality here also !

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1. *Vigraha* Concrete External Presence as Form.

*Mataji* : Between God and the devotee there is no veil of ignorance. The devotee is God's permanent servant. How can there be any veil of ignorance here ? If there were, how could one speak of a permanent servant ?

*Question* : What exactly does "permanent servant" (*nitya dāsa*) mean ?

*Mataji* : Don't you know that it is said, when Mahavira (Hanuman) was asked ; "Who is Rama ? What is your relationship with Rama ?" Mahavira replied : "Seen from the level of the *Ātmā*, Rama & I are one. On the plane where there are parts, He is the whole and I am a part of Him ; and from the point of view of the world He is the Master and I am his permanent servant."

Where the one *Ātmā* is, there can be no such thing as idea and its expression as creation (*driṣṭi-sriṣṭi*). The power of burning is equal in fire and in a spark of fire : Just as fire can burn something, so can a spark. In the one *Ātmā* only all this is possible.

*Questioner* : But all this cannot take place without God's Grace !

*Mataji* : Where there is a receptacle for grace, the Giver of grace and the supplicant, there grace will certainly be obtained. You all know that this body keeps on repeating : the grace of God Almighty is incessantly being lavished. Keep your vessel straight side up and it will be filled ; but if you hold it upside down, the grace will flow away.

April 17th, 1959

*Question* : People say, one should surrender to God. Has it to be achieved by oneself or does the Guru make one do it ?

*Mataji* : You are a pandit, why don't you explain ?

*Pandit Sundarlal* : If I were a Guru I should speak.

*Mataji* : You will hear exactly as you sound the instrument. To whom is one to surrender oneself ? Surrender comes about spontaneously. Self-dedication by effort is a particular action, but entire and total surrender happens of itself.

*Pt. Sundarlal* : Please don't twist your words !

*Mataji* : Surrender to whom ? To one's own Self. Just as a small child solely relies on its mother. However, the relationship between mother and child is based on ignorance and attachment through delusion. There is attachment in both. It is the mother's nature to do everything possible to keep her child happy, but she does not fulfil every one of its obstinate demands. A mother is the ideal of affection. But there can be no true love (*prema*) between human beings (*jīva*) ; real love (*prema*) is only between *jīva* and Śiva. To whom should I surrender ? To my Guru or to my Divine Beloved (*Iṣṭa*) ?

*Question* : Yes, tell us !

*Mataji* : Where one's Guru and *Iṣṭa* are, there nobody is separate. This is why I have said that true surrender is to one's own Self.

*Questioner* : I still don't understand.

*Mataji* : When saying "I", who is this "I" ? One does not know because of the covering veil of ignorance (*pardā*). What does "*pardā*" mean ? *Pardā* (curtain) means *para-dwāra* (a door to something else), that is to say, a *pardā* presupposes the existence of a second. In the material world there is bound to be a concealing screen. Every *jīva* is in reality Śiva. But where the *jīva* is Śiva, how can there be a hiding curtain ?

*Pt. Sundarlal* : You talk to us from a very high level !

*Mataji* : Fundamentals have been spoken of. Now, when one asserts that when the roots of a tree are there, then flowers, fruits and everything pertaining to the tree will develop—so surrender cannot be to another.

Of course, this body babbles like a child, while you are all learned people. Surrender yourself to your Guru or *Iṣṭa*. If the action of surrender were not already inherent in you, one could not say "surrender yourself". Exactly as your Guru bids you to, engage in kirtana, meditation, *japa* and so on. In this endeavour utilize to the full the energy that you are spending on following your vocation and earning your keep. The rest God Himself will provide to make it complete. So long as there is a desire for sense enjoyment one has to be in a body.

To aspire to Knowledge is natural to man, because in Reality he is indeed Knowledge, he is the *Ātmā*, so the cover that conceals this fact is unbearable to him. Try to discover what you really are !

*Samyam* means a way of life whereby all your intemperance is brought under control. Through *Samyam* the road to Immortality will be opened up. Bābā (Mahamandaleswara Bhagavatānanda) has declared to day that “just as a piece of iron can be beaten into any shape after having been heated up, so also can the mind be shaped.”—By doing so will be revealed what you really are, your true Self. Genuine surrender will come about spontaneously.

As long as one has the energy to act, it is right to perform auspicious actions. By persisting with this the fact will become evident that “He is none other than you”, in other words “Soham” (THAT am I).

*Question* : Does iron approach the magnet or does the magnet attract the iron ? Do you attract those who come to you or do they come of their own accord ?

*Mataji* : I do not bring anyone to myself.

*Questioner* : I shall parade before you ten such persons !

*Mataji* : All right, do so ! (Everybody laughs).

*Questioner* : Self-dedication can only be to the beloved.

*Mataji* : Yes, unless he is one's own it cannot be done.

*Question* : If first of all you become most precious to me, then I shall forsake my hearth and home and come to you. Is this due to attraction from your end ?

*Mataji* : Baba, this is attraction on your own part.

*Pt. Sundarlal* : Please speak out straight !

*Mataji* : It is you alone who exist, there is none else. You appear as non-achievement and also as achievement ; You are in the form of both vice and virtue. Attraction originates from His end. When the self is surrendered to the Self, then there will be Revelation—when this attraction becomes evident there will be Revelation.

*Question* : Are there different types of attraction ?

*Mataji* : There are infinite kinds of attraction, just an infinite number of trees can derive from a single seed. There is infinity in the one and the one in the infinite.

*Question* : Do you call those whom you want ?

*Mataji* : This body neither calls anyone nor does it remove anyone, it does not talk to anyone nor partake of anyone's food.

*Questioner* : All this is mere deceiving on your part.

*Mataji* : This body does not deceive any body. Sitting here on the bank of holy Ganga this body will surely not utter any falsehood. That you see deception shows that you yourself are the wilful, fanciful ruler.

*Question* : Why don't you make us love God's name ? What kind of a person are you ?

*Mataji* : Yes, what are you like ? Only when you make the Name your constant companion you will come to love it. Just as water is struck by continuous digging into the soil, so will your devotion for the Name become profound by sustained practice. So long as this does not happen continue to repeat His name.



Today I saw a shadowy figure sitting to the north facing the Ganga. He was clad in white garments and had long hair. Then I saw another person sitting on an *āsana*, also wrapped in clothes. Uncovering his face I saw he was none other than Mahāvīraji. When Sri Ramaji's pūjā was being performed this morning on the occasion of *Rāma Navami*,<sup>1</sup> a photo was taken of Sri Rama, I beheld his feet floating in the air. Later I saw him as a boy. As soon as I noticed the feet in the air, I at once asked Kantibhai<sup>2</sup> to provide a foot-stool. Furthermore, do you know what I observed behind Mahaviraji? Someone was lying in *savāsana* (dead pose) and someone else was performing *kurmāsana*. Thereafter I beheld the feet and Sri Rama as a child.

*Question* : Who was the other person ?

*Mataji* : Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra was there and Mahāvīraji, His attendant. The Lord did not appear as a youth but as a child. Mahāvīraji was sitting down below.

*Question* : So many people are sitting in the hall. Where was Mahaviraji sitting ?

*Mataji* : Do you imagine by sitting in the hall you have filled it? In fact there is nobody here, the whole hall is lying empty.

*Question* : Who was the third person you saw ?

*Mataji* : Must have been one of his companions.

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1. *Rama Navami* is Sri Rama's birthday, usually in April.  
2. Swami Bhagavatananda Giri.

*Question :* You would surely have recognized him. Please tell us his name !

*Mataji :* He did not disclose it.

*Question :* When did you see Lord Raghavendra and Mahaviraji ?

*Mataji :* During *mouna* (silence).

*Question :* Were they mahātmās in *savāsana* and *kurmāsana* ? Who were they ?

*Mataji :* Names must not be disclosed. This body does not speak of the future. Baba had said that this being the bank of the Ganga, how fortunate we were to have this wonderful opportunity of listening here to discourses of mahātmās. At this time everything got ready by itself for such a function. Those who were fated to participate have come and those who have not come were not destined to take part, so they are absent.

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*“Believe me, saints’ outlook is different. They feel really that suffering and comfort belong to the same category. They remember that whatever He does for them is for their benefit. So says Farid.”*

—Baba Farid

# DIVINITY'S TREASURE

Marge Hendel

It's the beauty of Her twilight hour  
And countless hearts sing Her name  
And countless souls are raised to regions supreme  
Regions of blessedness, ecstasy, light and peace.

Divinity's Treasure has descended this era  
From heights of the bountiful heavens  
Forging our souls from Her beacon of light.  
Divinity's Treasure—who is Mother Divine...  
Our Ma...Sri Sri Anandamayi.

Of unimaginable splendor is She, Anandamayi,  
our Ma,  
Created in God's own glorious image,  
On the throne of transcendence, as Soul of the  
universe,  
Sharing Her gifts, divine.

She crowns the firmament with gentleness and love,  
And moves with poise of an angel.  
Our globe is wrapt in Her infinite heart...  
Our burdens are laid in Her outstretched hands.

The blissful Mother resides amongst us  
And calls us to darshan each day  
To rise to Her splendor, serenity, love,  
To crown each moment with strength of Her  
blessing.

A benediction is Mother—blissful, sublime and  
sweet  
Strong, beyond mortal conception,  
Omniscient beyond mind's comprehension.

To live in this age in the arc of Her being  
Is treasure and gift beyond words  
Is love and gratitude, peace and beatitude,  
Elevation, redemption, release.

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# SRI SRI MA : THE UNREVEALED REVEALED

SVAKRIYA SVARASAMRIT VOL. 1\*

*Explanatory Survey*

Ma Das

The Supreme Ultimate Reality is the *Bhūma* (Divine Ground)—the undivided imperishable ONE-NESS—and It alone IS. This is the Truth, the final verdict of our sacred scriptures. Again, this sole causeless Cause, the source of everything in the world and beyond, is the immortal *Svarūpa* (Self) of all creation. And the publication *Svakriya Svarasamrit* contains an authentic record of the rare revelation of this *Svarūpa* through different phases, aspects and activities in the divine life-movements of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi—the Uncreated in peerless manifestation—and Her inseparable mother, our Gurudev Sri Sri Muktananda Giriji Maharaj.

In the phenomenal world, based on the divine deception of duality, the mind—itself a product of the grand Illusion—perceives and accepts as real, the apparent two-fold aspect of actor-action in all activities. But where the *niravārana* (unveiled) Self-emanated emergence of the Supreme Itself,

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\*English version of the first of the three volumes published so far in Bengali in the series under the title 'SVAKRIYA SVARASAMRIT'.

the undifferentiated ONE alone is and no other, there, all movements are naturally spontaneous, effortless and without any differentiation of actor-action. And this is *Svakriya* (*Sva*: Self or Supreme, and *Kriya*: action), which cannot be comprehended in the domain of the mind, as it belongs to the region beyond the reach of man's intellect. However, if a rough simile would help, one could perhaps say that *Svakriya* is like an oceanic wave which is spontaneous self-movement of the sea.

Also, existing simultaneously in that ONENESS are two other aspects represented by the term *Svarasamrit*: *Svaras*—the divine *ras* (sweetness) in identity with *Sva* (Self) and (*Sva*) *Amrit* (literally no death)—the innate immutability of the Supreme. Hence the elaborate English equivalent of *Svakriya Svarasamrit* (the Bengali title of the book) is “Spontaneous self-movement as undifferentiated actor-action, Sweetness in Identity with the Self and Innate Immutability of the Supreme”. This is more or less the utmost that can be conveyed in words to explain the awesome, though most appropriate title of the book under survey.

The phenomenon that is Ma Anandamayi defies all description, since it is not just a phenomenon but phenomenon, noumenon and beyond both at the same time, and the same applies to Her mother (our Didima) Giriji Maharaj, the ‘supreme great receptacle’. These two are ‘two forms of the same ONE—Mother, Daughter—the two indeed are ONE; the ONE, in fact, is two, as it were. The receptacle is His own creation and because He will

reveal Himself, is not this particular form too His only? It is only in the lineage of this family that what the mind cannot imagine as something that can happen has happened'.

## BROAD OUTLINE

*Svakriya Svarasamrit* begins with 'a general survey of the various aspects of life pertaining to this lineage, based as they are on the way of *Rishis* alone', revealing, in the background of rare spirituality, inspiring harmony and refinement in a superbly holy environment.

Both in this, the maternal home of Ma, as well as on Her paternal side, were families of hereditary Gurus—the descendant-disciples of *Rishis* Bharadwaj and Kashyap respectively. *Dādāmahāśaya* (Ma's father) was a most unusual person, in that 'at all moments, he was *tatrūpa* (with that Supreme aspect) only, and this was just a natural way with him'. In Didima (Ma's mother), there was an unwavering serenity of constant awareness under all conditions, with the three of them (father, mother and daughter) as *Triveni Sangam* (confluence of three rivers Ganga, Jamuna and the invisible Saraswati). Along with all this is presented a vivid picture of the traditional social discipline of those days in the context of the prevalent social ideal of high spirituality, with the *Śāstras* (holy scriptures of Hindus) playing a significant role, and rituals as powerful instruments to further spiritual growth.

The priceless divine utterances of Ma, generally as replies to questions in different contexts and liberally interspersed all over the publication, constitute a very special feature, and, of course, a subject of vital interest is the discussion on the *Svarūpa* (Reality) of Ma. Then, there are several other topics of great value. Out of them, those included in this survey are 'Visions of Giriji—their essential nature'; 'That, That and That alone' and 'An Instrument in His hands'.

### MA'S MATERNAL HOME

Ma's ancestral homestead on the maternal side was in the village of Sultanpur (now in Bangladesh), in the district of Tripura. In this family lineage, there appeared 'a great spiritual figure whose status and reputation were acknowledged as those of a *Jagatguru* (world teacher). Also, from the unknown past, there had been successive generations of many pandits in this family; and persons expert in spiritual rites, *sādhakas* (aspirants) and yogis as well took birth here'.

*Ma's Grand-Parents*—Ma's grandfather, Ramakant Bhattacharya had all the distinguishing features of a righteous brahmin, namely 'adoption inwardly and outwardly of the ways and methods which help to abide in truth, bring truth to light and become a centre of natural attraction for society's regard and devotion'. A Sanskrit residential school was at his home. Students and *śiṣyas* (disciples) who sought learning, came from remote places to the home of the Guru and

acquired knowledge while remaining under his care and devoted to his service (*seva*).

Befitting his exalted, noble personality, was his life-partner—Ma's grandmother—Hara Sundari Devi. She died early, when her daughter—Ma's mother—was only seven years old. However, it was learnt from Ma that 'She had heard that Hara Sundari Devi was also endowed with great beauty and virtuous qualities. Wherever she happened to be, the environment around her appeared to be radiant, as it were, through the effulgence of her beauty'.

*Rituals Promote Spiritual Development*—Worship, prayer, etc., all aim at that ONE, the Supreme, as the objective. 'The *ānanda* (bliss) of the ONE alone spreads out into infinite receptacles, while the infinite receptacles realize their cherished objective with the fulfilment of their resort in the lap of the ONE. It was as if this great ideal blossomed in all kinds of activities and rituals performed in this house'. And whenever these were undertaken, the environment, then, was such that there would be 'a centring of the entire energy of the village with enthusiasm and jubilation around these *pujās* (ritualistic worship), festivals, etc., with offers of assistance in sincere cooperation, as if one exercised the right to do so in one's own house'. And, of course, in all such activity, Ramakant Mahāśaya took the lead. 'Remaining at the forefront and observing scriptural rites in their unalloyed form, he would get executed, with flawless skill, all such rituals, etc., to perfect con-



clusion according to the injunctions of the *Sāstras*. In all such rituals and the like, he maintained the same ideal throughout his life and thus a model for perfection was sustained in an ever-living spirit'.

*Ramakant's Grihastāshram*—The second Chapter gives in detail the various aspects of the *grihastāshram* (life of a householder) of Ramakant, Mahaśaya. About his residence, the description covers his flower and fruit gardens, the Outer Section for men and the Inner Section comprising the residential part for ladies, the temple of the family deity, *Sri Sri Lakshminarayan Śalagram Śilā*, etc.

The outer apartment in the Section for men was suitably set up as a place for meeting, conversation and exchange of views among people from all stratas of society, Hindus and Muslims. 'The speciality in these meetings was the feeling that all were one's own and a spirit of friendliness towards all castes—*brahmins, kshatriyas, vaisyas, sudras*, etc., with respect, kind treatment, love and affectionate regards, as appropriate for each individual. To accord such a welcome to all was a distinguishing feature of this family'.

There were different types of seats for seating the visitors, and each visitor occupied the seat meant for him in accordance with his status and traditional place in society. 'Preserving the special ideal of the supreme spiritual goal of this family as the distinct common chord through all affairs, provided the background of this meeting place.

Continuing over a long past, and particularly within the atmosphere as it then existed, what a beautiful pattern of state of affairs was there !”

*Traditional Social Discipline*—What was the basis of this traditional social discipline ? ‘What is mentioned in the *Śāstras* was, indeed, followed by all classes’, keeping the spiritual ideal in view. There was then no confused conception of human rights as such, but obligatory right for each. For instance, ‘the actions of a brahmin had to be what was befitting a brahmin, to reveal what a brahmin essentially is. This too, indeed, has to be borne in mind that as the *Śāstras* declare, a brahmin is he in whom *Brahman* (Ultimate Reality) stands revealed’. The brahmin, and not political power or money, was given the first position in society because of this consideration.

About the spiritual ideal, ‘injunctions in the *Śāstras* regarding regulations for each caste are laid down to help one who has undertaken the journey for Self-realization from where he is stationed in order to reach his own objective’. All this was clearly grasped by all sections of society, and in keeping with that ideal, there never could be, for instance, a controversy in occupying different kinds of seats meant for people of different status and traditional place in society. It should be remembered that when the social ideal is high spirituality, ‘there is love born out of the understanding that there is only one *Ātman* abiding in all, and then, in that state, a spirit of pleasant friendliness will always be there whatever the type of activity based

on his caste, religion and work may be his means of livelihood'.

*Significant Role of Śāstras*—In reply to a question on the importance of the various relevant activities and rituals, Ma said, "At that time, a sincere effort was made to submit to the injunctions of the Śāstras. To the extent that this was done, there was an awakening of Śakti (spiritual energy) and so this, indeed, had connection with the background of such activities and rituals. The significance of abiding by the disciplines as codified in the Śāstras is to commence the journey for the awakening of a succession of inner Śaktis (powers)... The quest of Truth through observance of such a code of discipline leads to peace and self-possession, signifying Supreme Knowledge, which is beyond knowledge and ignorance. For such a revelation to take place, there is no other alternative way—none, none, none at all!"

*Inspiring Harmony and Refinement*—In the grihastāshram of Ramakant—naturally a joint Hindu family—there was, in keeping with its high spiritual ideal, an environment of perfect discipline based on a feeling of oneness among all and a very high degree of refined restraint, wisdom and love on the part of the elders. Among the ladies, in particular, where we see so much disharmony these days in similar circumstances, there was full understanding and ideal harmony in the home of Ramakant.

In each activity of the home, the house-mother (the head among the ladies in the house)

was the central figure. With love and affection, this house-mother 'would keep everyone enthusiastically engaged in work, inspiring them with her own example. With the cutting of jokes in between, now and then, as appropriate to the occasion, delightful harmony too would prevail in their midst. Indeed, in all affairs, the principle of truth was specially followed. Reporting with a prejudiced mind in favour of someone—such partiality was totally absent'.

The discipline was of such a high order that while everyone accepted cheerfully the decision and direction of the house-mother, she herself was all level-headedness with sobriety all the time, 'and as to mental agitation on her part, the question simply did not arise'.

In that truly affectionate environment, 'fault-finding was, of course, never indulged in, and self-importance was non-existent'. In this context, 'we have heard Ma say: indeed, the tendencies which are uncivilized, unrefined and lacking in culture, prevent progress on the journey aiming at the Supreme Objective. In fact, they are a great hindrance, as they create obstacles on the path. One should remain aware of this'.

### PATERNAL LINEAGE

Ma's grandfather Trilochan Bhattacharya was a resident of the progressive village Vidyakut, also in the district of Tripura. Proficient in learning, culture and the art of handling social affairs, he was also a handsome person. And it was to his

second wife Tripura Sundari Devi whom he had married after the death of his first wife, that Ma's father Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya was born.

'In the history of this lineage, many many decades ago, there had been, among the ancestors, one who had become fully illumined through what he had received from his own Guru and similar contacts. Since then, indeed, the *sevā-pūjā* (ritualistic worship as prescribed by the *Śāstras*) of the family deity of this lineage, Sri Sri Raj Rajeshwar Śalagram Śilā, had been maintained all these years. The lineage, too, of Sri Sri Guru had been continuing to function, assuming special significance since initiated by him'.

Tripura Sundari Devi, Ma's grandmother (*Thakurmā*), 'was born in a distinguished brahmin family, rich in spiritual wealth, of a really small village named Kheora'. Possessed of most unusual single-mindedness, her self-forgetfulness was of such an extraordinary character that 'even the thought of letting her very first infant suckle her breast in time would go off her mind'. On undertaking any work, she would do it with such absorbing interest and dexterity that she would 'have no thought of feeding the infant and serving food to her husband and others in right time'.

*Dādāmahaśaya* (*Ma's father*). The outstanding character of *Dādāmahaśaya*, Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya, was that he remained engrossed day and night in *bhajan* and *kirtan* devoted to *Bhagavān*. In playing musical instruments like violin, sitar, sarod, etc., he was a specially renowned adept.

‘But whether in respect of songs and *bhajans* or in the playing of musical instruments, he never had any training at all under anyone else—in fact, it was he, all by himself’. Naturally, therefore, the people as a whole regarded him with esteem and veneration. His absorption in singing and playing musical instruments was so great ‘as if he were not conscious whether it was morning, evening, day or night’.

In reply to a question on the real nature of *Dādāmahaśaya’s bhajans*, Ma said, “Here, in fact, you can observe that the entire life is in dwelling on the supreme *bhajan* and *kirtan*, the sweetness itself pertaining to the Self (*nija-rasa-svarūpa*). This body (meaning Herself) had definitely observed clearly that in taking meals and the like, in his movements—in all actions in any context—he would devote himself to that as little only as was barely needed. ...Indeed, in all affairs, this particular mode would remain unimpaired”.

In his case, ‘we feel that here is the self-revelation of the reality of a yogi in secrecy ; taking on at the same time an appearance like that of the innate reality of a *sādhaka* in *kirtan*. Functioning naturally and normally in the midst of all present, in a happy-go-lucky way, he remained innately in his reality in himself alone, with the plain and simple glory of poverty as well—this was his way of life. In our thinking it is the Supreme State that Sriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahaśaya was in, that occurs repeatedly to our

mind. Here, too, the question of attainment through *sādhana* does not arise at all'.

### MOKSHADA SUNDARI DEVI (MA'S MOTHER)

It was in 1877, at Sultanpur, that Sriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi—our *Didima* (Mother of Ma)—came into the range of our vision as the daughter of Ramakant Bhattacharya and Hara Sundari Devi. Right from her childhood, she attracted love and affection from neighbours, relations and everyone. Girls of the same age-group ever longed to enjoy her company. Always cheerful, simple and naturally guileless in her movements and dealings, 'even a single look at her would give one a kind of inexplicable experience within the domain of one's mind, which could not wholly be conveyed in any language'.

A most significant outstanding quality observed in our *Didima* was that she was not only never overpowered by anger at all at any time, but 'even high-pitched voice showing an angry mood was never heard or experienced by any one'. Pointing towards this extra-ordinary trait in her, Ma once smilingly said, "Dear mother, of what material was this head of yours made that it is such a calm and cool head?"

'The *Sāstras* say that the cause of anger is obstruction in the fulfilment of desire. Then, who is here—what should one conclude? As if demonstrating continuously what is recorded in the *Sāstras* and heard also from the mouth of saints—it was a mind free from desire. We feel

that here it is not at all a case just of demonstration only : is He not alone in Himself ?".

After her marriage, in her household affairs, 'her activities were always centred in the suspense-free, calm, composed, steadfast unperturbedness of the supreme Action itself. In her disposition and activity, this was always clearly revealed as if all actions were undoubtedly expressions of His will, He Himself.' To judge the basis of action on her part in her household life and to determine its real nature, Ma was questioned and She said, "As a touch, it was of her own ; in fact, she herself was the dwelling place, garden, water, earth and all."

'In the midst of pains and pleasures, favourable and unfavourable conditions, as and when encountered within family life, her ever-satisfied and relaxed state at all times remained with an undaunted frame of mind. Could there be a likeness of this kind of performance, so complete in all parts, in the kingdom of *jīva* (individual consciousness, monadic in character) in this world ?'

It should be remembered that 'to mould into the respective particular pattern that may lead to the complete realization of our objective—it is to help us towards this end that all such activities and the like too, as related to her, are being brought to light. This is exactly what we should try to comprehend as much as our competence may permit'.



## MA'S ADVENT : DISCUSSION ON HER SVARUPA (REALITY)

Being desirous of having a son worthy of the family, Ma's *Thakurmā* (paternal grandmother) would pray for it to the *Vigrahas* in every temple she visited. Among such visits, she once went to the famous Kali temple at Kasba. Since forgetfulness was her inborn nature, when she sat down to offer prayers after doing *pūjā*, the words that came out of her mouth unexpectedly were, 'If I am blessed with a grand-daughter and she lives long, then on the occasion of her marriage, Sri Sri Kālimātā will be worshipped with due ceremonial rites'. As soon as she got up, she realized: 'Mother has deluded me' and said, 'All right Hari, let Thy will be done ! Let Thou be manifested in any form which pleases Thee'.

In this connection, Ma was asked whether this was the sole cause of Her advent and She replied, "Is this the one and the only cause that you can think of ?" And when this was countered by the question as to what other cause there could be, She said, "In the company of you all, don't you see ?" After this She made some signs and certain movements with Her hands, but what was implied by those gestures was beyond comprehension. Now, 'Her being with us—is it without a purpose ? Indeed, He Himself is in our midst—the ONE who is immanent and transcends the universe, He Himself is amongst us'.

We know that according to the *Sāstras*, a soul gets embodied as a result of past actions which

determine such details as place of birth, span of life, the pleasure and pain it will experience, etc. But in the form of Ma, which we see, there is no connection between the form and the past or the future, as we have heard. 'The body and its activities, whatever they may be, are there only in our perception, as if bearing our own likeness. But here, where is the room for the question of a body' (as there is no connection with the past or the future).

As for the play of *sādhana* and talks on abstruse and allied subjects, they were also like any other activity such as movements, sitting down or other audio-visual actions. So all that may be said in this connection is : 'The body with its physical form, which is within our range of vision, even though it is a body, in fact, how could such a body be ? On the other hand, in this form, in that form—indeed, in each form—is revealed that form of super-splendour as also the formless—could the same be in the form of this *Vigraha* ? Even when spoken of as Infinite, the last word has not been said ; when spoken of as ONE, then too it is confined to a number, and so the assessment is not correct either way. In spite of its being everything, it is the same even without being anything—how to say what it is and what it is not ? So indeed, when conceded as a body, it is not merely the body. Even when admitted as bodiless, the question of body, however, remains. When all endeavour to grasp and comprehend is paralyzed and is at rest, is it 'That' which is revealed before our eyes in the

shape of a body? Where is any further question here of being within the reach of understanding? Indeed, we have been hearing: how can one catch Him unless he allows Himself to be caught?’

So all that we can say about the phenomenon that is Ma is that ‘What is before us in a physical form is, indeed, That which is unmanifested, ineffable, That which is Self-splendour, also the Light of the great Light—Self-Revealed Unrevealed’.

Now, ‘one understands and comprehends in his line of thinking according to what is admitted by the mind’ and ‘whatever we accept mentally is, indeed, in keeping with what we think, which is certainly in the realm of the mind’. But ‘where abstruse truth pertaining to *Svamūl Svarūpa* (the cause in identity with Reality Itself) is concerned, it is, indeed, not at all within the working of the mind—in fact, it can never be apprehended by it’.

Therefore, under the circumstances, the only way is to have recourse to repeated reading of the words concerning that Supreme Wealth. As this goes on, ‘while pursuing that trend of thought in the realm of the mind, at some moment will be revealed the form of the faint presence of the touch of the purifying connection with ever-present Remembrance. With that hope, we go on progressing’. That in fact, is the purpose of producing the series of books entitled ‘*Svakriya Svarasamrit*’.

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## VISIONS OF GIRIJI : THEIR ESSENTIAL NATURE

In later years of her life, after taking *sannyās* Mokshada Sundari Devi was in our midst as Sri Muktananda Giriji Maharaj. It was then that, in response to earnest enquiry, Giriji revealed certain facts about her visions which she had experienced at the time of Ma's advent. She had said that even two or three months before Ma was to make Her advent in her body, "I very often saw many incarnations (*avatāras*) in various forms, numerous deities and gods come near me in a vision—what a glorious manifestation !"

Again, when Ma's advent in her had become definite, then sometimes during that period too, while sitting and truly awake, she said, "I could feel an indescribable environment. In my room itself, I used to have a vision of all these appearances repeatedly in a like manner as if the previous vision were also included. Further, sages and ascetics (*rishis, munis*) numerous *vigrahas* of deities, etc, in their respective moulds familiar to me—of course, all were certainly not so well known at that time—would appear within clearly cognizable sight and sometimes a few among them would even be seen moving about. On the other hand, I would, with an inexplicable inner experience, welcome and extend ceremonial reception (*avahan* and *varan*) to them with reverence."

In another vision, Giriji had said that, while sitting in her room wide awake, with an unaccountable inner feeling, she had seen that from some-

where—she did not know from where—had ‘appeared a young lady, looking like a married woman, dressed in a sari with a red border and a veil on her face, and after giving in my hand a winnowing platter decorated with requisite articles for ceremonial reception, (though not perceivable at the gross level) had gone away—becoming invisible there itself’.

When this was referred to Ma in some context some other time, Ma had said, “There is a state and stage for this too (to happen). With that particular stage becoming manifest, such kind of revelation has surely to take place. But, in the ordinary course, all this cannot happen. The revelation of all this is an extraordinary and profound action (*Kriya*) which takes place through an appropriate touch at the moment when it is *Svakriya*.....All this does not belong to the ordinary world of creation-perception (*Srishti-Drishti*) in the domain of the mind’.

About the other visions of Giriji, Ma, when replying to a query on a certain occasion had said, “One may have some experience at a certain stage of *sādhana*—all this cannot be said in any way in the case of Giriji.....This is really not a matter of the inner world. The environment in which this takes place, who is it that is there—do you know? It is difficult to understand it through intellectual enquiry and the like. In this vision there is no question of dream or no dream. It is effortless (*sahaja*) movement in the midst of all moments and at the arrival of a specific time.

*Bhagavān's* activity as itself takes place.....Try to grasp in the context of your query what that particular action (*Kriya*) is. In that Supreme, that form is visible in invisible, invisible in visible”.

In response to another query Giriji had revealed that ‘all those various forms and the like manifested with full brightness’, adding ‘I remained generally unconcerned about the identification or otherwise of all of them. The *avatāras* and the like, as well as many *vigrahas* that are familiarly known and heard of, were there, such as *Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mahaprabhu, Siva, Durga, Kali, Jagaddhātri, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Kartika, Ganesha*—in fact, all others’.

In this connection, Giriji had said that a little before Ma appeared within the sight of the world, a woman friend of *Dādāmahaśaya's* grandfather had exclaimed on looking at Giriji, “Great God! What beauty and glow are bursting forth, as it were !”

Also, in the context of the earlier subject, she had smiled and exclaimed in her innately gentle and sweet language, “Look, listen! What else did I see, do you know? In all, indeed, it was just your Ma! Simultaneously, in your Ma Herself, there was, again, as if, everyone indeed—those there, all of them, the numerous *avatāras* with their *mudrās* and the like!...Besides, there were saints and sages, *rishis, munis* and also numerous gods and the like and goddesses too...There was also the gesture of doing *pranāma* and the like with folded hands, as appropriate in each case during that particular period.”

## THAT, THAT AND THAT ALONE : MA'S REPLIES TO QUETIONS

In reply to a question relating to the activities pertaining to *Svarūpa* with respect to His *līlā khela* (play) which are beyond human comprehension *vis-a-vis* the state of a yogi where spiritual power (*vibhūti*) is awakened, Ma said, "In *jīva-jagat*, while sustaining the sense of want (*abhāva*), the stages that are attained through the current leading to the objective (*svabhāva kriyā*) have their distinctive marks ...In the case of a *jīva*, as a traveller, the objective is realization and attainment of *Bhagavān*. There, indeed, is the process of transformation and a pattern of transformed state as well, and also the attainment of that which was not there before. In *Bhagavān*, all that is stated here is, of course, not there. So now do understand that for a *jīva* it is, in fact, attainment of freedom from bondage and knowledge of that which was not known before. Wherever these spiritual powers (*vibhūti*) are, they are according to different stages and of infinite variety too.

"On the other hand, where you speak of *Bhagavān*, there you should particularly bear in mind that He Himself is pervading (*vibhu*) and 'ti' i.e., here. He is in his statical aspect (*tishthit*)\* Furthermore, that Divine Power (*Vibhuti*) also pertains to His play like clapping oneself with one's hands and hearing too. Here there is no

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\*A play on the word *vibhuti* (spiritual power). *Vibhu* means all pervading and 'ti' as abbreviation of 'tishthit' (that which continues to stay).

question of perfection, imperfection, no question of attainment—non-attainment of the domain of eternity. The divine activities (*līlā*) pertain to *Bhagavān*. Therefore, if He does not bestow His touch, how can it be grasped through the mind with the help of activities acceptable to it ?”

*Question* : And, again, *līlā* too has no place, Ma—about that also we have been hearing.

*Ma* : “Oh *Baba* (father), right you are ! The question of *līlā* too does not arise—‘That’, ‘That’, ‘That’, who in His eternal statical aspect is, in fact, unquestionably there ! In the mental realm, so long as the stage is not attained in which questions cease to crop up, by what means can one transcend the state in which questions arise ? His play—playing Himself with Himself, *līlā*, Himself in Himself alone—merged, absorbed ever. Even, when in existence, there is nothing at all that exists and yet there is existence. He is in the form of questions so long as His touch is not there, later, revealed in the form of absence of questions, just as in the form of words, so also in the form of no words, is that, That, That”.

## AN INSTRUMENT IN HIS HANDS

Continuing Her reply to a question, Ma said on this subject that if one is an instrument in the hands of *Bhagavān* Himself, then he is *Bhagavān*’s own, fashioned by His hand, operated by His hand. “Consequently, all actions do originate from His hands alone. And if they originate from Him only, then they are sustained by Him alone,



and movement, speech, moulding and the like in their entirety are in His hands. Therefore, is it not one's duty to accept that intellect, power of judgement and skill in action really originate from Him ; the use of the term 'I', 'I' in ideas and language, this too indeed...In all this, the mind too is a gift from Him alone. Is it not proper to admit this fact ? It is He who causes movement, in fact, it is He who is moving and He Himself who is using the term 'I', 'I'. One should live a righteous, pure and holy life, while moulding oneself as an instrument in His hand...

“If, in all activities, one can remain solemnly pledged to abide by the principle stated above, then, He Himself will provide the technique for progressive movement to realize one's own Reality. ‘That one is an instrument operated by Him’—for the reason that this thought is held, it amounts to a contemplation of Him alone through this activity. At all times, in all, pervading all, He alone—the ONE exists. Abiding in this act of thinking, though now considered as *kalpana* (mental reflection), even so, is there not a positive hope of getting the touch of *Satya Svarūpa* (Truth Itself) ?

“One should set apart some time during the twenty-four hours and dwell upon the thought pertaining to this aspect too, so that in all activities during the twenty-four hours, the flow of this thought process may blossom. Speaking the truth, abiding in truth, right discrimination, which are conducive to the revelation of one's own Reality—these should also be the pattern of the traveller's

journey. Since the objective of the journey is the realization of one's own Reality, the movement should be a vigorous one. In case of improper conduct, unrighteousness, which invite calamities, the grip (of such weaknesses) will be relaxed".

## CONCLUSION

I should like to conclude the survey of this book with a most appropriate statement of its publisher Sri Virajanandji Maharaj, the well-known mahatma whose life has been blessed by being made an instrument of Ma's grace for us all through Her priceless utterances during the past several decades. About the three volumes published so far, of *Svakriya Svarasamrit*, the revered mahātmā points out the inestimable benefits to be derived by their study. He says: "While deeply pondering over the *Svarūpa* (Reality) of Ma, as the earnest seeker would read through the various chapters of these volumes, he would receive a touch of the vivid portrayal of Her *Svarūpa*, and while not knowing how and when, he would suddenly find that he is, as if, in identity with that *Svarūpa*. Abstruse spiritual truths and the language with deep spiritual significance are the speciality of these publications. For them who are determined to undertake the journey towards immortality, these books are indeed priceless, their contents being the product of the infinite grace of Ma. It seems, as if, it is a singularly great fortune of all genuine aspirants that by making someone an instrument, Her grace is enabling those deeply interested in the

subject to get a touch of the supreme truth through the medium of this writing”.

The publication, spread over 172 pages, contains six chapters of text matter ; nine preliminary pages of contents, Introduction, etc. ; a note on *Sri Yantra* (with a diagram) as an Appendix and a glossary of over one hundred terms of Sanskrit origin. The book carries a beautiful picture of Sri Sri Ma on the front cover, of Giriji on the back cover and 8 pages of attractive illustrations within.

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*“The immortal can be reached only by continuous acts of kindness, and perfection is accomplished by compassion and charity.”*

—Gautam the Buddha

# SOME TYPICAL DIALOGUES WITH SRI MA

Anil Ganguli

## Introduction

“I keep six honest serving men  
(They taught me all I know) ;  
Their names are What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who ?”

This spirit of enquiry is inborn in man. But not every question deserves an answer. And “a fool”, runs an English proverb, “may ask more questions in an hour than a wise man can answer in seven years.”

The *satsanga* centred on Ma is attended by wise men who are assets to the assembly and also by others whose contribution seems to be hardly worth mentioning. But Ma is Ma to all. Whoever the questioner may be and whatever the nature of his question, Ma's answers in any event are invaluable gems. The key to understanding Ma's sayings is to be found in the following passage quoted from the Preface to “*Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma*” :—

“She (Ma) has often declared unequivocally that She does not talk to ‘another’. For Her everything is the One Supreme Being who manifests in infinite diversity, yet at the same time is beyond expression and limitation, formless, immutable,

inconceivable. In that there is no room for distinctions, although on our level they do exist. Questions are asked from the point of view of the individual, but the true answer lies beyond the ego-mind where no separation, no divergence of opinion exists, and Ma gives it expression.”

### On Ma

A question that has agitated the minds of many is : What is Ma ? A Goddess in human form ? An *avatāra* ? A Self-realized human being ? An aspirant for spiritual perfection ? These questions, and many others relating to Ma's identity and spiritual status, have given rise to diverse theories. The gist of some of Ma's sayings which seem to be relevant to these questions is given here : The dialogues reveal that Ma's answer varies with the nature of the question and the approach and spiritual maturity of the questioner. Let me start with two interrogators from abroad with special reference to their respective approach and Ma's corresponding *kheyāla* that arose in response.

In a *satsanga* at Varanasi an Irish journalist expressly wondered, with a ring of sincerity, whether he was right in believing that Ma was God. Then followed an interesting dialogue :—

*Ma* : There is nothing save Him alone. Everyone and everything are but forms of God. In your person also He has come here now to give *darśana*.

*Questioner* : Then why are you in this world ?

*Ma* : In this world ? I am not anywhere. I am myself reposing within myself.

*Questioner* : What is your work ?

*Ma* : I have no work. For whom am I to work since there is only One ?

*Questioner* : Why am I in this world ?

*Ma* : He plays in infinite ways. It is His pleasure to play as He does.

*Questioner* : But why am I in this world ?

*Ma* : That is what I have been telling you. All is He. He plays in countless forms and ways. However, in order to find out for yourself why you are in the world—to find out who you are in reality—there are the various *sādhana*s. You study and you pass your examinations, you earn money and enjoy the use of it. But all this is within the realm of death in which you continue life after life, repeating the same kind of thing again and again. Then, there is another path as well, the path of Immortality, which leads to the knowledge of what you really are.

*Questioner* : Can anyone help me in this or must each one find out for himself ?

*Ma* : The professor can teach you only if you have the capacity to learn. Of course he can give you help but you must be able to respond, you must have it in you to grasp what he teaches.

*Questioner* : Which is the best path to the knowledge of the Self ?

*Ma* : All paths are good. It depends on a man's *saṃskāras*, his conditioning, the tendencies he has brought over from previous births. Just as

one can travel to the same place by plane, railway, car or cycle, so also there are different lines of approach for different types of people. But the best path is the one which the Guru points out.

*Questioner* : When there is only One, why are there so many different religions in the world ?

*Ma* : Because He is infinite, there is an infinite variety of conceptions of Him and an endless variety of paths to Him. He is everything, every kind of belief and also the disbelief of the atheist. Your belief in non-belief is also a belief. When you speak of disbelief, it implies that you admit belief. He is in all forms and He is formless.

*Questioner* : From what you say I gather that you consider the formless nearer to Truth than God with form.

*Ma* : Is ice anything but water ? Form is just as much He as the Formless. To say that there is only one formless Self (*Ātmā*) and all forms are illusion would imply that the formless was nearer to Truth than God-with-form. But this body declares : every form, as also the formless, are He and He alone.

*Questioner* : How can I find happiness ?

*Ma* : First tell me whether you are willing to do as this body bids you to do.

*Questioner* : Yes, I am.

*Ma* : Are you really ? Very well ! Now suppose I ask you to remain here, will you be able to do it ?

*Questioner* : No, I will not (laughter).

*Ma* : You see, happiness that depends on anything outside of you—be it your wife, children, money, fame, friends or anything else—cannot last. But to find happiness in Him who is everywhere, who is all-pervading, your own Self, this is real happiness.

*Questioner* : So you say happiness lies in finding my Self.

*Ma* : Yes, find your Self. Discovering who you really are means to find God, for there is nothing outside of Him.

*Questioner* : You say all are God. But are not some people more God than others ?

*Ma* : For him who asks such a question, this is so. But in actual fact God is fully and equally present everywhere.

*Questioner* : Is there no substance to me as an individual ? Is there nothing in me that is not God ?

*Ma* : No, Even in 'not being God' there is only God alone. Everything is He.\*

Evidently, the Irish journalist had a feeling that Ma might be God. He openly asked Ma whether he was right and he desired to know the secret of happiness. His questions were gladly received and he was fortunate to get from Ma answers to many of his queries. This visibly made him happy. Incidentally, other participants to the *satsanga* profited from Ma's utterances arising out of the foreigner's frank approach, free from any pretension.

\* *Ananda Varta* Vol. VIII/1/40.



Another foreigner, Arthur Koestler, Nobel Laureate, came to the Agarpara Ashram (Calcutta), and had a short interview with Ma. He has since written a book entitled "The Lotus and the Robot", recording his experience of his tour in India and Japan in which a few pages have been devoted to Ma. Before *darśana* he had been given an opportunity of participating in the congregational meditation then going on in the hall of the *Ashram* and his feeling was : "I was unable to enter into the spirit of the silence and wondered why." He has admitted that he was in an unresponsive mood and has recorded his experience of a subsequent interview in Ma's room : "She (Ma) seemed restless, and was chewing *pan*, as I was shown in, she seized me up with a single quick glance, pointed at the mat beneath the dais on which I squatted down, then seemed to lose interest in me." "Does Mother", he asked (in a tone which seemed to be challenging) "approve of what has been written about her, claiming that she is of divine origin?" What happened when his question was being translated has been narrated by this foreigner as follows : "Ananda (*sic*) continued her conversation with another woman in the room, then she snapped impatiently : 'everybody sees in me what he likes'. With that the conversation came to an end ; Ananda kept chatting to the woman and chewing *pan*, ignoring my squatting presence at her lovely feet."

Incidentally, what was this honourable visitor doing during the period of congregational medita-

tion preparatory to *daršana*? He was carefully taking mental note (eventually publicised\*) of “the ugliness of the bare room, with its dirty and peeling plaster-walls” and of “the bed with its greyish, creased sheet standing in lieu of an altar on the platform.”

And after the interview in Ma’s room what was this distinguished guest doing when he was given a seat by my side right in front of Ma? Let us hear his own version :—

“A moment later Ananda (*sic*) herself entered... She was followed by a very old woman with the face and skull of a head-hunter’s shrunken trophy (obviously Didima is meant). ...Ananda (*sic*) made a speech. She wriggled and giggled on the audience : the Finnish sisters in their saffron robes listened with their faces buried in their hands ; the middle-aged lawyer-like man squatting on my other side sat with his mouth open, shaking his head and smacking his lips in wonder, his eyes shining, his expression reverting to infancy....”

His graphic description of things non-essential shows that the tourist’s mind was touring far away from Ma. Arthur Koestler is the critic to whom Benares and its “sewer-like streets” appeared to be a “holy inferno” and Bhaiji “a kind of saintly, tragic clown to Ananda.”

The Irish Journalist’s demeanour showed that he sought light ; and he got light. He left the *satsanga* all smiles. The Nobel Laureate, famous for his book entitled “*Darkness at Noon*”, came

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\* *The Lotus and the Robot* by Arthur Koestler.

to Ma and seems to have discovered darkness at noon.

Let us now turn to Bhaiji, that great *sādhaka* whose ultimate attainment of Self-realization was inspired by Ma. He once made a submission, in the spirit of a genuine seeker, couched in prayerful language : “Mother ! pray, tell me, what are you really ?” Ma laughed and said affectionately :—

“How could such childish queries arise in your heart ? Visions of gods and goddesses appear in accordance with one’s inherited dispositions. I am what I was and what I shall be. I am whatever you conceive, think or say. But it is a supreme fact that this body has not come into being to reap the fruits of past *karma*.”\*

Ma’s self-revelation to Paramahansa Yogananda, already described in an earlier article is beyond our comprehension.\*\* Great personalities speak from peak to peak.

It has been my good fortune to have heart to heart discussions about Ma’s identity with many of her close associates, including Didima. I have noticed that each one of them has some mental image of Ma as painted by him or herself. Not one of them claims that their image is faithful like a photograph which represents an object as it is ; but everybody admits that it rather resembles a painting which gives a picture of an object, not from the objective point of view, but as seen by

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\* *Mother as revealed to me by Bhaiji* (1972 Ed.), p. 6.

\*\* *Glimpses of Ma in Calcutta*.

the painter, reflecting the painter's preferences and rejections, emotions and predilections.

### On God

Not many in *satsanga* are so much interested in unravelling the mystery as to what Ma is as in knowing what She says, because Her sayings help one to improve one's mind and to strengthen one spiritually and thus give one peace and happiness. Let me, therefore, cite samples of Ma's sayings arising out of a variety of questions generally asked for the guidance of the questioner.

To start with, questions regarding God.

*Questioner* : Ma ! is a vision of God possible in these days ?

*Ma* : Why in these days ? It has always been possible.

*Questioner* : I mean direct vision with our eyes.

*Ma* : A vision as clear as daylight. There is no doubt about it. If you call Him, He is ever ready to appear—this is His nature. He manifests Himself clearly ; it is on this account that there goes a saying that *Bhagavan* (God) is at the disposal of His *bhakta* (devotee) ....The idea that God does not exist is the chain by which the *jiva* is bound ; it is the smoke-screen that covers your real Self. Remove it and God will stand revealed in all His glory.

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A devotee was in doubt as to what was the point in observing prescribed rituals meant for a God not known to the worshipper. He could not

express himself clearly ; in fact, he failed to formulate his question properly. But that did not matter. Ma Herself clarified the purport of the question and gave an answer which satisfied the questioner and others present.

*Questioner* : People are asked to worship God, to sing His praises in *bhajan*, to perform *pūjā*, to repeat God's name constantly. And they do all this without knowing what God is. Will you please explain ?\*

*Ma* : God is all-knowledge, and one cannot know His true nature till one attains Self-realization. Thereafter, one will find Him to be none other than one's Self, the only *Ātman*—the *Ātmā* with form as the world, as also the *Ātmā* without form as *Chit*, Pure Consciousness. In the meantime, prayers, worship, *japa*, *dhyāna*, etc., have to be performed.

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Further clarification of the same point will appear from the following dialogue arising out of a somewhat similar question asked by someone else.

*Questioner* : We often hear you say : 'Think of God'. But surely, God is unthinkable and formless. What can be taught of must have a name and a form and therefore it cannot be God.

*Ma* : Yes, without a doubt, He is beyond thought, form and description and yet I say : 'Think of Him !' Why ? Since you are identified with the ego, since you think you are the doer, since you say : 'I can do this and that', and since

\* *Ananda Varta* 1/57.

you get angry, greedy and so forth, therefore you have to apply your 'I-ness' to the thought of Him. True, He is formless, nameless, immutable, unfathomable. All the same He has come to you in the form of *Shabda Brahman* (Brahman symbolised through "Aum") and *Avatāra*. These also are He Himself and consequently, if you abide by His name and cōtemple His form, the veil which is your 'I' will wear off and then He, who is beyond form and thought, will shine forth.

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*Questioner* : What is the easiest way to God ?

*Ma* : Tears !

*Questioner* : And if tears do not come ?

*Ma* : Seek the company of those who shed tears. Attend *satsanga*. The easiest way to God is through love and devotion.

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### On renunciation of the world

With reference to a question as to whether renunciation of the world was a condition precedent to communion with God, Ma once gave a long discourse explaining how to lead a really good life, irrespective of one's commitments as a man of the world.

*Ma* : You are not called upon to retire to the forest or to become inert, unresponsive like a stone to what goes on about you. You have to start life from the position God has placed you in. Be His servant. If you are at home, look upon your

son as Balgopal<sup>1</sup>, your little daughter as Kumari Uma, your wife as Lakshmi. Don't do any harm to anybody. Let the little attachment you have developed to people about you, continue within its minimum limit. When the call will come for your final exit, all the ties of life will have to be snapped up and you won't have a moment's respite. Why do you weep? Judge it yourself; this world is but a *dharmasālā* (traveller's Inn). We meet people there who are on the way: The goal of your final union is the *Ātmā* or Self. Forgetting this you look upon your body as your own self and that is the root of all bondage, of all the miseries of life. This world means perpetual motion; you yourself are in the chains of the ego. So you want to know your birthright. You desire to be free, to throw off your chains. Try to enquire from where you have come. When there is serious disorder in the body, the thought of your son, wife, friend or brother vanishes. You are engrossed in the sole idea of saving yourself. So you find that your Self is the highest object of your love. Self is none other than Rāma who dwells in every one of you. Lower animals pass their lives enjoying only food and sleep. But how do you pass your days as a rational being?

Just as there is a veil of ignorance over you all, there is also a way of escape. Gird up your loins and say, 'I must try my best to find a way out'. This will-to-be-free is your sheet anchor. 'God is and I must find Him' should be the motto of your

1. *Balgopal* The child Krishna.

life. See that not a single breath be wasted till the aim is attained. What you spend for things of the world is a sheer waste. *Hari Bhajan* or worship of God is choosing one line of action, one way that would lead you to His presence. It does not mean that there is only one way. What is important is to stick fast to some way and march on. Let truth be your refuge. For God is Truth. Abide by truth in all ways of life and God will stand revealed. You have such a lovely body ; such an asset should not be wasted with the poison of pleasures of the world ! This little girl of yours, *Pitājī*, implores you all to choose one way, here and now. You must not while away your time in idle pursuits. Trust not a single breath of your life. It may pass away any moment. At all times think of Him. This will give you peace. When we desire little things of the world, we obtain them easily. But in your quest for Him, don't expect anything from Him, except His Grace. He is One, Indivisible, Perfect—the one goal of all men.\*

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In response to a specific question of a Westerner, Ma explained the technique of working in the world.

*Questioner* : Is there no justification at all for professional and any other mundane work ?

*Ma* : \*\*\*Take any path that according to your temperament will lead you to the realization of your Self. Even while working in the world, you can do one thing : whatever you do throughout

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\* *Ananda Varta* I/3/140.



the day, endeavour to do it in a spirit of service. Serve God in everyone, regard everyone and everything as manifestations of Him by whatever work you undertake. If you live with this attitude of mind, the path to Reality will open out before you.

*Another Westerner* : What is right for me, to live an active life in the world or a contemplative life in seclusion ?

*Ma* : To whichever of the two you can give your heart and soul, that is right for you.

*(To be continued)*

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“We must go to the Reality. Renunciation will take us to It. Renunciation is the very basis of our true life ; every moment of goodness and real life that we enjoy is when we do not think of ourselves. This little separate self must die. Then we shall find that we are in the Real, and that Reality is God, and He is our own true nature and He is always in us and with us.

“Let us live in Him and stand in Him. It is the only joyful state of existence. Life on the plane of the Spirit is the only life, and let us all try to attain to this realization.”

—Swami Vivekananda

# THE TEACHING OF SRI ANANDAMAYI MA\*

Ma Suryananda Lakshmi

( Translated from French )

My dear friends, I should like Sri Anandamayi Ma to really be among us to-night. And this is not impossible, as, with Her, everything is possible.

I shall try to efface myself behind Ma. She calls Herself "a little girl". She repeatedly says : "I am a little girl, I am your little child, everybody's little daughter, who wants to give to her parents whatever is most beautiful, good and true!"

Sri Anandamayi Ma is now over 84 years old ; since quite some time Her health is said to be declining, but this in no way keeps Her from constantly travelling all over India inspite of the trying climate. There are several Ashrams in Her name, at Benares, Calcutta and elsewhere, but She is always moving from place to place, and those who seek to meet Her may sometimes have to wait for long periods, under disagreeable and difficult circumstances. It may also happen, that some have to turn back without having seen Her. She goes forward Herself to seek out those who need Her, the sick, the despairing, those who have real

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\*Lecture delivered by Ma Suryananda Lakshmi at "l'Homme et la Connaissance," Paris, on November 18th, 1980

spiritual problems. And this, not only in India, for, whenever necessary, She is present in the West. I have had this experience myself : all of a sudden, —*there She is*, bringing to Her father, Her Mother, what each needs, because She is the child !

Anandamayi Ma, when young, was exceptionally beautiful. She lived unknown in the midst of Her family, passing through innumerable *samādhis*, spiritual ecstasies which, with Her, were *spontaneous*. Later on, there will be mention of this spontaneous ecstasy, which She says is the only kind that is authentic.

Now that She is older, people from all parts of India, come to see Her and ask Her questions. Her Teaching is spreading wider and wider. Many are eager to have what is called Her '*darśana*'. *Darśana* means sight, vision but can be translated also as '*point of view*' ; this is very interesting and means much more than just a face-to-face meeting with Ma : *to receive Her point of view* is to open up little by little to *Her* way of seeing things, to how *She* goes about solving problems and understanding our difficulties, in what light She considers them. I have chosen a passage from Her Teaching which illustrates this point.

She is often questioned about Her *samādhis* and She has a nice way of answering. It is, moreover, Her usual way of responding : joyfully, and charmingly. This is how She explains it :

“Yes, it sometimes happened that you saw this body in what you call “*samādhi*. It is a *state* beyond all conscious and supra-conscious planes ;

“a state of complete immobilization of all thoughts, emotions and activities, both physical and mental,— a state that transcends all phases of life here below. What you call *savikalpa samādhi* is but a means to reach it, not the ultimate goal ; it is only a passing stage in your *sādhana*.”

Then She will specify :

“Each one, sees in me and in others only what he is capable of seeing.”

Here we must add an important fact, which we usually overlook : we, too, have our own “view point” as regards God, and that is why endeavouring to impose this view upon others is so totally wrong. We see God according to our own capacities, our own limitations. Each one sees Him differently, grasps Him in his own fashion, perceives Christ or Krishna with different eyes, with a different heart, with a different soul.

Therefore, as Ma would say :

“why try to impose upon others our own views ?” Let us have the sweet patience to wait until Infinity reveals itself. Then only can some of His radiance emanate from us. But not until then !

Ma Herself declares—and I should say this can readily be *felt* in Her, —that She is always in the same state. She is a being, in all probability unique on earth, an ineffable Boon to humanity. She is the Mother, She is God bearing the universe in Her, and guiding it with infinite patience towards Truth. You may be told that on occasions She can be adamant and very severe. Possibly—Christ

was, too, But generally She is sweet and kind and will readily laugh, for She is Joy : Ma, the divine Joy ; not a fickle, passing human joy but the joy of the Absolute, that selfsame Bliss or Felicity about which we talked last night, and into which we have to grow, to ascend.

Ma is "Joy itself", which does not prevent Her, at times, from being infinitely sad as well. And moreover She listens to those who seek Her advice, She responds to them ; She is certainly not indifferent to their sorrows and hardships, but She does not see in anyone anything other than God.

Towards the end of his life, Sri Ramakrishna used to say : "It is only since I see God in every man that I know God." Ma was born with this very vision ! She was born with this very joy and this very love, and whatever the turmoil, the sufferings, and the perplexities and quarrels which people bring to Her at their own level which is often very low, She does not see in all of them anything other than the luminous Infinite. What stupendous power this is ! Truly, the power of a child, in the very sense that Jesus declared : "Verily I say unto you, whosoever will not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." (Luke 18, v. 17). The marvelling eyes of a child who, forgetful of self, fulfils itself in the Joy of what he beholds ! Such is the nature of Ma Anandamayi's glance when She directs it at men, at the world, at the sky and beyond.

And now to some indications of how She teaches. However wonderful may be the modern

scientific discoveries to which She does not attach too much importance, "She continues to attach great value to Hindu traditional concepts, in particular to the four *āśramas* which must, She claims, be maintained."<sup>1</sup>

Those *āśramas* should not be mistaken for the *ashram* which means the community, the hermitage, a gathering of disciples around a Master whose life they share. The four *āśramas* are life's four stages. And Ma is perhaps fairly exceptional the way She preserves and respects those different stages of existence, those diverse aspects of our becoming, without omitting any one of them. She honours all those factors equally and accepts them as being the complete path to our realization of Divinity.

Firstly—the *brahmachārya* period is not only the period of absolute continence, as it is generally and solely understood. *Brahmachārya* is the time for *study*, when the young man and maiden improve themselves, learn a craft, discover life. Often Ma will encourage study, for She knows that the human mind has to be developed, that atrophy would follow, if it were not put to use for as long as it needs to, otherwise it would sink into the sluggishness of *tamas* and turn into an element of trouble, ignorance, and boredom. So *brahmachārya* is a training on all levels, where youth is moulded through the rules laid down in the Scriptures and through life.

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1. Preface of 'The Teaching of Ma Ananda Moyi' p. 37  
Ed. A. Michel Paris.

After that comes the experience of *marriage*, that is to say of life lived fully accepted, that of wife, husband, and children. It is the second traditional stage, where selfless service to one and all is the divine yoga.

“Serve your spouse, your children, as manifestations of God Himself,” Ma keeps on repeating. “This is an excellent *sādhana*”

Thirdly, when the children are grown up, and can go their own way, earn their living and start family life themselves, then comes the time when man and wife have the right, and even the duty to *retire* to the forest in order to *meditate*. They still belong to terrestrial life but they have to concentrate more and more on the *Quest* for the only thing essential, God.

And finally the fourth *āśrama*, *samnyāsa*, which signifies total renunciation of this earth, or preparing for death. For dying is nothing other than a *samādhi* : a birth into another movement of life.

What has just been quoted is very interesting and important. Nowhere else have I found this teaching so simple, precise, clear and traditional, so well laid down as with Ma Anandamayi. She preserves the sacred rhythms of earthly existence, the very Law of its individual and cosmic progression, according to life’s divine richness and total grace.

Man himself is as sacred as God, the human being is as worthy as the Divine, for they are One. To know this, already shows an extraordinary power, a creative and revelatory force which issues from the Absolute.

Yesterday we noted that man, in order to arrive at a certain synthesis, at some degree of unity, in whatever field it may be, has the tendency to cut off whatever exceeds, to destroy whatever bothers him. Ma Anandamayi does not suppress *anything* or *anybody*. She is obedient to the hierarchy of beings, of acts, accepts the necessity of events and the diverse factors of our human life, nay She honours them. Moreover, She *loves* and upholds them. In this, She is not alone, for our giant, Sri Aurobindo, at the end of his book "The Life Divine" speaks precisely of this *supramental being*, of the *supramental man* who shall live from the height of the Spirit, who shall speak from the height of the Spirit, and shall act from the height of the Spirit, while preserving the diversity of life ; the diversity of existence which we also find at the end of the Book of Revelation, where, in man as in creation, is revealed the Plenitude of the Absolute !

By the four *āśramas*, Ma upholds an essential balance and harmony which cannot be disturbed without considerable danger. By neglecting them, man runs the great risk of ending up in confusion, rather than attaining to the revelation of a higher and purer intelligence. To study and serve God in others remains the best school for self-forgetfulness by which the soul can ascend to the ONE.

Marriage may be replaced by some *activity*. Practising a profession is somewhat similar to marrying, for work done in co-operation with others may be compared to a couple's joint progress. The period following that of preparation through



*brahmachārya* is one in which the studies are applied to the duties and the happenings of everyday life. Nevertheless, this active phase of our destiny is not always favourable to our spiritual aspirations, and Ma insists that *at least* fifteen minutes every day must be dedicated to God. She is perfectly right, for what is the use of meditating for hours during a few weeks or months and then stopping for a long time? A little, yet regularly every day! Ma explains it over and over again, and She says so here as well: "Each one draws near to God according to his heart, "each one has his own way of praying, of meditating, which is the "holy spontaneity of the Divine Himself."

Fifteen minutes each day, preferably at the same hour, an hour we choose because of its convenience amidst our activities; preferably too, at the same place. To keep a small corner in our homes, where others do not enter, where we can retire in order to pray. To sit in the lotus pose, if possible, or else on a chair, comfortably, with the back straight, letting our breathing calm down slowly, then chant: Aum, Aum, Aum inwardly a few times, five, seven times; then try to create within oneself a certain silence full of love and *self-offering*; for *true* prayer, my friends, is also: "Here I am, Lord, to do *Thy* bidding!

What His will is, we do not know. It unveils itself by degrees, and when we have learnt to accept it in advance, whenever the bidding comes, even if it is difficult and painful for us and does not please us, we have already acquired the necessary

maturity and disinterestedness to live it well :  
"Thy will be done, not mine !" in a joyous tone, knowing that, in any case, it is a birth to divine Bliss, even if sometimes it may hurt at the beginning.

Let us remember Job, Job overwhelmed with riches, Job stripped of everything, Job impaired in his health, in his body, hideously, but because he had the *habit of offering everything to the Lord*, day after day, of worshipping Him under all circumstances, found the necessary courage, in his intense ordeal to repeat on two occasions :

"The Lord hath given,  
the Lord hath taken away,  
blessed be the name of the Lord !"

Never could Job have responded to misfortune in such a way, if he had not acquired the habit of praying to the Lord on every occasion. Just fifteen minutes every day !

And now here is a passage which will engage our attention for quite a while. It concerns the rules that Ma Anandamayi gave in 1968 for the members of Her own ashrams. And I must add that Ma has only Hindus in Her Ashrams with a very few exceptions, contrary to other Ashrams in India, which accept Westerners. There as well, She has wanted to preserve the strict traditions of Her country, and She is quite right ! People from the west may live around the ashrams ; there are fixed hours when they can see Her, consult Her in the ashrams. She who sees God in each and every one and knows the fundamental and radiant Unity of

the universe, knows nevertheless that there are forms, mentalities, structures which should not be mixed up. Swami Vivekananda also used to say aptly :

“If you go to the Hindus, make them better  
Hindus ;

“If you go to the Moslems, make them better  
Moslems ;

“If you go to the Christians, make them better  
Christians.”

Each path has its own value and its own truth which suits those who are meant to follow it ; and each path leads to the same goal. Forms of expression, faiths, should not be mixed, even though they all emerge from the same Being—from the One and Only Light !

In India, which is so vast and so diverse, this is also unthinkable. We find there many different styles, many different structures and schools, not necessarily in opposition, but *different*, complementing each other, and care should be taken to maintain them in their own particular richness. That is why Ma's *ashrams* are reserved mostly for Hindus, whose ways of thinking are not at all our own. Here follow some fundamental ashram rules that are extraordinarily beautiful. To-night we shall look into them more closely and endeavour to learn from them.

*Firstly*, and this will perhaps surprise us somewhat : “When elders or superiors talk, do not interrupt by commenting on what is spoken about. You may give your opinion only if you are asked.

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If you have anything to say on the matter, you may later, in private, tell the elder : "In connection with what was said, such and such thoughts have occurred to me."

Here again, the courtesy, the respect ! One of Ma's characteristic traits is Her exquisite delicacy ! When she receives guests, She goes out of Her way to check in the kitchen and elsewhere, to make sure that everything is all right, that all is well arranged. She who is a very good cook Herself, and has cooked a good deal in Her life, inspects everything to make sure that all is perfect.

This *politeness*, my friends has, a meaning that is far reaching. When we get into the habit of interrupting our elders or superiors, we interrupt without knowing it, also the word proceeding from God, who is speaking to us. This simple remark may seem far-fetched, but it is extremely true : When an "elder", like Ma Herself for instance, talks about a subject he *knows* and which he has lived ; when he has experienced in his life-time, by his spiritual discipline and practice, certain higher realities, the inner knowledge of the Vedas, of the Upanishads, it is not only impolite but wrong and detrimental to ourselves to interrupt him because an idea crosses our mind or because we wish to start a discussion, to air our views. What happens then is in fact like a short-circuit, interrupting the current which was flowing, the teaching which was being imparted, the *word* which, perhaps, was descending from a level much higher than the mind, like a *mantra* emerging from the Word of Truth. This

also holds good for actions where our thoughtlessness and our haste to react without first trying to understand makes us break the thread of Grace that was being offered to us.

The *elders*, in fact, are all those who can instruct and guide us, and we should therefore strive to *receive* such instruction in silence and with reverence. We need to learn everything as yet, everything ! And God teaches us His Beauty, step by step all along the path, when our minds are filled with mute and docile adoration.

All over the world, courtesy is far too often neglected specially since the last war. And Ma Anandamayi is again right to put Her divine finger on the sore : “When elders talk even if an idea crosses your mind, do not interrupt, do not speak, do not discuss ; perhaps later, in private, you may say : ‘This is what occurred to me on that particular subject’. And I feel sure that in Ma’s thoughts this wider meaning, which rises to the word of God within us, is present. By discussing, by analysing circumstances and people, we only feed our minds, enlarge and fortify them, and thus become deaf to the Spirit. Silent service is the surest way to Truth, to the blessed illumination.

*Second rule :*

“When an elder or superior in conversing with someone, one should not disturb by interrupting or by chatting. If one has something important to say, one may do so after the elder has stopped talking.”

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*Elders* are not necessarily aged, they are, more often elders because of *inner maturity*. The elder is the *adult*, found in the Mahābhārata, he whose soul is versed in the knowledge of the Vedas, who thinks and acts from the height of Brahman of Bhagavān, the Blessed, as Ma puts it !

Respect and specially *attentive listening* : In the Book of Revelation there is a sentence which recurs again and again like a refrain at the end of each of the Letters written by the Spirit to the seven Churches : "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." Each Church is one level of our consciousness to which the Lord speaks, in order to purify it and bring about its transfiguration. If our time is spent in discussing, how can God speak to us ? Man must learn to be silent so that one day the Lord's voice may resound in him. This voice is the *Elder*, which comes to us from the depths of time, from deep within ourselves. Thus these superiors, these elders who must be allowed to express themselves without being interrupted, are a preparation for the secret silence of our souls in which we are able at last to listen to God. Very often moreover, whenever we are silent instead of launching into the fray or making a speech, we discover that what we had wanted to say was not that important ! It is wonderful to become aware of this fact and to note it, because the life of the Spirit is a continual *act of conscious awareness* ascending towards the apex of an Intensity which is total, where the divine Light has pervaded all perception. Our very consciousness has

again become the Light. Such is the path of progress as found in the Vedas, the birth through the Spirit, our growth in the Truth. — To be aware consciously is to be silent in order to listen, and there is no better way of becoming aware than by stilling our tongues, by loving worship, by letting the word *Aum* sing in us. — At the close of this brief analysis, we find that the respect for our “elders” on earth turns into devotion for God within us, and that the path of human beings is the path of God, His profound reality.

*Third rule :*

“When conversing with one’s companions one should neither make fun of anyone nor pass critical remarks about others.”

This is very striking ! Have you noticed that in these first three rules the emphasis is on *speech* ?

Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramakrishna used to say : “Man becomes what he thinks”. And Ma Anandamayi seems to conclude : “Man becomes what he *says*” ; this is only too true. Our words have an immense importance and we do not pay enough attention to them. We should watch our words and the right time to speak. To remain silent instead of discussing, to remain silent when God one day speaks to us is a study, a task demanding continual effort and self-mastery at every moment, hence requiring strength of soul. To the respect toward an elder is now added discipline, the righting of relationships between the disciples and other human beings.

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“While conversing with a companion, do not make fun of someone else, nor pass critical remarks about others”.

Without appearing to be so, *mockery* is perhaps one of the most destructive things in life, and there are persons who make a profession of it, who really enjoy ridiculing everyone and everything one says or does ; perhaps they don't mean any harm but the very fact of ridiculing actions, attitudes, and what other people say harms and often even annihilates the persons concerned. Once again, let us not forget that in making fun of our fellow-beings we end up by hurting God within us. Mirth is healthy, but mockery is not.

One must not criticize either. Jesus said : “Judge not, so ye be not judged”. I should like to explain these words in this manner : we cannot judge for we know so very little, for we know so very wrongly, and our knowledge is so limited. God is the only judge for He alone knows all, He alone is aware of all the factors of each problem and His Vision of our lives is perfect and fundamentally different from our own. That is why Ma Anandamayi says : “Whatever the tale you tell me, whatever suffering you are going through, I see only God in you, the Blessed Lord Himself. And yet your sorrow touches me.”

Our criticism of others, my friends, only shows what we are ourselves. Let us keep this in mind ! It is true that in our work we must observe and judge, we must correct ; but this is something else, which refers to competence, which springs



from experience and also from being very demanding towards oneself. As regards life, as regards other beings, the best attitude is to sing the name of God and to love Him.

“Aum Sri Ram, jay Ram, jay jay Ram.”

“Aum Sri Ma, jay Ma, jay jay Ma.”

From this is born real understanding and the right word which is kind and comforting, which unites and delights the Lord within ourselves and within all.

*Fourth rule* : Listen attentively !

“With antagonism at the back of one’s mind, one should not talk about anyone in either praise or blame.

Neither in praise nor in blame !. This denotes an extraordinary understanding of psychology, because indeed, when we are antagonistic to someone or something, even the good we say of him or her can turn into poison !

To acquire the habit of speaking neither good nor evil *is to learn to rise above dualitiyan*, which is so difficult to transcend. We are inwardly always confronted with these two poles of our nature : attraction and repulsion, sympathy and antipathy, harmony and antagonism. We do not always know why a certain person pleases us and another not, why one word uplifts our spirits and another disheartens us, why some situation or act fills us with enthusiasm, or, on the contrary, with irritation. In order to take one step towards Felicity we must all the time rise beyond the idea of good and evil

and seek Unity in the Plenitude of Truth. What a wonderful task to put into practice all these rules. They contain the very teaching of the Bhagavad Gītā, of the Blessed Lord Krishna.

“Do not judge your companions, or discuss them with “others.” — This is a monastic rule which can be found all over the world ; it is the beginning of Wisdom, for God is the only judge. In fact, it is much easier simply to love : “You also are one of God’s creatures, whoever you may be.” To abstain from personal reactions, to let the inner silence through light on whatever occurs. Only in this manner can the equanimity of the Spirit, which is so powerful, establish itself within us by degrees. The silence which we impose upon ourselves becomes Truth. It radiates around us and asserts itself automatically whenever necessary.

“If someone insults or abuses you, or accuses you unjustly, think : ‘Lord, Thou hast in this manner given me a blow to teach me a lesson. Be pleased with me again !’ “Do not hate the person who has dealt the blow.” It’s another way of saying : “If a person strike you on the right cheek, turn him the left also.” (Gospel of Matthew. Chap. 5, V. 39).

“If someone insults or accuses you unjustly, say : “Lord, Thou hast given me a blow to teach me a lesson, be pleased with me again.” “Do not hate the person who has dealt the blow.”

This rule is extremely pertinent and powerful !

When life wounds us, — and it does so continually — when people offend us, even unintentionally,

instead of being irritated, indignant, let us turn to the Lord and say : “You have given me a lesson which perhaps I do not understand, but be pleased with me again.” That is what is termed “to forgive” others and oneself, of alleviating ourselves divinely in order to remain face to face with the Light which sets us free, illuminates us and makes it possible for us to ascend towards God. In this way, there is no more cause for irritation and our hearts, our minds can unfold their wings in the Infinite.

“Do not feel or speak unkindly about anyone.”

This is also pardon’s solace. As a general rule, when we say something disagreeable about others or to others we are unhappy ourselves ! We more or less reproach ourselves for it, we do not feel at ease, in fact, we have injured ourselves ; let us keep this lesson in mind ! The disagreeable word or gesture which we project on others hurts ourselves primarily. Instead of advancing towards peace and clarity of the spirit, we regress. It is hard for us to own our mistake, it grieves us, and we then involuntarily seek to justify ourselves. From then on, we sink into a mental maze from which we can only extract ourselves with the greatest difficulty. Months or even years may be necessary for us to free and cleanse ourselves from a single sentence, from an ill-tempered reaction, which a little love and self-control on our part could have avoided. Worldly disputes, the perplexities of our mind have no other origin. Let us heal them by continually chanting God’s Name in our hearts.

*(To be continued)*

# THE "TRUE TZADDIK"

Parvati Alexander

(Translated from Hebrew)

## Introduction

These passages from the *Teachings of Rebbe Nahman* deal primarily with the nature of the 'Tzaddik' literally meaning 'Righteous one'. In Hassidism the term *Tzaddik* takes on the particular significance of Saint or Enlightened Master. Rebbe Nahman especially emphasizes the role of the 'True Tzaddik' who has attained a very elevated spiritual state, and is an illumined master. His description of the nature and role of the True Tzaddik is very similar to that of the 'Sadguru' within the Hindu tradition. Many of the characteristics and ways of the True Tzaddik given by Nahman, parallel descriptions of God Himself, and his conception of the Tzaddik is probably the closest to the idea of divine incarnation one finds in the Jewish tradition.

It is said by some that when a *Tzaddik* is very great, he is unable to guide and look toward the people of the world due to his greatness, as he is so far away from the world. But, actually, this is not so; on the contrary, when a *Tzaddik* is very great, he is then all the more able to take care and look after the world... The greater the *Tzaddik* is, the more is he able to see the world, for is not God Himself so very elevated and greatly uplifted, yet he watches, so very carefully, all the world. For the truth is that he who is (*YESH*) (i.e., existing with the sense of a separate identity) cannot be everywhere at one time because that which has an

awareness of separate identity, when it is in one place is not in another so that, for example, when he is engaged in prayer and service of God, he cannot at that time be mindful of the world. But he who is “no-thing” (*Ayin*), there is no place where he is not because he has no *place* at all (no particular space). Therefore the more the *Tzaddik* is included (absorbed) in “no-thing” (*Ayin*) the more he is able to supervise and watch over the world, for it does not apply to him to say that he is in a very high and distant place since he has no *place* at all.

Know that words of truth coming from the mouth of the true *Tzaddik*, even regarding worldly affairs, are more precious than words of wisdom from another *Tzaddik* because in the latter's talk there may be a great deal of mixture but the words from the mouth of the true *Tzaddik* are *only* truth, and because it is only truth with no mixture, there is nothing more precious. The one who hears words from the *Tzaddik's* mouth, which are the words of truth, and especially, if he is in his presence at that time (if he is seeing him then) — as it says : “and your eyes shall behold your teacher” (Isaiah 30) — he receives the aspect of the ‘face’ of the *Tzaddik* and also of his intelligence (‘buddhi’) and his soul because the *Tzaddik* puts into these teachings which he reveals his intelligence and he who receives these teachings receives his intelligence as well as his soul, for the soul is connected with the intelligence and he also receives the ‘face’ because the words he speaks are truth and truth is

the face of all the faces of holiness... Thus we find that he who receives teaching from the mouth of the *Tzaddik* receives his face, his intelligence and his soul, and that the image of the *Tzaddik* who is the face, intelligence and soul, is engraved and imprinted in his mind (of the hearer).

However, it is essential that one guard himself against forgetting because forgetting will erase all from him; all that which has been imprinted on his mind from the teaching and even though he may write the teaching down in a book in order to remember, when forgetfulness becomes overpowering, it falls also upon the written book. For example, when a great sage who has revealed a new teaching passes away and the power of forgetfulness becomes great, then it has dominion even over the written word. But there is one remedy for this: one must imagine before oneself the image of the sage at the time when one is learning his teachings, as it is written in the Talmud (*Shekalim* 92) that "when one is learning, he should imagine to himself that the sage is standing before him". For in the work of that sage is his image imprinted and drawn, and this is because the words and letters noted down and formed in that book are the intelligence of the sage, his soul and his 'face'. Thus one can find in each and every written work the exact image of the sage who has revealed these teachings, for according to his image (i.e., his intelligence, face and soul) are the letters in the book drawn, and if that sage had had a different image (intelligence, face and soul), he

would have created different letters... And when one merits to have "remembrance", that is, when he remembers the words of the sage as he spoke them, or when he remembers by means of repeating these 101 times, then when he speaks the teaching in the name of the sage, the image of that sage is created before him and it is as if the sage himself were speaking the teaching.

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A man must make haste to expel from within himself the spirit of ignorance, that spirit of ignorance which clings to him and with which his heart is filled. And this is done by means of attaching oneself to the True *Tzaddik*. Through such an attachment, which is actually the love of the soul with which he greatly loves the *Tzaddik*, is his heart included within the heart of the *Tzaddik*. And due to the fact that his heart (the disciple's) is full of the spirit of ignorance, and that spirit is only air and the nature of air is to find itself a vacant space to go to, and that when air finds an empty space to go out to, it pierces and breaks through with a great and frightful speed — when the (disciple's) heart is absorbed into the *Tzaddik's* heart which is a vacuum (empty space) — then that spirit of ignorance clinging to his (the disciple's) heart pierces and breaks his heart in its great haste to flee to the empty space it has found in the heart of the *Tzaddik*. And due to one's expelling of the spirit of ignorance in great haste from within,

his heart is broken. The heart is broken\* by the great and frightful speed with which the spirit rushes out from within him.

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There is a *Tzaddik* who is the beauty, the splendour and the grace of the entire universe. As it is written (Genesis 39): "And Joseph was comely, beautiful to look at."\*\* This is the True *Tzaddik* who is of the same quality as Joseph, he who is the grandeur and the beauty of the world.

When this beauty and splendour are revealed in the world, that is, when the *Tzaddik* who is the splendour of the whole universe becomes famous and great in the world, then the eyes of the world are opened. For everyone who is included in the true grace of this *Tzaddik* who is the grace and glory of the world, whoever is drawn close to him and included in him, his eyes are opened and he is able to see and the most essential is that he sees himself.

And this is done by means of coming close to the True *Tzaddik* who, as we have explained, is the aspect "The *Tzaddik* is the foundation of the world" (Proverbs 10).† He is the primal element

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\* "A broken heart" is an essential element in Rebbe Nahman's teachings as he says that a man must 'break his heart' before he can truly be in the service of God.

\*\* Joseph is the archetype of the *Tzaddik*.

† This refers to another passage where Nahman explains: "*Tzaddik Yesod Olam*" 'The *Tzaddik* is the foundation (basis) of the word' (Proverbs 10). The word *Yesod* means basic or



from whom derive the world as well as that we derive from (Gen. 2). "A river goes out from Eden" — this is the *Tzaddik* who is the foundation of the world. "From there it separates and there are 4 streams" — these are the 4 elements. Thus by drawing close to him (the *Tzaddik*) one is able to look into oneself and to see all one's qualities, how one is clinging to them. And one is also to perceive the greatness of God and to perceive the world because one's eyes have been opened through the revelation of the True *Tzaddik's* glory.

When this *Tzaddik* is revealed and made known in the world, this is the aspect of 'name' for he becomes famous and has a name in the world. Now in this very name of the *Tzaddik* His Name Blessed Be He is dressed conjoined for His name is combined with our name. So it is that when the name of the *Tzaddik* is made great, His Name Blessed Be He is also made great. And the more the *Tzaddik's* name becomes great, so much greater does the true name of God become. For His Name and our name are joined one to another.

(To be continued)

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primal element and here Nahman takes it to mean the primal element from which the four elements earth, air, fire and water derive. Man is made up of the four elements which derive from the basic one which is the *Tzaddik*. Thus the inseparable connection of the *Tzaddik* and the people. He illustrates this also with the cited passage from *Genesis*.

# THE YOGI

Brahmachari Gadadhar

Our American Brahmachari Gadadhar passed away prematurely at the age of 34 in a Delhi hospital after a short but severe illness. The following is part of his last letter to his parents which they received two days after his demise.

From his childhood he had been an ardent seeker after Truth. As a young man he came to India and became deeply devoted to Sri Ma. Several years ago he built himself a cottage in our Kankhal Ashram, where he stayed whenever he was not travelling with Ma. There are indications that his consciousness was centred in Ma while he lay in coma for two days before breathing his last.

We are painfully missing the physical presence of this dear friend and co-worker. In spirit he remains with us.

“Father, the Yogi leaves the world and does meditation. What good does he do for the world? How is he fulfilling the purpose of creation? How can this be called religion?”

“You have asked a good question, My son, which every Yogi must answer. That love which is so deep that deepness is forgotten, which people seek because they know it is there, which makes one cry, and gives joy, in which one cannot say “I” anymore because he has merged in his beloved. That is the love of the Yogi. Dear son, be thou a Yogi.”

“That humility which the world mistakenly seeks in degradation, which comes from oneness with all, which has self-respect and dignity, that

is the humility of the Yogi. Precious son, be thou a Yogi.”

“That compassion which all have partially, which is fearless, without prejudice, heals effortlessly and honours all, which is in and of the Self alone, that is the compassion of the Yogi. Gentle son, be thou a Yogi.”

“That courage with which all action is done, which needs nothing, which honours the Self in all, is unaffected and is, with purity, the way to strength ; that is the courage of the Yogi. Brave son, be thou a Yogi.”

“That silence, seeking which the world sleeps, which the creation honours at dawn and dusk, in which the body rests between breaths, from which speech arises, which honours love, that silence the Yogi honours by solitude. Quiet son, be thou a Yogi.”

“That for which this creation has come forth, which the creation honours, for the fullness of which all things are done, which has no purpose but is simply fulfilled in itself, that the Yogi is.”

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*“It is the nature of love to change  
a man into that which he loves.”*

—Dionysins

# MĀTRĪ LĪLĀ

( January—March, 1982 )

In the last issue we have already reported that Mataji came to Vindhyachal on December 25th. Four or five devotees were waiting for Her at Mirzapur station and followed Her car by taxi to Vindhyachal. A few devotees of many years' standing had come from France, England and America to spend their X-mas holidays with Ma, who was resting most of the day on Her veranda upstairs.

On December 29th, Mataji drove to Varanasi. The next day crowds began to gather for Her *darśana* and on the 31st Mataji attended in the *Candi Mandap a yantra pratistha*, the *yantra* belonging to the brother of the Raja of Tehri. In the afternoon of January 1st, Mataji returned to Vindhyachal. Her health was not too good, but She was in high spirits and one morning sang very powerfully.

In the evening of January 9th, the day of the lunar eclipse, Mataji reached Allahabad where She spent the night in 31, George Town. Early next morning She was taken by the mahātmās of the Nirvani Akhārā by car up to the *bāndh* (dam) and from there carried in procession on a palanquin placed on an open jeep to open the Mela. Mataji looked radiant and was in a very good mood

throughout the function. On January 14th, *Makar Sankranti*, Mataji was again taken in procession to the confluence of the three rivers Ganga, Jamuna, Sarasvati, where everybody took a bath. Ma sprinkled *Trivenijal* on Herself and others.

She remained in Her camp in the mela grounds from 10th to 25th January. During Her stay there the four *Akhāras* were entertained to feasts, each on a different day. Many *sādhus*, officials and other V. I. Ps came for Mataji's *darśana*.

We quote from a devotee's letter: "The arrangements at the camp of Sri Ma's ashram were very good indeed although the living accommodation was in tents and thatched huts.... We were accommodated in a tent. Although Ma's health was not that good, we could have Her *darśana* and blessings every day. In fact on the 24th evening Ma sat in the pandal for about an hour and a half. All the Mahamandalesvaras had gathered and in their speeches were full of veneration for our revered Ma. Sri Nārādānandji of Nimsar said: (i) There is no difference between Sri Anandamayi Ma and God. (ii) One *darśana* of Sri Ma is equal to the result of performing 24 lakhs of Gayatrī japam. (iii) However learned we may be, we are nothing but toddlers in the presence of Ma."

"Early morning on the 25th, i.e. *Mauni Āmāvāsyā* day, we lined up and walked in procession to the Sangam along with our Ma for a distance of about a mile, and after our dip we returned in procession to our camp. After lunch we left for Vindhyaçal where Ma remained. We stayed in

that Ashram for a short time and then returned to Varanasi. In Vindhyachal also Sri Sri Ma sat and talked to all of us for about an hour. We were simply overwhelmed with Her kindness."

This year, January 25th, *Mauni Amāvāsya*, was a very special planetary constellation which occurred after 130 years. On that auspicious day, Swami Mahānānanda, who was born in Sri Ma's own family, passed away peacefully soon after Ma left. He had come from our Puri Ashram and been able to have his bath on January 14th. Thereafter he had fallen ill.

On the 29th, Mataji left Vindhyachal for Varanasi where the sacred thread ceremony of the son of a devotee was performed. On the 30th morning, *Vasant Panchami* day, Sarasvati Pūjā was celebrated. That very night Mataji proceeded to Naimisaranya. During Her sojourn there the foundation stone was laid for a building of the Institute for Vedic and Puranic study and Research by the Governor himself who then paid a visit to Ma and had his meal in our Ashram. Mataji did not attend the function. Several ministers and other officials came for Mataji's *darśana*. On the whole She had a very restful period at Naimisaranya.

From there Mataji travelled to Kankhal where She alighted in the morning of February 20th. *Mahāsivarātri* was celebrated on the 22nd night. The attendance was not as large as on previous occasions as Mataji's program had been fixed rather late. However, already in the morning

many came for Sri Ma's blessing and to offer presents. Mataji came to the hall at about 6-45 p.m., a little before the all-night pūjā started and was present for about two hours. She came again at 2-30 a.m. and retired to Her room only at 4-30 a.m. after distributing *prasāda* to all present.

In 1979, when Śivarātri had been celebrated in Kankhal, a few foreign devotees had performed pūjā at the far end of the hall. One of them had been Br. Gadadhar. In exactly the same spot, a chrystal Siva Linga which he had presented to Sri Ma, was this time worshipped all night by Sri Bhola Pandit of Varanasi. Gadadhar's parents who had come to India specially to offer their son's ashes to Mother Ganga on Śivarātri day witnessed the pūjā until about 9 p.m. Garlands and *prasāda* were distributed to them and to all foreign guests after the first pūjā.

Mataji was quite active throughout Her short visit to Kankhal. She talked to the bereaved parents at length and gave them solace as only She can. When they took leave on the 25th morning, Mataji said : "There is only one all-pervading *ātmā*. As such your son is with you eternally. The body is a temporary thing — in fact it is dying all the time : the foetus in the mother's womb dies to the infant, the infant to the child, the child to the adolescent and so on. The world is in constant flux while the individual is that which is in bondage. If someone comes to sympathize with your loss, say : "No, we have not lost him, he is with us for all times as the *ātmā*".

“The suffering he had to endure during his illness was God’s gift to purify him. God has taken him unto Himself. Where he was, there he is — with God”.

On February 25th, which happened to be the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Mataji paid a short visit to the Ramakrishna Mission at Kankhal a few hours before Her departure. On returning to our Ashram She remained in Didima’s *Samādhi Mandir* until it was time to leave for the station where She boarded the night train to Delhi en route to Vrindaban.

The train arrived four hours late and Mataji reached the ashram only at about 11-30 a.m. on the 26th. After She had had a short rest, Sm. Indira Gandhi came and went with Sri Ma to open the new dispensary of the Delhi Ashram. Any number of devotees had flocked for Mataji’s *darśana*. At 3 p.m. Mataji motored to Vrindaban, reaching there at about 7 p.m. Mataji had had a hectic day and looked tired.

On the 28th, half a dozen students of the Vidyapeeth (now stationed in Almora) had their sacred thread ceremony. The same morning a Bhagavata Saptaha started, sponsored by the Maharaj Kumar of Karauli and by Sri Anil Chatterji of New Alipore, Calcutta. The main commentator was Goswami Vrindaban Bihariji and the special commentator Sri Swami Akhandananda Saraswati. Mataji attended his brilliant talks every single day. Two *singhāsana* instead of the normal one, each specially and equally



decorated as usual, were provided for the two commentators.

On March 4th, His Excellency the Governor of the U. P. paid a visit to the Ashram for Mataji's *darśana* and had *prasāda* in the Ashram. The next morning when Sri Krishna's birth was described in the Bhāgavata Saptah, the Governor came again and sat in the hall in the first row to listen to Swami Akhandanandaji for some time.

On Sunday the 7th in the afternoon, the celebrated centenarian, Sri Swami Gangeshwarānandaji came to have Mataji's *darśana*. A number of other notables paid visits at different times; the ex-rulers of Jodhpur, Sri Gay Singh, and of Kashmir, Dr. Karan Singh, the Central Minister Sri Bhagavat Singh Azad and Minister Sri Goel of the U. P.

On the 8th evening began *Nāma Yajña* with *adivāsa*. Our Delhi and Calcutta kirtan singers jointly were responsible for this function. The 9th was *Holi*. From early morning devotees besieged Ma's room to offer coloured powder at Her feet and She in turn blessed everyone by putting red powder on their foreheads. In the early afternoon, Mataji, with Her arms uplifted, walked round the circular altar with the kirtan singers for a few minutes. She then played *Holi* while sitting down and squirted coloured water with a syringe on all present. Afterwards She put *tīkā* (coloured mark) on the foreheads of 200—250 people.

A huge crowd had assembled for the *Holi* festival. About two hundred families had flocked from Calcutta and West Bengal. There were of

course devotees from Bombay and many other places in India, as well as Germans, Americans, etc.

*Holi (Dol Purnima)* being the birthday of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, special pūjā was performed in Nitai-Gouranga Mandir by Br. Nirvanananda in Sri Ma's presence. Br. Sivananda celebrated Sri Krishna Pūjā in Chhelia Mandir and Br. Santivrata Nārāyana Pūjā.

Mataji was in an excellent mood and looked well and energetic. The *Nāma Yajña* had such a marvellous effect on Ma's physical condition that on the 10th She sat up for hours and received homage from hundred of devotees who had filed up in a queue. This was the *Vasant Utsava* (Spring Festival) when Holi is played in Vrindaban.

On March 15th a message was received that Swami Sasvatānanda had breathed his last in our Varanasi Ashram. He had been ailing for a number of years.

From March 21st to 23rd *Akhaṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa* was recited by a party from Agra.

Ma left Vrindaban on March 26 by car for Delhi where She boarded the train of the same day for Agartala in West Tripura. After a tortuous journey for nearly 3½ days, She reached Agartala on 30th morning. A small ashram was already built by Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha with a small room and an adjoining verandah constructed for Ma. The ashram premises has a very old temple with a deity of *UMA-MAHESWAR* — which was gifted by the Tripura Raj family. Ma had also installed on 31st of March two marble deities—

one of Goddess *Saraswati* in the small room meant for Ma and another of Siva-lingam in the small verandah in front. There was a record crowd of people who assembled for Ma's *darśana* on the day and the police department which made elaborate arrangement estimated the crowd to be to the tune of 50,000 at least. Ma gave *darśana* to the surging crowd from a raised chair because the crowd in the line was very long indeed. Ma was scheduled to leave Agartala by Mithila Express on 1.4.82 for Calcutta to participate in the installation ceremony of a beautiful marble statue of Didima in the new temple constructed at Agarpara ashram near Calcutta.

### ON PREMA AND MOHA

“*Prema*, the love of God, is certainly a way. But what is ordinarily called ‘love’ is not *Prema*, true love, but *Moha*, attraction through delusion. *Prema*, real love, cannot exist between individuals. How can one get pure love from that which, by its very nature, is impure, namely the individual? Again and again it happens that people come to this body saying: “My love for such and such a person is true love, not worldly love”. They are deceiving themselves. Love for that which is mortal is invariably *moha*, attraction through delusion and it leads to death. Quite obviously so. Have you not noticed how, when you find it impossible to get the object of your love, you either wish to kill it or to die yourself? Whereas *Prema*, the love of God, takes you to the death of death, to immortality.”

—Sri Anandamayī Ma