

**“I AM WHAT I WAS AND SHALL
REMAIN NOW AND FOR EVERMORE !”**

“At all times and under all circumstances, in inspiration and in dryness, Ma remains and ever will remain with everyone.” “Solely, for you all is indeed everything that this body does—its actions, movements, its going hither and thither. Whatever is done for your sake through this body at any time, it is you who cause it to happen.”

Ma has discarded Her body not because it was old and ailing. Ma is all-powerful. Had it been Her *kheyāla*, Her body would have remained young, radiant and healthy. Just as Her advent was an act of Supreme Divine Grace and Compassion, so was Her withdrawal.

Whatever is done by Ma is for the best of all. There are no exceptions.

“The Ātmā of this body is everyone’s Ātmā. It cannot be that anybody, anywhere is not Ma’s very own.”

What is perceived by the senses cannot last, however flawless, however perfect. Taking on a human body, Ma has given us a glimpse of Divinity, a taste of eternal Bliss. Ma is not only that bliss-permeated divine being that attracted us irresistibly, whom we loved and adored. Ma is the ONE equally present everywhere, in everyone, in everything and beyond. By withdrawing Her radiant form She has kindled in us a deep yearning to find Her within, so spend our lives in the sole endeavour to know HER AS SHE IS.



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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*Mother ! you are my everything :
My life, my breath, my body, my soul,
The endless path to the Eternal Goal ;
All in all, all in One,
One in the many galaxies and suns —
Ever moving, yet transfixed beyond Time,
Super-conditional, beyond reason or rhyme.*

*I bow at your feet, enshrined in my heart —
The ones I can't see — never seen from the start
Of Creation and Movement of Shakti Divine,
Till death and dissolution in Darkness Sublime.*

*I bow at your feet never seen by human eyes,
Never touched by mortal hands
Nor carressed with deep sighs.*

*I bow at your feet, I bow to my Self —
I bow to the One who bows to Herself.*

—Stephen M. Quong

Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi," Vol. 3

"I wanted to sit near you for some time, but my baby is pestering me so much that I am forced to go." With these words a lady took leave of Ma, bowing to Her. After her departure Ma commented with a smile: "This is how you should all behave, for you, too, are babies. Why can't you harass your Mother (God) in this way? Why can't you raise your clamorous voice saying, 'O Lord, unless you grant us that Bliss of yours, we will trouble you day and night—we shall never leave you in peace! We are but children—what do we know of service? We shall vex you just for this gift of Bliss!'"

* * *

The soil must indeed be made ready, this is why so much effort is required. The earth should be prepared so well that immediately after the sowing of seeds, plants may sprout forth, growing in no time into tall trees, gracefully laden with fruits and flowers.

* * *

It is necessary to set to work with firm determination. Alive or dead, never lose sight of the Goal. Remain engaged with great regularity in the endeavour towards spiritual progress.

Make enquiries about your own real home ;
time flies away quickly ; invoke Him.

* * *

The hymns that are being sung here, this also is a kind of *sādhana*. When even temporarily our minds get detached and elevated from worldly cares by listening to the songs, this too is a mighty *sādhana*.

* * *

Look, if a room is jammed with many things, even a shout or a loud noise fail to produce any echo. Whereas even a faint sound does echo in an empty room. Likewise, if you are able to keep your mind clean, your true Self will automatically be revealed to you. Is it not your own voice that you hear in the echo ? Similarly what blossoms forth in the pure heart is your own true Self. Hence, I tell you, try to cleanse and purify your mind. Purification of the mind is achieved only by regular *upāsana*.* Perform *upāsana* according to your predilection, be it the repetition of His name or singing kirtan, reading scriptures or discoursing on spiritual topics, etc. ; choosing the way according to your individual inclinations, try to purify your heart and mind. And daily before falling asleep one should retrospectively reflect on all the commissions and omissions done in the course of that day. Thus, if one tries to gradually

**Upāsana*—Effort to realize God through worship, meditation, japa, prayer, singing hymns, reading of holy scriptures etc.

remove wrong tendencies by constant discrimination, the mind gets purified by and by.

* * *

Prāṇāyāma means control of *prāṇa*.^{*} If you can perform *nāma japa* in the right way, you will find *prāṇāyāma* coming about automatically. Engaging in *japa* with one's attention fixed on the rhythm of the breath does immense good.

* * *

Question : Ma, would you please tell us about God ; what is He like ?

Ma : For every particular person He is precisely as that person desires Him to be.

Try to keep mind these words of mine ; devote as much time as you possibly can to His name ; remember all of you—days are speeding away ; bygone days never return.

* * *

One has to endure all kinds of circumstances. To live always in comfort and at ease is not beneficial.

* * *

No matter to what hardships one may be subjected at any time, one should accept them cheerfully.

* * *

Ma's advice : "You should all go ahead regularly with your programme of spiritual discipline and prayer. Do not waste time. Your span of

^{**}*Prāṇa*—The current of vital energy canalised through the breath.

life is getting shorter and shorter with each breath you take.

* * *

Ma said in a particular context, "People say that even the *munis* and *rishis* used to get angry sometimes ; so what is our fault if we, too, are ill-tempered ? The reply to this would be that the *munis* and *rishis* were perfect beings. When they expressed anger, even that was done to perfection. And, in consequence, they could effect creation, sustenance and destruction. Just as they were capable of reducing one to ashes by their wrath, they could also create life. On account of this wide difference they should not be compared to ordinary people."

* * *

Someone asked Ma inquiring about *dīkṣā* ; "Ma, in case no *bīja* mantra has been received, is it sufficient just to repeat the name of God ?"

Ma replied : "Yes, the Name alone is effective. Don't you see, when a small baby who has not yet learnt to pronounce "Ma" starts crying, the mother understands that the baby is calling her. Immediately she hurries to his side. But when the same child is grown up, if he simply cries, his mother won't understand that her son wants her to come. In the same way, while we are ignorant, God will surely understand our earnestness by whatever name we may invoke him."

* * *

Explaining this point further on another occasion, Ma said : "Go on invoking God by which-

ever name you like best. If necessary, He Himself will come in time and tell you His real name. For example, suppose you do not know the actual name of a certain boy ; if you call him by the nickname of his childhood or simply by saying, "Hallo, boy," he may not respond at first, but on being called repeatedly, he is sure to listen and come to you. And then he himself will tell you his proper name. Thus, by whatever name you may call God, it will have the desired effect."

* * *

Pursuit of a single objective with one-pointed concentration and purity of heart is truly like magic. If once you are in its grip, it will never let you go.

* * *

Whatever work you are engaged in at any time you should do it with all your heart and soul. Whether the work is small or big, it matters little.

* * *

A sādhu whom Ma gave some secret instructions was advised by Her in the following words, "Don't divulge it to anybody. If just after sowing a seed you dig it out again and again then that seed will never sprout. After sowing it in the soil it has to be carefully tended by regular sprinkling with water. At last when the sprout grows into a big tree, that big tree will again produce so many seeds. Innumerable flowers and fruits will then naturally shower from it."

On watching a potter busy turning out pots on his wheel, Ma observed pointing to him : “That lump of clay is undergoing great suffering, but it has got to be shaped in this very way, by turning it round on the wheel. ‘Making’ is always accomplished by a painful process.

* * *

Ma’s advice to children

“You should repeat the name of God just a little ; this will be beneficial to you. Do one thing : Each of you keep a special notebook and every morning, as soon as you get up and finish washing your face and hands, start your day with writing in the notebook the name of God you like best 5 or 10 or 12 times (according to your age) and do *namaskār*. Only after that take your breakfast, study and attend to whatever else you have got to do. When the notebook is filled up, do obeissance and throw it into the river ; then start a new notebook. Well, will you remember my words ?”

* * *

Someone asked : “Ma, does spiritual realization depend on one’s effort (karma) or on grace ?”

Ma responded : “First effort (karma) is needed. Grace follows Karma (endeavour).”

Question : Then, is there no grace as such (apart from karma) ?” Ma said, “After accomplishing a series of spiritual practices the aspirant reaches a stage where he finds that he is unable to achieve anything further without Divine Grace.

So long as there is ego-consciousness one does not understand the factor of grace. When heart and mind have been purified then only it can be understood what grace essentially is; then only the aspirant realizes that *Puruṣakāra*, the doing of the *Puruṣa*, is everything. *Puruṣakāra* means whatever the *Puruṣa* (God, the Universal Spirit) does—whatever the Supreme *Puruṣa* chooses to do that will be done.

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“Both before and after kirtan it is good to meditate for some time with the eyes closed. And when the kirtan is over, before you return home, it is advisable to discuss among yourselves the thoughts and feeling that arose in your mind during meditation.” Then Ma added, “Moving slowly in a circle during the kirtan with one’s gaze turned upwards generates a special *kriyā* (yogic effect) in the body.”

“The repetition aloud of His name is better than praises. Better still is the faint murmur. But the best is repetition within the mind and that is meditation.”

—Ramana Maharshi

In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Amulya Datta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

(Continued from A. V. Oct. 1982)

Dacca, August 20th, 1939.

This morning Ma was sitting on the Veranda of the Smriti Mandir surrounded by devotees. Everyone was anxious to hear Ma talk but nobody had any questions ready. At last Pramatha Babu requested : "Ma, please say something !"

Ma : What shall I say ?

Pramatha Babu : Whatever you have in mind.

Ma : That is the trouble, there is no mind here. (Turning to me) Baba, what should I say ?

I : Whatever you feel inclined to.

Ma : Here, there is no inclination or disinclination.

I : Speak of something that will be of benefit to all of us. (Everybody laughs.)

Abhaya : At Azimgunge you spoke for three or four hours about *dīkṣā*, *samādhi*, etc. Please repeat some of that !

Ma : The reason for so much conversation was that several people had asked various questions about their personal *sāadhanā*. This was their own individual affair. Hence it cannot be given as general advice.

I : Please, tell us something concerning *dīkṣā* (initiation). What exactly is *dīkṣā* ?

Ma : Why do you study ?

I : To acquire knowledge.

Ma : So I say that just as after completing your studies you do professional work and thus reap the benefits of pension, so also there is a kind of pension to be enjoyed on this path.

I : When Sri Ram Thakur's disciples complained to him in their disappointment : "Baba, we are unable to repeat the Name properly, so what is to be done ?" Thakur would reply : "Can the Name be repeated deliberately ? The Name comes about spontaneously. Even though you may not be doing anything, the Name is there automatically. If this were not so, what did I bestow on you ?" What is the purport of these words of Ram Thakur ? What precisely does the Guru give by *dikṣā*? Even though we have no experience of it, yet a certain action is taking place within us. How is this possible ?

Ma : What do you understand by *dikṣā* ?

I : I know nothing myself, I can only repeat what I have heard from revered Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj on this subject. He has said that *dikṣā* connotes making a connection between the power of God and the individual power of the disciple. If the disciple can be linked to the current of the Lord's might, then the force of this current will one day or another lead the disciple to the Supreme Goal. Even if the aspirant makes no effort, the force of the current will gradually draw him towards God—there is no doubt about this. And if he regularly engages in spiritual exercises or worship, he will be able to progress very much faster—it is just like swimming with the current.

Ma : All this is very true, completely true.

I : Very well. So there is no need for us to repeat God's name or do anything in this direction, for in any case we are bound to reach the Goal one day !

Ma : (laughing) But you want to get there quickly, you feel the urgency of it, don't you ? So for this reason you will have to set to work.

Didi : While being carried along by the current, you may be held up by some obstacle and come to a standstill.

I : No, *Didi*, there is no fear of that. *Ma* has declared that once the mercy of a Sadguru has been won, there can be no more fall from Grace.

Ma : Yes, if a Sadguru has bestowed his Grace, how can there be danger of a fall ? Some devotees are of the opinion, "since I have been blessed by the Grace of the Sadguru why should I take the trouble to practise sādhanā ? The Guru will accomplish everything. So I can continue to enjoy my life." Again, someone else feels the intense urge to make quick progress, so he performs *japa* and meditation. There are so many different types. It is of course a fact that once the timber catches fire, it will in due course be reduced to ashes, *That seed* (of initiation) cannot be destroyed. When a seed is buried in the ground, in some cases the plant grows quickly and in other cases there may be delay. If the soil is well prepared beforehand the plant grows fast, but if not it may be a slow process.

A devotee : Could not some of the seeds rot in the ground ?

Ma : Yes, a few seeds may possibly become rotten in the ground. But even this does not render them useless. After rotting they remain in the soil as fertilizers. Nothing is wasted.

It may happen that some people receive the Sadguru's grace at any early age but for many years are not interested in the spiritual path. Eventually, in old age devotion for God awakens in them. For others nothing may be achieved during the present birth, but in a subsequent birth there may be fulfilment. Is it not said that after leaving the body one has to return and live in another body. This world is a continuous coming and going. Here there is only birth, death and rebirth. But it may also happen that after leaving the body one may never have to return again. For once the fire of the Knowledge of Reality is kindled it can reduce everything to ashes within a split second. Thereafter there is no more coming and going.

I: Ma, it is believed that in order to exhaust one's karma (results of former actions) one has to take on a body. Can karma not be exhausted without assuming another body ?

Ma: Even when the physical body dies, there are other subtle bodies.

I: Then is it possible to work out one's karma in an etherial body ?

Ma: There are quite a lot of karmas for which a physical body is needed, so one has to be reborn in a new body. But there are other karmas that can be worked out in a subtle body. The ONE is constantly leading human beings towards Himself. Everyone will at sometime or other reach the Supreme Goal because this is man's destiny. To become established in his own true Being is man's inherent tendency (*samskara*).

I: Ma, by *samskāra* we usually understand the results that will ensue due to one's previous actions. Has a human being the capacity to perform actions that will enable him to attain to the Supreme Brahman or the Supreme Goal.

Ma: This is why it is said that it is the Guru who out of His Grace leads to that Goal. It is impossible to achieve merely by performing action.

I: When you speak of becoming established in one's true Being, this seems to be the ultimate state reached by *sādhana*. But one also hears of states of existence such as *Śivaloka* or *Viṣṇuloka*, etc., which the power instilled by the Guru into the disciple may subsequently enable him to attain, but beyond which the disciple cannot proceed. So how can it be that everybody is able to reach the Supreme Goal, which is to be established in one's own Self?

Ma: What you say is also true. Frequently it is seen that human beings become arrested on particular levels. But if a person has the inborn tendency, he may after temporary confinement at one level, proceed higher up. Others may spend age after age in the same state. There are so many possibilities. Is there an end to this subject?

Pramatha: I don't understand all these bickerings over knowledge and worlds after death. I just want to make sure that since you are here as our Mother, do we have to acquire all this knowledge to know you?

Ma: You are a practising lawyer, do you do your work without having studied law?

Pramatha: By what kind of studies have you yourself acquired all this wisdom?

Ma: Leave aside the question of this body!

Abhaya: You are so great that one cannot compare anyone with you.

Ma : I do not ask you to leave aside the question of this body because it is so great. You can ask this body "to go to hell". (Everybody bursts into loud laughter). Do you not frequently call someone an "idiot" ? You can ignore this body as an idiot. (Again loud laughter).

Pramatha : This is not what I mean. I must repeat that I want to realize Ma. Now, do I have to acquire all this knowledge in order to realize Ma or will I automatically obtain all this knowledge by realizing who Ma is ?

Ma : By realizing Ma you will have gained everything. Did I not say only the other day that the mother wishes to give everything to her children. It is the mother's sole desire that whatever she possesses should belong to her children.

Pramatha : Indeed, this is very heartening news. I understand this quite well. But Ma, do you know what happens to me when I listen to all these people discussing abstruse knowledge ? I start suspecting my own feelings. I imagine these people have stolen away everything and I have been cheated. (Laughter)

Ma : (Laughing) Listen, even though the Goal is the same, the paths taken by different people are of great variety. Some choose the path of knowledge, discriminating : 'Not this, not this ! (*neti, neti*); others tread the path of devotion and yet others of dedicated action. But the objective is the same.

Pramatha : I do not relish all these questions.

Ma : When one starts studying and gains a little knowledge, questions are bound to arise. Questions multiply in proportion to the increase

of one's knowledge. On the other hand he who has never touched a book does not gain any knowledge nor do any questions occur to him. There is yet another category of individuals who have no problems and therefore no questions.

Pramatha : So it seems that I belong to this category. (Everybody laughs)

Ma : (laughing) This is quite obvious. (Laughter again) But they do not harbour any suspicion that they have been cheated.

Pramatha : So, in order to realize Ma, we cannot evade all this knowledge ?

Ma : See here, have I not pointed out a moment ago that it is the natural disposition of the human being to become aware of the treasure hidden within himself ? The true nature of man is to move in this direction. In this natural process he cannot avoid anything. You may have observed the natural flow of water : If water is poured out it starts flowing. Should there be a hole on the way, so long as the hole is not filled entirely, the water cannot flow any further ; but as soon as the hole is full, the water resumes its course. Similarly, the individual quite naturally moves towards peace and tranquillity. Along the way he cannot avoid anything that happens to be there, so nothing remains unknown to him. That is why I repeat : set to work. Effort is a necessity. Nevertheless attainment does not ensue due to one's own exertion. By His mercy alone everything becomes possible.

How to Get Rid of Doubt.

Pramatha : Tell me, Ma, how can I get rid of my doubt ?

Ma : As soon as He is realized all doubts are resolved. Unless and until your spiritual power (*chaitanya śakti*) or your Guru are revealed, doubts will not cease.

Pramatha : This is no reply to my question. I repeat, please tell us what we have to do to resolve our doubts.

Ma : Start by putting into practice what you have gained from your Guru. By continuing to do so, His mercy will resolve all your doubts.

Abhaya : This is not correct. Even though you say it, we cannot believe it.

Ma : I never ask anybody to listen to my advice or to accept it. This body merely voices what you evoke from it. However, some people do receive from these words what they are seeking. On the other hand some derive no benefit, since they don't require anything. This is somewhat like this : suppose you have dropped something on the way. Someone coming behind you may notice this but goes on, while someone else picks it up carefully and makes use of it. My words are like this.

How to Still the Mind.

Pramatha : Please tell us how to get rid of our doubts !

Ma : Have I not already told you to start your work with whatever your Guru has bestowed upon you. Quite often it is asked, how can the mind become still through japa ? Everyone is

anxious to have peace of mind, because without stilling the mind *ānanda* is not possible. Here is one way to set the mind at rest.

I have already explained to you that Guru mantra and *Iṣṭa* are one. To contemplate the Guru or the *Iṣṭa* and to perform mantra japa amounts to the same because the Name and the Named are identical. So start by repeating the mantra received from your Guru. During this japa meditate on the image your Guru has indicated to you or on your Guru's photo. Where exactly should you concentrate during meditation? It is good to concentrate in the heart because this is the place where joy and sorrow arise. However, if your Guru has instructed you to concentrate on anyone of the six chakras, (along the meridian of the body as explained in the Yoga Śāstras) it is a different matter. You will concentrate in whatever spot that the Guru has indicated. You may have read about the chakras that are situated in different locations of the body, and how each chakra has a different shape and a special presiding deity. This body has not studied anything, but it speaks on this subject because it has actually and quite clearly seen all this. By meditating on these different chakras, various states or spiritual experiences may be the result. But let us leave all this now.

You will start your meditation by imagining your Guru or *Iṣṭa* enthroned in your heart. There is yet another reason for concentrating in the heart. If you want to grow a tree out of a seed, you bury the seed under the earth and go on watering it.

Due to your care and through the strength of the soil the tree grows out of the seed. Why do I stress the strength of the soil? Because in order to produce a tree out of a seed, good earth is necessary. Even though the tree grows upwards, its roots remain underground, and it is the roots that constitute the life of the tree. Because it is seen that however many branches and twigs may be chopped off, the tree does not wither since its roots are intact. To enable the tree to grow you water it regularly. This water you pour at its bottom surface, not directly into the roots. The water reaches the roots and helps the tree to grow. Similarly, the roots of this body-tree of ours lie in the head while the branches are down below. The heart is the foundation of this tree and any nourishment given here will reach the roots. For this reason one should meditate in the heart.

A devotee : Where exactly is the heart ?

Ma : The heart is everywhere in the hands, in the feet, in every part of the body. Yet, when we speak about the heart we normally understand this place (pointing to Her chest.) This is where one should concentrate while meditating.

Now, what should you do when sitting down for meditation? Whether it is the Guru or the Iṣṭa, whom you have placed on the pedestal in your heart, contemplate His form. But during this meditation you find that your mind cannot remain steady. You cannot keep your mind fixed in one place even for a minute. This is why I advised that after placing your Guru on His seat in your

heart, watch your breath moving in and out. It is this breathing that enables us to remain alive. However different human beings, animals, birds, etc., may be in species and also each creature from the other, in this respect, as far as *prāṇa* (life) is concerned, they are the same. Because they all remain alive by breathing. Hence, enthrone your Guru in your heart and contemplate Him as pervading the whole universe through *prāṇa*; the breath of life. The Guru is all-pervasive. So one should perform japa of the mantra received from the Guru and simultaneously watch one's breathing.

Everybody can do this. But the practice of japa in rhythm with one's breathing should be done on the advice of the Guru. If it is done merely because one has read about it in a book, there is the possibility of the brain becoming over-exerted. All the same, in many cases it is seen that by this practice the japa fits in naturally with the rhythm of the breath. In such cases there is no danger.

For performing pūjā you have seen how people mould an earthen image and then instil life into it by some special rites. Consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) exists everywhere. It is equally present in every creature (*jīva*) as well as in earth. But because we do not realize that living consciousness is also present in clay, we mould an earthen image and then instill life into it through some special ceremonies. Similarly, enthroning your Guru in your heart, think of Him as pervading everywhere as the life force (*prāṇa*) and then engage in your japa while watching your breath moving in and out.

The benefit derived from watching the movement of one's breath while practising japa is that the mind becomes somewhat calm. Whether it is a picture or an image, the mind cannot concentrate on it for any length of time. But because breathing implies movement it is a little easier to tie the restless mind to it. In a similar fashion, to make a restless child remain quietly in a room, one has to provide the kid with a toy.

Now consider something else : the waves that arise in water are nothing but water. Yet, because of their movement they appear to be separate. The same substance is simultaneously quiet and in motion, broken into parts and unbroken. This constitutes the ceaseless *līlā* of the universe. Beyond that there is a state where there are neither water nor waves. This is the unmanifest (*avyakta*).

If you concentrate on the waves for sometime you will find that they are nothing but water. In the same way if you continue for some length of time to carry out your japa while concentrating your restive mind on your breathing or on your Guru in the guise of *prāṇa*, you will find that your mind has become calm, and the consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) that is always present within you becomes revealed of itself. Once this revelation has taken place, there is an end to doubts.

Another advantage of carrying out japa in rhythm with your breathing is that it can be performed everywhere, at all times. Inhaling and exhaling continues without a break ; so all you have to do is to perform your japa in rhythm with

your breathing. There is no need to keep a picture or photo in front of you. Besides, people proceeding by whatever path, whether that of devotion or dedicated action or knowledge, can carry this out. To imagine one's Guru to be the life force (*prāṇa*) of all creatures is helpful on the path of knowledge. To enthrone his Guru or *Iṣṭa* in one's heart is helpful on the path of devotion; the performance of japa and the like is an aid on the path of dedicated action. So you see, this method of *sādhana* will suit aspirants regardless of the path they pursue.

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In the evening I returned to the Ashram and found Ma seated on a cot on the veranda of the Śiva Temple. Speaking to an old man, She remarked: "Babā, do keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth!"

The old man : Are my words so very harsh ?

Ma : (smiling) Not that. When you keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth it will melt slowly and keep your mouth sweet. That is to say, if you do not keep your tongue idle but engage it constantly in japa, you will get the taste of its sweetness. Otherwise a "return ticket" has to be taken—one has to come back again and again.

Addressing another person, Ma said: "Here we are staying in a *dharmasala*, this is not our real hearth and home. If it were, could we be forced against our will to leave it? When the call comes we cannot delay even for an instant, neither do we get the opportunity to make preparations,

As we are so we have to quit. This is why I request you to try and follow a path by which you can return to your real home and not have to wander from one *dharmaśālā* to another again and again.

Pointing towards an aged lady, Ma said : “Ma, with your Gopal remain inside your room and shut the doors. This is the way to peace. One by one you have lost all your teeth, now you are toothless (*bedanta*).^{*} If you cannot stick to your Gopal, you will have to return again and become toothless once more.

Another lady : Ma, I cannot bear the worries and troubles of my household any longer. There is constant unrest.

Ma : No, you are still liking it, otherwise how could you live in it ? Once a house catches fire, can one remain in it ? One has to run away with great speed. Since you are still living in it, it appears that although there is some trouble, yet you are still fond of your home.”

(*To be continued*)

^{*} *Bedanta*—toothless & *Vedanta* Philosophy, a play upon words.

Who is Anandamayi Ma ?

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj

(Excerpts from 'Introduction' to "Mother as seen
by Devotees")

Mother is so very unlike ordinary or even extraordinary persons known to us that it is extremely hard to make any positive statement about Her with any degree of confidence or accuracy. We know that similar difficulties leading to misunderstanding were experienced in the case of some of the supremely great persons of the past and that as a result many of these persons actually felt that they were not truly appreciated and were even misunderstood by those among whom they lived and for whom they worked. Sri Kṛṣṇa, for instance, complained that most people—some of the gods as well—not knowing his true nature looked down upon him as an ordinary mortal. Gautama, the Buddha, too in a subsequent age spoke in the same strain saying that very few people understood him properly.

That Mother's life, even Her earliest days, should abound in extraordinary incidents is not surprising—we are accustomed to such incidents in the lives of genuine saints, mystics and yogins. They exist and have their place of honour in those lives. But all these pale into insignificance before wonderful poise and bliss of Her sweet but magnificent personality—a personality which, strong as

it is, blends into the Impersonal, nay is utterly undifferentiated from it.

It is well-known that the illumination and liberation of saints and mystics presuppose an earlier stage of ignorance and bondage, followed usually by a period of aspiration, personal exertion and austerities. This stage is usually found in the present life itself, or, in exceptional cases, in a pre-natal state of existence. But in the case of Mother we are told that such a prior state of ignorance never existed at all. The possibility of an ante-natal embodied existence is ruled out on Mother's definite assurance that Her life is not subject to the laws of natural causation and that She has no prior life to account for Her present existence.

Among the well-known mystics of the world we seldom find any in whom we do not observe a period of gloom and subjective torture antecedent to the descent of Light. Mother had no experience of darkness in Her life, either of the soul or of the spirit nor had She any experience of the descent of Light except as a matter of play. It is said that from Her very birth She was aware of what She had ever been and what She would always continue to be and that there was no possibility of a deviation from Her self-conscious stature for a single moment.

Her self-knowledge, we are assured, did not arise under the impact of an extrinsic element outside of Herself—it was always with Her, being a state of Her nature. It was there already in its fulness, requiring no effort on Her part, nor any grace from above, to bring it into greater perfection.

Now what is the nature of the self-knowledge which was innate with Mother ?

It is clear from what has been said above that though self-knowledge, on the analogy of lower knowledge, has its roots within, its exciting cause is usually outside, as it is initiated by forces working without us. But it may also be, due to initiation from within, in which case the external agencies would be no more than merely propagating forces. History records instances of illumination of both these types. The Divine Grace is the most important factor, not only in the awakening of religious consciousness in man but also in its subsequent development in him till the union with the Divine is accomplished. Granting this as a necessary pre-condition of active spiritual life, what is needed in ordinary cases is the operation of a mediating factor through which such grace may become accessible to man. For the bodily and the mental mechanism of an average individual is not capable of bearing the strain involved in the direct transmission of Divine Grace. As a rule God's Grace is said to act on a receptive vehicle free from contact with matter, i.e. on an unembodied soul in a pre-creational state. But if the soul in the process of creative evolution happens to take on a body of impure matter it can no longer receive grace directly from the Divine source, but receives it only through a medium. The medium would be an embodied being whose body may be of exclusively pure matter or of pure matter mixed with impure.

Grace acts freely and immediately in the case of souls which are not clogged with material vestments. This is possible where Grace does not require any external support for its manifestation and it acts indirectly through pure bodies on recipient souls endowed with bodies of *māyā*. This is an instance of Grace acting through a support as its medium. By the term 'Grace' we should understand here the special Grace of the Lord and not the general grace which confers benefit other than Supreme Realization.

Those in whom the supreme intuition does not arise from within, have naturally to depend for its origin either on illuminated persons or on revelation. But to one in whom it flashed up spontaneously revealing Truth fully and immediately, external aids are held to be unnecessary. Such a man is believed to be a master of every phase of spiritual life and possesses the ability to impart it successfully to the needy. It is said that the process of his so-called self-initiation is in reality a process of introversion of senses and their subsequent unification with the true Self which awakens the latent divine consciousness. This is the secret of his self-acquired authority. He never feels any urge for resorting to an external teacher for interpreting the sacred word, for his inner sense reveals it to him. This is an illustration of how Pure Light, free from intellectual and conceptual elements, comes into manifestation. In the matter of communicating his wisdom to others, he is guided solely by the consideration of the receptive capacity and other qualities of the seekers. Thus if the minds of the

recipients are absolutely pure the beneficent Will of the Master is by itself sufficient to kindle their spiritual sense. But if they are not so pure, external accessories of a formal character consistent with their inner demands may have to be conceded to suit their requirements. Such a unique person is a Guru unto himself and is known as *Akalpita Guru*, possessed of Full Knowledge and Power manifested from within.

But when this self-derived knowledge and power is imperfect he has to remove it and bring the knowledge into perfection by some means or other, e.g. through a mental act viz. *bhāvanā* or contemplation or *japa* or *yoga*. Thus by constantly turning in his mind the thought he is verily one with Brahman or by repetition of a potent mantra or by some such means he has to supplement the knowledge he has acquired from within. Such a person is called *Akalpita Kalpaka*. The difference between the two is that while in the former or superior type of self-illumination the co-operation of the mind, *prāna*, senses or body is not essential, in the latter it is indispensable.

A superficial observer might find a Mother's self-knowledge some resemblance to the illumination of one of the two types mentioned above. If Her subsequent course of life be interpreted as a real process of *sādhana* intended to bring into perfection what She has derived from Her inner Self it would come, they say, under the second category. But if it means simply an outer expression of what She found within and does not

convey the usual significance attached to *sādhana*, it would fall under the first category.

A little reflection would however show that Mother's case is exceptional and does not come under any of the two categories.

Mother's self-knowledge is not easily explicable. It cannot be interpreted in terms of the experiences of saints and sages. Hence the difficulty of estimating Mother's personality. We cannot ignore the fact that She was never subject to ignorance and the question of saving grace even in its highest degree can never arise in Her case. She played the role of a *sādhikā* in Her earlier years, no doubt, and during this period She seemed to have passed through all the stages of a real *sādhikā*. In this play She started with ignorance and proceeded through various austerities, observing silence, regulating diet, practising japa and yogic exercises and performing pūjā and other similar rites. Dawn of knowledge formed also a part of this play. A sense of agony and dryness of the soul followed by the bliss of union had their own places in this self-enacted drama. The whole affair was an imitation of *sādhana* and it was so arranged that it had all the air of naturalness in it. Her self-knowledge, fortified in its unshakable purity, stood behind this play of self-assumed ignorance and the dramatic impersonation of an ordinary *sādhikā* in quest of supreme Realization. One should not take it as an illustration of divided self and of its activities—it is rather the outcome of an eternally vigilant and self-conscious Will playing the

double part of impersonation of a sādḥikā passing through the shadows and lights of a disciplined life and of the still Witness behind observing and directing its own play on the stage.

Some people are inclined to regard Mother as an *Avatāra* or incarnation of a god or goddess.

But what is an *Avatāra*? It is the descent of Energy to the earth level from the pure causal plane with the object of bringing order into a troubled world, establishing righteousness and restoring moral balance to humanity. The Energy which comes down to an *Avatāra* is distinguished from what descends to a man on the ground that its connection with the source remains unbroken whereas in the case of a man it is discontinued. Notwithstanding this, its relation with the source is like that of a part with the whole, and even when the descending Energy is continuous with the source, it is only a projection and nothing more. The original source lies outside the field of the descended energy. The very expression *Avatāra* means descent and presupposes a higher source from which the descent is made.

We are not concerned here with the particular god or goddess of which She is claimed to be an *Avatāra*. The difficulty is everywhere the same. Even if the god or goddess be taken to be divine in essence the difficulty remains. Knowing Mother through personal contact in the light of what She says about Herself indirectly from time to time I cannot bring myself to believe that this view would solve the difficulty.

Is She then the Divine in its Svayam Rūpa, in its plenary and perfect Form? Is She then a visible expression of the Absolute Itself? Is She the outer manifestation, within a self-imposed veil, of the Inner Atmā of the world, of all of us, revealed to us clothed in a human form simply to draw us towards Herself away from the turmoils and tumults of fettered existence? Who can say?

It is believed by some that Mother has come down on a definite mission viz. to awaken divine consciousness in man and bring love and peace into the present world. But some deny this on the ground that Her actions are purposeless in the sense that they are actuated by Divine Will directly and not by a personal will of Her own as an ordinary individual. In any case it seems clear that a descent or manifestation so remarkably great as this cannot fail to have a great consummation in its own course. She never claims to be a Teacher though She sometimes seems to some to function as such indirectly, for the Teacher is one who has the limitation of teachership attached to him on account of his pure *vāsanā*. But the Mother is free from every kind of *vāsanā* as such from the very beginning. She claims to be Herself alone—nothing more and nothing less. In a sense She is perhaps the very Truth which the Teacher promulgates.

We are often told that Mother has no mind and no body. The meaning of the statement does not seem to be clear, at least to some of us. To me it means that the statement is intended to convey the

sense that as an ordinary body or physical organism together with its term of existence as a vehicle of worldly experience is due to one's prior karmas maturing for fruition and having their roots in ignorance, Mother on account of Her immunity from these causal factors cannot be said to bear the burden of such a body and of such a mind. It means that even a pure body and a pure mind cannot be really attributed to a person who is eternally free from ignorance and karma.

How then are we to account for what appears like Mother's body and mind? May they not be due to an act of the Supreme Will playing in its freedom or to the same Will in response to the cumulative karmas of humanity crying out for ages for a Divine Appearance. It comes to this, then *Mother's body is no body and Her mind is no mind in the ordinary connotation of the terms.* They are only apparent and exist for the ignorant who are under *māyā* and unable to see behind the veil. This is a docetic view to be sure, but there seems to be no escape from it. Did we not hear of it in connection with the Buddha's body and also the body of Jesus Christ? Did not Śrī Kṛṣṇa too say that he did not really take any birth and had no karma of his own like ordinary men and that his birth and karma were both divine in nature?

Mother Herself said once in reply to a question as to whether the persistence in consciousness of body is consistent with the dawn of knowledge.

“For a self-realized Being neither the world with its pairs of opposites exists, nor does the

body. If there is no world there can obviously be no body either !”

“Who says the body exists ? There is no question at all of name and form. To wonder whether a realized Being sees anything outside of himself is also beside the point. Who is there to whom he can say : “Give, give” ? Yet this state of wanting is precisely the reason for one’s belief in the reality of the body. Therefore, since there is no world and no body there can be no action either ; this stands to reason. To make it quite clear ; after Self-realisation there is no body, no world and no action—not even the faintest possibility of these—nor is there such an idea as “there is not”. To use words is exactly the same as not to speak ; to keep silent or not is identical—all is THAT alone”*

This is in regard to persons who have awakened to eternal life from the torpor of worldly existence. It is equally applicable certainly with a greater force to those who have never been in that existence.

Mother says that the teachings of all lines and of all teachers, provided they are genuine and proceed from the right sources, are correct and should be followed by those for whom they are meant. They may be opposed to one another, but that does not detract from each its peculiar value as a distinct path leading to the goal set before it. If this path is self-consistent and lies unblocked till the end of the journey it will not mislead, though

* ‘Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma’ ; P. 118.

it may carry the pilgrim to a sectional truth and not to the whole Truth. But if the pilgrim has within him genuine aspiration for the Supreme Reality, Reality will assert itself and overtake him at any point of the journey. In that case the sectional truth will be either brought into relation with the Whole and make a step in its direction or will be converted into a medium through which the Supreme Truth will reveal itself. The Ultimate Truth is one and the Way to it is also one. An earnest Seeker, free from worldly attachments and desires, has no reason for disappointment. What is needed is unflinching patience, grim resolution, persistent endeavour, unflinching faith in Divine Providence and unconditional surrender to the Divine Will, preceded by a life of purity, devotion and self-dedication.

Mother has no line of Her own, no particular teaching or doctrine. She recognizes that though at bottom the Way is unique, it assumes varied forms as the temperaments and capacities of individuals are varied. The true test of real advance in spiritual life lies in gradual purification, illumination and transformation of the human soul whereby in the end it may be restored to its lost unity with the Divine. She is at times very eloquent on the deprecation of the so-called spiritual favours, including revelations, visions, locutions etc. and exhibitions of occult powers. Not that they are always had or inspired by dark forces, but the point to be remembered is that they have generally a tendency to deflect us from

the right path, which consists in a single-minded and all-absorbing attention to the great Aim held in view. It is very important to bear in mind that the strength of personal will, self-consciousness and power of rational discrimination should not suffer in any way.

It is thus intelligible that Mother is tolerant to all. She sees the bright side of every object and every event and asks all to do the same as far as they can. Everything has its own use and importance. People have different points of view. What one says from his own view-point may be as true as what another says from his own view-point. She speaks to people from their own standpoints so that they may understand Her well, showing that She is familiar with all. This is the secret of Her universal sympathy and compassion. She always makes it clear that different people with different temperaments and intellectual backgrounds have to be led in different ways.

A great World-Teacher said that "there are many mansions in my Father's house". Mother says that there are really infinite mansions and that there are infinite ways leading to each and yet what She insists on is that we should not forget the fact that the House is one. All the creatures live in the same house and are members of one and the same family. They all have descended from One and are parts of One and verily One and the Same. Differences are in appearance only ; due to māyā, but even this is in reality the play of the One. When we are ourselves again we are bound to realize

this. Though She moves about from place to place She is always aware that She is in the same house—movement and rest, many and one, are always co-existent in Her consciousness ; nay, they are aspects of the self-same Reality, indeed the Reality itself is aspectless.

For the same reason people of different creeds and persuasions find in Her their strongest support, each for reasons best known to himself. *Karma*, *jñanā*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, in fact all the ways of spiritual life, find their best exponent in Her. She knows the value of each, the relation of one with the others and the fact that all are simultaneously operative. She recognizes the different grades of spiritual advancement and yet She is emphatic—of course to those who can appreciate it—that the universal and integral self-revelation of God is always sudden and the question of a Moment, for it never happens in time. She teaches the law of moral and spiritual causality on the analogy of natural law and yet She stresses the supreme value of Divine Freedom which stands above all laws and restraints. She attaches great importance to Teachers and yet She holds that even Teachers need not be indispensable. She reconciles all conflicts in Her own inimitable way saying that behind all varieties and diversities one Truth shines in its own glory and adds strength to every position.

There is a deep meaning in Mother's utterances some of which may seem to be obscure to a casual reader. It should not be thought that Mother is not accustomed, to speak in plain language. So

far as Her ordinary speeches are concerned, speeches addressed to the people of the world coming to Her in search of blessings or assurance or directions in a state of trouble or embarrassment, they are simple, straightforward, free from ambiguity and full of wisdom and compassion.

From what has been said above one may have a faint idea of what Mother is like and what Her central teachings are, but it would be a futile attempt to try to estimate Mother's position on the strength of what little we know about Her. We must go beyond surmises and grip Reality in its heart. The best thing for us would be to try to love Her deeply and sincerely as Mother and by loving Her to bring ourselves into closer and closer union with Her true Self. I felt this years ago and feel this even now. I am convinced that as a result of this process Mother will surely reveal Herself to us more and more fully according to the degree of our fitness and receptivity and that we shall then be in a fortunate position to know immediately, and not through our intellect which sees through a veil and perverts what it sees, what Mother truly is. And in so knowing Her we shall be able to know our own selves also. For She is verily one with us. No intellectual approach, however free from pre-dispositions and prejudices, is capable of revealing the heart of truth.

So much of disharmony and opposition in the world today, engendering bitterness and strife, is due to our lack of sympathy and sense of oneness. The root cause is the lack of self-knowledge. There

is but one Self which is Love and Wisdom eternal and we shall share it if we but know it in a proper way. Discord and hatred are bound to disappear like mists before the light of the sun. It will herald the advent of a New Life in the world when the central principle of Unity and Love will reign and dominate all its thoughts and activities. May Mother hasten that glorious day and shower Her blessings on humanity.

“With earnestness, love and goodwill carry out life’s everyday duties and try to elevate yourself step by step. In all human activities let there be a live contact with the Divine and you will not have to leave off anything. Your work will then be done well and you will be on the right track to find the Master. Just as mother nourishes her child with all possible care and affection and makes him grow into a healthy boy, so you will find the Divine Mother shaping your inner life and making you reach your full height and stature.”

Sri Ma Anandamayi

A Birthday Offering

Ranadheer Dastidar

In the stillness of dawn
At an auspicious moment
Of Vaishakh,
In a cottage in a hamlet
Wert Thou born—
A blossom of light
Shedding its effulgence
Of pristine purity
Far and wide.
And by the dust of Thy feet
The world was sanctified.

Eternal Mother art Thou,
In Thy sunlit heart
The stream of love
Murmurs into soft music.
Let it wash away
The distress of our dust-laden lives
And fill up the empty vessels
Of our wistful hearts.

Generous with forgiveness art Thou,
Gracious with boundless bounty.
Thou art heavenly music
Melting into mercy.
Thou art Grace personified.
Formless wonder art Thou
In the shape of beauteous form.

In Thy lotus hand
Ever rests hope for the forlorn.

Ever resplendent art Thou
With the manifestation of the Divine.
It is Thy Motherly image
That casts its spell over me.
In Thy heart
Lurks the fragrance of love,
And there abide for ever
Light and hope and peace.

Against the dark background
Of dire disaster
Thy deathless message
Shines in letters of gold.
In it rings the glad music
Of the Infinite,
Resonant with the sweetest melody
Welling out of the depth
Of the Unknown.

The enchanting tune of some flute from afar
Rings in Thy ears
And lights up Thy face
With a mystic smile.
That beatific smile of Thine
is reflected in
To-day's festive lights,
And Thy ringing laughter
Ripples in the stream
Of soulful strains.

When from the summit of silent meditation
Thou didst descend
On this dusty earth
To bear the cross for us,
The waning moon, four days' old,
Suddenly shone with the splendour
Of the fullmoon,
And at our doorstep blazed
The quenchless light of bliss.

When at the end of the day,
My heart was weighed down
With the burden of weariness,
Thy mercy brought me to Thy door.
My fevered brow was caressed
By Thy loving touch,
And my arid heart
Soothed by Thy honeyed words.

Those memories are wafted today
By the fragrance
Of flowers and incense,
And my heart breaks into
Rhythmic verses.
O my Immortal Mother,
May the radiance
Of Thy Birthday Celebration
Turn the gathering gloom of life
Into an everlasting
Festival of lights.

Empty is my hand
So is my flower-basket,
Poor me ! I have only these verses
Strung into a wreath
For Thee.
This my humble offering,
Bathed in the perfume
Of love and adoration,
I dedicate to Thy lotus feet
My Mother,
And bow down to Thee
Again and again.

“The cause of suffering in the identification of the perceiver and the perceived. Out of it desire is born and with desire blind action, unmindful of results. Look round and you will see that suffering is a man-made thing.”

—Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

The Heritage of the Hindus

Bithika Mukerji

(Continued from *Ananda Vārtā*, Jan. 1983)

The importance of continuity in a tradition may be regarded from another perspective. It is well to remember in this context that the Vedas are a body of literature covering a wide range of human activities, pertaining to welfare in this world, felicity beyond it, and also indicating the way to fulfilment in final liberation. The quintessence of the Vedas lies in opening up a dimension of transcendence from the very mundane world which remains the world of human experience. In the Vedas, however *Svarga* (heaven) and *Moksha* (liberation) are not contradictory ideas but one is subsumed under the other.

The concept of *Sreyas* is very integral to Indian tradition. The question, "Why should we give up the pursuit of that which is pleasant here and now, in favour of an unseen and promised '*Sreyas*'?" is always relevant in this context. Moreover, this is not a modern question. It is the moving spirit underlying all discourses on *Brahmavidyā*. The famous dialogue between Yajñavalkya and his wife Maitreyi begins with her question about the nature of Immortality¹. To this question is given one of the most moving,

1. Brhadararyakopenisad.

vibrant and enduring answers which has inspired generations of philosophers and commentators. Thus we see that Sruti is pre-eminently devoted to the living of the good life on this earth and to raising of questions regarding the identity of the self and Brahman. The self most intimately experienced by us is the ultimate Witness (*Sākṣi*) to the yearning of the heart for knowledge. The Upanishads delineate, describe, refer to, characterise, the region in the proximity of the heart but they never dogmatically circumscribe it in definitive language. The unspoken is always the root from where the inspiration for the speaker must be derived. This remains the secret of its continued relevance. It is not the answer which lends unity to generations of the same tradition, but it is the question which is held sacred and which exercises their innermost thinking.

If the tradition seeks only to preserve the yearning for Truth, then it must be considered vital to our way of life. To seek to do away with the "deadwood of tradition" or to weigh it in balance against extraneous judgements, is to miss the point about the grounding of Hindu culture. From this point of view all historical movements of information and renaissance fall outside the scope of the Vedic tradition. One cannot strike at the roots which sustain life and so improve upon the manifestations of it. It is unquestionably true that manifestations and appearances need to be critically evaluated and dealt with rationally, but to question

the root of life would be a contradiction in terms.

The definition of a Hindu therefore is "one who has faith in the Vedas". He who is *Veda-vahya* is not a Hindu. The Hindu is an *astika* and the non-believer in the Veda is the *nastika*. The word *astika* in this tradition does not mean, one who believes in God, or *nastika* does not mean one who is merely a materialist. One may believe in God or not, or one may accept the world as a physicist would explain it ; yet if he is seized with the question of the Witness-Self in his heart and a yearning for Truth as spoken by the Vedas, he would be an *astika*.

It is believed that the holy land of *āryavārtā*, surmounted in the north by the eternally snow covered silver peaks of the Himalayas and girded by the deep blue of the oceans in the south, has always been the sacred land where men have held dialogues with enlightened sages regarding ultimate Truth. It is here that the Vedic seers sang joyously of their vision of Truth. These paens of joy are called *Sruti*. They are not the inspired constructions of poetic imaginations nor are they the spoken words of a supreme Being. They signify the revelation of itself.

This supreme utterance (*Vāk*) chooses to reveal itself to him who is a *ṛṣi* (seer). It appears like a flash of lightning in the understanding of the

poet-sage. The memory of it which survives and is expressed in language which is spoken is called *Smṛti*, (that which is remembered). These recorded revelations are the descent of the eternal *Vāk* to the realm of the spoken word. They also are received through the medium of sages who are the spokesmen for these auxiliary aphoristic literature called *smritis*. They are elaborations, annotations and constructions of the Vedic literature or *Śruti*. Although this knowledge is auxiliary, it is still above the category of rational thought; that is, it is to be discoursed upon and commented upon for greater understanding but not be discarded as dispensable. Under this category may be enumerated the six *Vedāṅgas*, the *Purāṇas* and the two *Itihāsas*.

The *Vedāṅgas* :

The six *Vedāṅgas* according to tradition are *Sikṣa*, *Chhandāh*, *Ryakarana*, *Nirukta*, *Jyotisa* and *Kalpa*. The first two deal with the study of the pronunciation of the vedic literature, the next two are indispensable for construing the meaning of Texts and the last two are guidelines for the performance of all Vedic details enjoined on the householder. A Vedic scholar is required to be well versed in these studies for an in-depth understanding of the import of *Śruti*.

The *Purāṇas* :

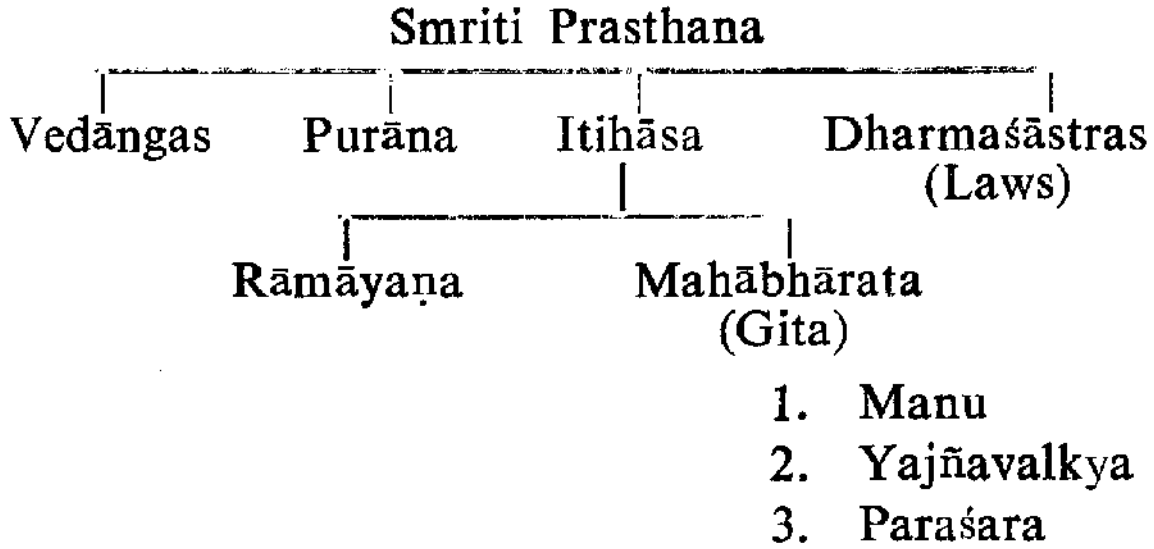
There are eighteen *Purāṇas* available to us and they are the foundation on which Hindu religion

has built up its various ideals of theisms. The worship of God in a personalised form is to be met with in the *Purāṇas*. *Purāṇas* are the repeatedly told tales of God's involvement with His creation, His majesty, His glory, His compassion and also His grace without which man may not achieve the beatitude of God-realization. The *Purāṇas* form the widening circle of spiritual power radiating from the focal point of the Vedic Sacrificial Fire. We now have the additional spiritual centres of temples, images, hallowed cities and holy rivers. We see the emergence of festivals and the tradition of going on pilgrimages to sacred mountains, temples and rivers, the *Dharmaśāstrās* :

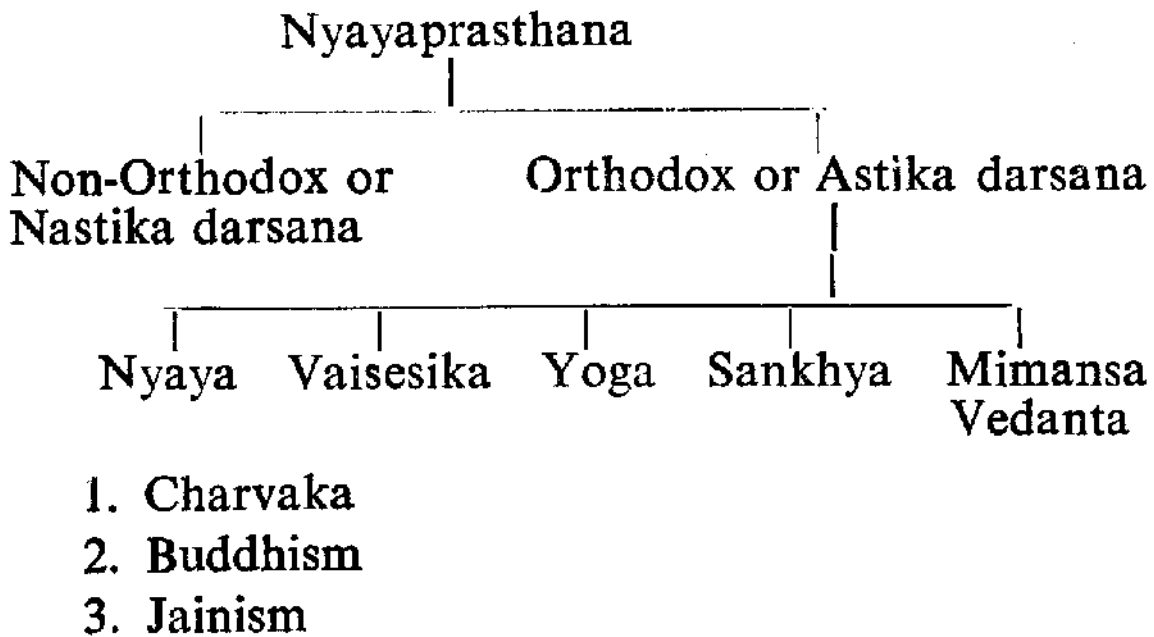
Together with the *Purāṇas* we have the works of sages who have enunciated laws for the guidance of men living in a considerably more complex and heterogeneous society than the simpler forms of the Vedic societies. These works are still used in formulating laws for our contemporary societies. It may be said that the Vedic tradition is like the holy Ganges, which comes into view as a powerful stream out of impenetrable and unknown mountain fastness. The pure blue waters cascade down the valleys of the Himalayas ; flow broadly through green fields to diversify into a net work of shimmering water-ways before she loses herself in the still depths of the ocean. The Vedic tradition, whether it discourses on the unity of the Self and Brahman, or whether it is speaking of the Grace of God, flowing in a continuous shower to

sustain the devotion of man, it remains one and unbroken.

We may classify the *Smṛiti* Literature as follows :



Together with *Sruti* and *Smṛiti*, the Vedic tradition recognises, a third source of knowledge—Reason. Under rational enquiry are placed the philosophic systems which are also in the nature of exegeses on the *Sruti* literature, but here we have criticisms as well as their answers :



(To be continued)

Epitaph of Mata Anandamayi

Dr. Bireshwar Ganguly (Nilmoni)

They say, Thy mortal frame has been laid to rest ;
The body that was matchless and divine,
Spotless and beautiful, that wandered ceaselessly,
For half a century from Dacca to Dehradun,
From Kankhal to Kanyakumari to redeem mankind,
To enkindle the spirit of joy eternal.
It lies in motionless rest at Kankhal,
Never to rise up, and bless millions of hearts,
Hearts parched with dreary desires,
Hearts in deep slumber of ignorance,
Just aspiring for the touch of the beyond.

But Oh Mother ! I know Thou wert not a body,
Thou wert a spirit eternal, incarnate on earth
From the supernal sky.
Beyond all human imagination
Thou travelled from the supramental plane,
To the world of time and space,
To build a bridge between man and Godhead,
To shower Thy motherly grace
On aspiring souls, wandering aimlessly
In the abysmal darkness of Kali Yuga ;

I was weeping that night,
For I missed Thy smiling face
On the fateful day of departure.
And lo ! Thou comest in my dreams,
Full of joy and light, smiling that eternal smile.
Thou consoledst me in Thy familiar tone ;
Nilmoni, why weepest thou ?

This body has not gone anywhere,
 I am ever present everywhere.
 Call me and I shall come,
 Pray to me and I shall answer,
 Meditate on this my body,
 And I shall appear, for it is divine.
 I am ever what I was.
 The veil of my worldly body is gone,
 Now look at my changeless eternal form.”
 I woke up with full faith,
 Faith that is unshakable,
 Affirmation that is unimpeachable,
 That there is no more the barrier
 Of time and space, of attendants or crowds,
 Between Thee and me.
 Thou art at the beck and call
 Of Thy child, frail and timid,
 Poor but passionless,
 Ever longing to be hold Thy holy face
 Smiling with affection and compassion.
 I decide not to listen to atheists,
 Who declare Thou art dead.
 For they know not, Thou art Life of all life,
 Beyond life and death, time and space.
 For Thou art the Fountain of Life,
 Life that flows through all creatures,
 Joy that creates and sustains life.
 Blessed is mankind that Thou assumedst a shape
 And movedst among Thy children
 For four score and seven years.

Guru Darshan

Acharya Satish Chandra Mukhopadhyay

PART II

(Continued from the last issue)

I have been speaking of *Mukta Purushas* who have achieved their *Mukti* after having passed through the *baddha-purusha* stage or the stage of a fettered soul—fettered because of the identification with the *achit* body. Now the state of an unliberated soul requires to be discussed at some length, in order that you have a further understanding of the different stages through which unliberated souls have to pass, before they get entirely freed from identification with matter, and achieve the stage of *Mukta Purushas* or liberated souls.

To begin with : Every human being who is *baddha* or unliberated has got to wear a twofold body, namely (1) the outer body called the *sthula* or gross, *achit* body, and (2) the interior, *achit*, *sukshma* or fine body functioning on the mind plane, and which may therefore roughly be termed the mind-body or mind-stuff. Now, when the unliberated human being passes away, he simply sheds his outer *sthul* covering or body, the internal or the interior fine *sukshma achit* body remaining intact. Thus when death supervenes, the fettered soul, with the help of his internal *sukshma achit* body, goes to some *paraloka* or some invisible other

world, as it is called, either to suffer or enjoy as the case may be. For he has either to expiate a portion of some *sanchita* or accumulated stock of *pāpam*, or to work off by way of enjoyment a portion of some *sanchita* or accumulated stock of *punyam*. This is what ordinarily happens. In some special cases, however, the unliberated human being at death gets immediately reborn, without having to pass through a process of temporary sojourn in a *paraloka*. But where, instead of getting immediately reborn, an unliberated soul goes to such a *paraloka* or other world (invisible and *sukshma achit*), he has got to work out there a portion of some past karma known as *sanchita karma*, i.e., an accumulated stock of *pāpam* or *punyam* as the case may be. Here however it must not be imagined that after having worked off a part of his *sanchita karma* in such a *paraloka*, he becomes a *Mukta Purusha* or a freed soul, wearing a *chit* or *chinmaya* body. No ; he has got to return to the human world and wear a twofold body namely, the gross or *sthula* and the finer or *sukshma*. But is this last *sukshma* body a new creation ? Or is it the very same *sukshma* body of the same human being who had gone to the *paraloka* and about whom I have just spoken ?

The question is not free from difficulty. Let me begin from the beginning therefore. First let me repeat that the inner *sukshma* body is always there with the unfree *jiva* even when it wears a *sthula* or gross physical body. Next, it is with the help of a *sukshma* or subtle body that the unreleased *jiva*

is able to sojourn in another invisible world known as *paraloka*. Is this last mentioned *sukshma* body a new creation? Yes; for at the time of death the function of the existing *sukshma* body is wholly ended, and this last-mentioned *sukshma* body therefore vanishes. For death does not occur unless and until the entire stock of *prārabdhas* lodged in the *sūkshma* body is worked out. What happens at death may be thus stated. Immediately before the death or disintegration of the physical body, the dying *jīva* puts on a fresh internal *sūkshma* body fashioned from out of an endless stock of endless past *sanchita* karmas, all lodged in the *jīva's* *sūkshma* body, out of which, for each particular birth, *prārabdhas* emerge to be liquidated in the first instance, i.e., in that particular birth. *Sanchita* karmas may therefore be defined as the unliquidated stock of past karmas (whether *punyam* or *pāpam* or both), and which therefore have got to be worked off in a series of future reincarnations or rebirths by way of what are called the *jīva's* *prārabdhas*, allocated to each particular incarnation, and along with whose liquidation the particular birth would come to an end through death. The store of endless *sanchita* karmas, all lodged in the *jīva's* *chitta* as part of his *sukshma* body, may well be compared to an infinite reservoir, out of which all future *sukshma* bodies are fashioned from time to time, i.e., producing incarnation after incarnation. It goes without saying that for purposes of each incarnation, this *sukshma* body must put on a corresponding *sthula* or gross body.

Thus when the dying *jīva* leaves the gross physical body, he does not leave it without first having acquired a fresh *sūkshma* body fashioned, as already pointed out, out of the stock of endless *sanchita* karmas. This last-mentioned *sukshma* body must therefore be altogether different from the *sukhma* body which he has just shed. To repeat : the law is that as soon as the existing stock of *prārabdhas* lodged in the *chitta* of the existing *sukshma* body is liquidated, the outer *sthūla* body automatically drops off, while another and a fresh *sukshma* body automatically emerges to replace the departing *sukshma* body whose work is done. Therefore, if and when at death a fettered *jīva* has to make a sojourn at a *paraloka* to wipe off, not the whole but some part of his past karmas (*pāpam* or *punyam*), he does so with the help of the new *sukshma* body to which I have just referred ; and with the exhaustion of the aforesaid *punyam* or *pāpam* in the *paraloka*, the temporary sojourn there is over, and he takes birth again as a human being on earth, and puts on a gross *sthūla* body along with his subsisting *sukshma* body.

Far different is the case of a *Mukta Purusha*. At his death not only does the gross body drop off as in the case of the unliberated souls, but simultaneously the *achit sūkshma* body disappears for good. In other words, in his case the *sūkshma* body ceases to exist for good and all. The *sūkshma* body, as already pointed out, is the repository of *achit prārabdhas* ; that is to say, the latter are lodged in the *chitta* which is part of the *sūkshma*

body. If therefore this *sukshma* body vanishes for ever, then there would be no fresh *sūkshma* body to take its place at the *jīva's* death, as happens in the case of a dying *jīva* who has got to reincarnate as a human being. Therefore, if the *sūkshma* body disappears for ever, there remains no possibility of his undergoing a fresh human birth. For there could be no rebirth where there is no *sukshma* body present. For clearer understanding let me repeat my argument: the *sukshma* body being the repository of all *sukshma achit* desires, *achit sanskāras* and *prārabdhas*, these do require a gross physical body to liquidate them. But when there is no *sukshma* body, there are of course no *sukshma achit vāsanās* and *prārabdhas* to be worked off; and hence there is not only no need, but there is no possibility of a rebirth, which means the putting of a physical body.

Therefore when and if at the time of the death of a *baddha puruṣha* his *sukshma* body vanishes for ever, then he is able to achieve complete liberation or *Moksha*, through a complete disappearance of the twofold body (gross and *sukshma*), which is the inalienable accompaniment of every human being reborn on the earth plane.

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

—Dionysius

Grace (*kṛipā*) and Action (*karma*) on the Spiritual Path according to Mahamahopadyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj

Jagadishwar Pal

(Translated from Bengali)

The ultimate aim of human life is the realization of God. Some method is indispensable for this fulfilment. So long as identification with the body is strong in the *sādhaka* and the feeling that he is the actor is prevalent, it is difficult to adopt any other means than recourse to work. Desire arises from the sense of "I". Every embodied person is working all the time. While living in the domain of ego-consciousness it is impossible to be free of self-conceit. Therefore skill in action is a necessity—this skill is yoga. "Yoga is skill in action". One should engage in work but be free from fear of the bondage that may result from action. The impurity of the mind (*chitta*) is the cause of bondage. This impurity comes from the craving for results which stains the mind. Whether one reaps the fruit or not, the very hope for the result pollutes the mind. So it is necessary to work without the feeling of being the performer of the work. This is known as work in the state of yoga. In this there is no attachment—equanimity prevails in success or failure and

this equality is yoga. By performing action with this attitude, the mind (*chit*) is almost completely purified. As self-conceit slackens one loses the capacity to engage in various types of work and one becomes conscious of one's incapacity. In this condition, although pride has been weakened, a particle of it still trails behind. In order to get rid of the last vestige of self-conceit the performance of work is necessary. At that stage the best method of *sādhana* is to seek shelter in God without looking for anything else. This is called *śaranāgati* (taking refuge). Real *saṁnyāsa* is also just this.

To keep one's gaze fixed exclusively on God and to depend on Him wholly without getting entangled in any particular kind of work is the constant mark of *śaranāgati dharma*. By this attitude work slowly drops away. So long as self-conceit persists in the heart one has to work. When the *sādhaka* takes refuge in God whole-heartedly, the sense of being the actor subsides. In this state God Himself becomes the instrumental agent: "O Lord, Who art enthroned in my heart, whatever you make me do, I do!" Then the *sādhaka* comes to understand that indwelling God is the inspirer as well as the actor. After this there is no more feeling of acting oneself and the *sādhaka* becomes free from care and anxiety. God Himself is taking on all responsibility. Now the *sādhaka* has not even the pretension that he is working, being goaded by someone else. He is now witness and observer—God Himself the Actor. In this condition the aspirant

realises that the work performed through his body, mind, intelligence, etc. is actually done by God Himself. Thus he becomes free of the sense of right and wrong, takes refuge at the feet of the Lord and becomes capable of comprehending God's infinite Līlā.

So according to ordinary conception, action comes first and Grace afterwards. However, it has to be kept in mind that it is Grace alone which is at the root of action. Albeit, that Grace is secondary. Primary Grace manifests only when the *sādhaka* rests permanently at the feet of the Lord as a carefree child with the attitude of an observer.

In this connection the viewpoint of the *Āgama Tantra* is also to be considered. In keeping with the injunctions of the *Āgama*, ancient tantrikas prescribe that ordinarily one has to proceed with the help of the laid down injunctions.

Self-conceit is also of various types such as identification with the body, with one's feelings, pride of one's senses, intellectual conceit, mental conceit and so forth. Because of this conceit of the ego, work is necessary. A particular type of self-conceit is subdued by a particular type of action. When self-conceit is specified, inspired work also calms down. Thereafter the *sādhaka* needs no rules or restrictions. The question arises: "What kind of state is this?" It is the state in which the latent spiritual energy (*chit śakti*) of the individual (*jīva*) is awakened from its agelong sleep. This is the initial stage of the fully enlightened condition. In popular parlance this is known as

the awakening of *kundalinī*. When the *samvitśakti* (power of knowledge) is aroused the aspirant need not exert himself anymore in any way for the achievement of the ultimate Goal. Of course, due to the fact that a small remnant of identification with the body has remained, a residuum of karma has yet to be worked out ; but this is just nominal. The *śakti* being awakened flows upwards and the nescient state being converted into the sciential one merges with the consciousness of the Self. When the Ganga arising from Gomukhi breaks through the icy fort and flows as water, she then advances with her own speed towards the great ocean. Likewise, the *sādhaka-jīva*, taking the assistance of *Mahāśakti* can start for the ocean, for which he need not exert himself separately. In other words, he is then active through the activity of *Śakti*. Thus united with *Śakti*, *Jivātmā* reaches the Ocean of *Śiva* or Brahman : the *jīva* attains *Śivahood* just as Ganga merging into the ocean becomes part of the ocean.

Just as the *anava* method is necessary for the juniormost aspirant, so for the medium aspirant the *Śakti* method has to be employed. About this the Gita says : “Abandoning all duties, come unto me for shelter, sorrow not, I shall liberate thee from all sins.”

However, here also perfection has not yet been attained : for this the *sambhava* method is necessary. Even though being *Śiva*, perfection does not come so long as one is not aware of the state of *Śivahood*. By becoming fully conscious of one's *Śivahood*,

final perfection is achieved — here the state of Śiva-hood has been established as well as full consciousness thereof. This engenders bliss. Thus, to make it clear and simple, first of all action has to be performed according to the instructions of the Guru or the Śāstras. When the mind (*chitta*) has thus been purified by work done without desire for results, one should advance by seeking shelter in the Supreme Goddess Śakti. This is known as Grace. Finally, having become established in one's essential Reality (*Svarūpa*) the full consciousness of this is to be retained.

In this connection, it has to be noted that Grace and action are interdependent. But one has to keep in mind that in the beginning action is predominant and later Grace. In the state of complete Realization neither action nor Grace predominate.

Some *sādhakas* experience Grace after action, while others feel inspired through Grace to perform action. This difference is due to the influence of *saṁskāras* brought over from previous births. There are many different varieties of Grace also. But the speciality of Supreme Grace is that God Himself, being attracted, comes to the devotee. A mother is bound to hurry along when the child cries.

For Anandamayi Ma

Elizabeth Dayton

The life of Anandamayi Ma has always fascinated me, ever since I read of Her in "Autobiography of a Yogi" by Yogananda, whom I had known personally.

When I discovered Ma was living still and that there was a journal about Her, I subscribed five years ago. I felt very blessed, always, by Her words and actions, and "soaked up" all descriptions of Her, found myself in Her words of wisdom, which often, often smoothed The Way for me.

Yesterday, when the October issue arrived with the marvelous colored picture of MA (what a blessing !), I started reading the pages as usual. I came to the sanskrit and then all the expressions of grief for Her passing, of eternal Thanksgiving for Her living, eternal presence.

As I turned back again to the beautiful color picture of MA, She Herself gave me darsan, I felt Her radiance about me.

Oh you,
Friend God ;

I abandon all else,
So that I may be near you
And touch your feet.

When night is still and cool,
You are there
With blanket of caring
Encompassing the void
And singing, unheard,
Primeval song of peace, awareness, oneness.

Morning comes
 Supporting your gentleness,
 Stirs impulse of creation and
 I feel your heart enfold within —
 It is strong tenderest desire of my unbounded being :
 Creator becomes Creating and Created, all in One.

Slow dawn comes on apace
 With sounds of you, my dove,
 My morning glory,
 Chanting to your love unending,
 Which is my joy.

O blow,
 All winds of elegance !
 You cannot save manna of perfection for some ;
 Your soma is in sharing,
 And with all west winds,
 Breathing in most delicate
 Of sound and life,
 So that all pranic pulses,
 Golden breath of breath,
 May carry God Almighty
 To farthest ends of earth
 And touch that star
 Which centers in my being,
 Caresses cheek
 With silver-edged reach of Maya's toys,
 Which is to say,
 "All Timelessness"
 Within strong touch of joy.
 Oh then at noon
 You shall become the molten sun

Which beams
To leak all light
And knowledge,
Shine on each alike ;
For you are everywhere, My God,
My Joy,
In all beings sentient
And in all unawakened forms.

Blue, blue are small lakes
Held within great oceans of love's power
To lift with waves of laughter —
They are so sweet to taste.

With roses pink and gold
And lavender,
You tease the breeze...
Who has not held
Her share of fragrance yet —
It's love so light and right and pure,
These minerals
And haying joys
Of earth awake :

As wisdom grows with day
I look about
And seek to see you in all radiance everywhere
Because it's you,
My God,
Neighbor God,
Friend God,
Child God,
Mother God,

Husband God,
Wife God,
God God.

I sweep my love for you
Into giant bouquets of joy
And place them lightly
At your feet —
My God,
My God !
Oh you Friend God !

“Whatever work you have to do, do it with singleness of purpose, with all the simplicity, contentment and joy you are capable of. Thus only will you be able to reap the best fruit of work. In fulness of time, the dry leaves of life will naturally drop off and new ones shoot forth.”

Sri Ma Anandamayi

Ma as our playmate in *Nandotsava* 1973

Anil C. Ganguli

Sometimes Ma's 'outer manifestation' offered opportunities for catching glimpses of Her 'inner being'. Let me narrate an episode revealing the Universal Mother in the role of our playmate on the occasion of *Nandotsava* in Delhi in 1973.

Lord Krishna's advent to this world took place thousands of years ago on the eighth day after full moon in August. On the morrow following Krishna's birth night, Nanda Raja (Krishna's foster father) celebrated a grand ceremony which came to be known as *Nandotsava*.

The anniversary of *Nandotsava* is a regular annual function in Anandamayi Ashram. Ma's presence in Delhi in 1973 created a special atmosphere of religious enthusiasm, and the festivities seemed to reach a rare and sublime height of spiritual exaltation.

The delight of Nanda Raja and his consort Yasoda and the riotous joy of *Vrajavāsis* (residents of Vrindaban) over the birth of the divine child was, as it were, recaptured and reflected in this festival after the lapse of thousand of years. Ma radiated vibrations of love and light and thus inspired the whole assembly with an ecstasy of pure joy and devotional fervour.

Ma was in great form when an essential feature of this festival was being observed—crushing of the sacred curd-container and distribution of curd as holy sacramental food. This ritual was followed by Ma's *kheyāla* to be in a highly sportive mood with handfuls of curd splashed and sprinkled all around. One lady in the assembly carried in her satchel an image of Bāl Gopāl (infant Krishna). Ma lovingly besmeared the face of this Gopal with the sacred curd, to start with. When She was almost piously absorbed in this apparently playful ritual, Ma's countenance became radiant with a glow diffusive of maternal love. That ancient scene of Nanda Raja and mother Yasoda painting their living Gopal with curd (did not this look like dressing him with a white robe ?) was, as it were, re-enacted on this occasion at Anandamayi Ashram in the capital of India. The colouring of Gopal's image with curd was the opening scene of Ma's grand sport with Her 'children'. Our turn came next. Did not Ma treat each one of us as Her child, "Gopal", if not so in our own right, at least in Ma's overflowing affection ? It seemed the Universal Mother had generously condescended to come down to the mundane level of ordinary mortals. And thus She ushered in an atmosphere of divine delight and we on our part had a taste of this nectar of joy which made us quite oblivious of our worldly cares and anxieties for the time being.

It was, indeed, a day of days. As Ma began moving in the assembly of worshippers and Her

devotees, She seemed to be present everywhere, trailing behind Her a flood-tide of maddening joy. All were seized with a sort of religious frenzy. This festive function was open to all—the young and the old, the rich and the poor, saints and sinners—and they all participated as equals. Ma was the central figure dominating in Her spiritual grandeur the whole assembly plunged in a wave of hilarious merriment. Ma in Her sportive mood was also behaving like a self-forgetful child. As children spray coloured water with their syringe on unwary people during the spring festival of Holi, so was our loving Mother in the role of our playmate engaged in splashing and hurling playfully lumps of curd at all present in all directions. And whoever fell in Her way had his or her face smeared with curd—particularly those who happened to be immaculately dressed. Then he or she looked funny and comical and others laughed at his or her cost. It was indeed great fun ; but there was more of secret joy than embarrassment. It was interesting to note that even those who laughed were eagerly waiting for the Mother's approach and the touch of Her hallowed hands. Their wish was mysteriously fulfilled even as it crossed their mind.

The choral singing of Sri Krishna's sacred name is an integral part of the *Nandotsava*. On this occasion *kirtan*, from time to time led my Ma, started on the open balcony adjoining the temple. When the community singing had reached a high pitch, Ma suddenly walked down into the adjoining

courtyard and we followed Her. It was drizzling at that time ; the ground had become a little slushy and slippery. But our waxing enthusiasm suffered not the least slackening for this handicap. All of us had joined and contributed to the choral chanting and singing, in which we were deeply absorbed. we felt we were all playmates of Ma in this Grand Game of the Eternal Quest.

Then, there was, for a very short time, an abrupt shift in this scene of overwhelming joy. For reasons unknown, and probably unknowable, Ma's body began slowly to be relaxed and even though still standing in Her proper posture, She began to swing rhythmically in perfect consonance with the concerned harmony of vocal instrumental music. Soon after Ma lay down on the muddy ground and started rolling Her body which became mud-besmeared—even then She kept up the rhythmic movement and there was not the slightest discord. Though completely covered with mud, still Ma's body did not lose its spiritual lustre. Mother Earth had, as it were, painted Ma, in the role of a dear daughter, with sacred clay. It seemed Ma's senses slowly and gradually ceased to function—there was no motion except the automatic but rhythmic swing of Ma's entire body which appeared to be sans flesh and blood—an empty, weightless elastic doll of India—rubber tossed to and fro by the gentle breeze. Ma's countenance wore an other-worldly semblance, serene and solemn. Was Ma temporarily transported to an unknown region beyond human reach and beyond human

comprehension ? Did She cut off all communication with us, Her poor 'children' accepted by Her as Her playmates ? Just for a while there was consternation among us. Why this sudden end to all gaiety ? Oh joy : it had been but a short-lived interlude. Soon Ma opened Her eyes and sat up ; She now looked Her usual self—perfectly human and normal, as if nothing had happened.

*“O Thou who stealest the hearts of
Thy devotees,
Do with me what Thou wilt—
For Thou art my hearts' Beloved,
Thou and Thou alone.”*

—Sri Chaitanya

“Gita Jayanti”

Meenakshi Sahai (Shivani)

“I am in your absence incomplete
following shadows down an empty street
Hoping each corner I turn will be,
The one where *You* are waiting for me”

Each and every moment spent with Ma has its own importance and significance but *1st January 1981* is the day that will always remain vivid in my mind. I was standing on the steps of the *Purān Mandir* at Naimisharanya and talking to my niece Gopi. We were discussing the various *Utsavas* (festivals) which are performed in Ma’s ashrams. We wanted to do a joint pūjā for which not a very large budget was needed.

Suddenly Dasuda, who was standing nearby came up to us and said, “why don’t you do the “*Gītā Jayanti*” ? We had never heard of this function, but through Dasuda’s description, we got interested.

After returning to Lucknow, I wrote to Ma about this. She replied that it was a very good idea but there was a long gap in between and so it could be discussed later. After one month, I once more wrote to Ma and She again gave the same reply. Then came *Saraswati Pūjā* at Bhimpura (Gujrat). I went there with my sister and niece. After the pūjā I went near Ma to do *praṇāma* and

bid Her good bye. I again repeated the same question and She smiled and said, "Nirvan ko bolo" (Tell Nirvan).

I went to Nirvanda. He was very busy that day and said that he would send me the details later on. In the month of May, I received a letter from him. Ma was in Dehradun. Nirvanda sent me all details and asked me to pursue the matter with Ma, as he was going away for a couple of months.

I wrote to Ma and after a long interval received a letter from Her saying that suddenly Swami Akhandanandaji had expressed his wish to have the *Gītā Jayanti* at Patna and so my desire could not be fulfilled that year. All my hopes crashed but what could be done under the circumstances.

Then came 1982. My father had heart trouble in May 1981 and since September, he was staying in Delhi at my sister's place, on the doctor's advice. My mother was also with him. In February, I got two letters, one from Bhaskarda and one from Nirvanda. They were both from Naimisharanya. Ma was there in *agyātvās* (incognito). I took permission and went to see Her.

When I reached the ashram, Ma was waiting. She had not even taken Her food. I went to Her and did praṇāma. She was looking tired and I did not feel like worrying Her by talking about *Gītā Jayanti* again. After having our food, we went to see the various temples and came back to the ashram in the afternoon.

I went to Ma to say good-bye as we were leaving the same evening. But lo and behold—what do I see? A fresh and smiling Ma, sitting on Her bed! She called me near Her and inquired about my father and then She said She had thought that I would come to Varanasi for *Saraswati Pūjā*. I was overjoyed that my Ma had remembered me. What can give a person greater joy than knowing that She, who is God Herself remembers or has *kheyāla* about oneself.

I mustered up some courage and asked whether I could have the *Gītā Jayanti* in 1982. Ma looked towards Nirvanda and said that I should discuss it with him. He said that he would let me know. I left Naimisharanya with a new hope.

After this, Ma passed Lucknow station twice but Her health was not good. Everyone prayed for Her *kheyāla* because it was only Her *kheyāla* which could make Her well again.

The Divine Mother heard the prayers of Her children and once again regained Her health. We were filled with immense joy.

Then, in May, my parents and myself reached Kankhal for our beloved Ma's *Janmotsav* (birthday celebrations). We were told that Ma had shifted to Her new cottage and as Her health was not alright, we could have "darshan" only in the evenings, when Ma came out on the open verandah and lay on a wooden couch. It disappointed us but at least we could see Her once a day and Her presence was the most important thing. Every evening we used to stand in the cottage compound

while kirtan and āratī were performed. Then we had to leave the place, after giving our offerings and doing *praṇāma*.

This routine continued till the main day. From the early hours of the morning, the bhaktas took their tickets from the office and stood ready with their offerings. We also got our tickets and when the cottage gate opened, we joined the queue. When we reached Ma, we had to do a hurried pūjā and put our offerings near the couch. When my turn came, I could not control myself and called out, “*Ma main Shivani hoon*” (I am Shivani). Ma turned round and looked at me. I could see love—love and only love. I bowed down and Ma picked up a towel and put it around me. Then people pushed forward and I had to move on.

The day after Ma’s birthday, we were leaving for Lucknow. We asked for a ‘private’ for five minutes to bid Ma good-bye. Ma was sitting in the enclosed verandah. I went near Her and said “*Ma, sharir ko achcha rakhiye*” (keep your body well). She only smiled. Little did I know that this was the last time I was looking at the physical form of One, who means everything to me. Once again I asked about “*Gītā Jayanti*” and She said emphatically, “*Nirvan se tai kar lo*” (Fix it with Nirvan). Then I did *praṇāma* and She put Her hand on my head for the last time. With a heavy heart I departed.

In August Ma took *maha samādhi* and left me an orphan. My whole world crashed. I had nothing left. By the time, I could bring myself

together, it was end of September. Somehow, I collected myself and wrote to Nirvanda at Dehradun. He had returned from his trip to Kailash and Mansarovar and was not feeling well. But I had given my word to Ma and *Gītā Jayanti* was a must. Nirvanda was very kind and wrote all the details about the function. It was to be performed from *ashtami* of the month of *Margashirsha* to *ekadashi*. This is the only period in the whole year, when *Gītā Jayanti* is celebrated.

I requested Swami Parmanandaji, at Kankhal to make all the arrangements and he, in spite of his old age took all the trouble of arranging for the function.

We reached Kankhal on December 21st. Everything had been prepared well in advance. We were given a room downstairs, as my father cannot climb upstairs. Swami Swarupanandaji was there to see to all our needs. A *Bhagwata Saptah* was going in the main hall and the problem was where to held the *Gītā Jayanti*. But because it was Ma's wish and She was Herself there in Her invisible form, the problem solved itself. It was decided to have it in Ma's cottage. What could have been better than this! It had been fixed in the same cottage on 12th May and it was going to take place in the same cottage.

Everything was being done, but with a heavy heart. At every step, I was missing Ma and Her guidance. The whole of 22nd was spent in making the programme and arranging the articles for the *pūjā*. Gopi (my niece) had also come from Delhi

as the pūjā was being done jointly by us. On 22nd night my sister arrived with my cousin and her family. The whole night Bhaskarda, Tanmayda and all the ashram girls were busy arranging everything and decorating the hall of Ma's cottage where pūjā was going to take place.

It was from that moment, that I could feel Ma's presence. Everyone was working, not as individuals but as a united family under Her benign guidance. Billoji and Aruna had gone to Delhi but they also returned on the 22nd. Nirvanda had sent a letter to Bhaskarda saying that he had high temperature and would not be able to come to Kankhal, someone else would have to perform the pūjā. But somehow the letter never arrived and since Nirvanda felt better, he left Dehradun with Swami Shivanandaji and reached Kankhal on the 22nd, afternoon. Was it not Ma's miracle ?

Then dawned the 23rd morning. Gopi and I were told not to partake of any food or drink until the *Pātha* (reading) and *Pūjā* were over. We got ready, and reached Ma's Samādhi to do *praṇāma* and get Her blessings before the Jayanti. When the aratī, at the Samadhi was over, we were allowed to enter the enclosure and do *praṇāma*.

Then, we went to Ma's cottage. It was beautifully decorated. Ma's life size photo was kept in the middle of the hall and in front were the pictures of Sri Krishna and Arjuna. The paraphernalia for the pūjā were all kept in their fixed places and Bhagvad-Gitās were also kept on a Chowki. Nirvanda was sitting and doing pūjā and Ma's bed

was on one side. I could feel Ma's presence ; it seemed as if She were lying on the bed and supervising everything.

On the 23rd morning, we had "*Samvet Gūā Pātha* (reading of the Gita in chorus) Chapters I to VI. All the ashramites participated. Even Vijayanandaji, who seldom comes out from his *kutia*, was there. Swami Swarupanandaji left all the important official work and participated in the reading. It was led by Billoji on one side and Tanmayda on the other. All the old Swamis of the ashram and all the ashram girls were present because Ma was there. After the reading of the Gita, Nirvanda did the "*Partha-Sarathi pūjā*" and *ārati*, in his distinct style. In the evening, Swami Sachidanandaji Saraswati of the ashram gave a beautiful talk on *karma yoga*.

Next day again the same routine was observed when chapters seven to twelve were read, followed by *pūjā* and *ārati*. The evening discourse on *bhakti yoga* by 1008 Swami Brahma Hariji of Chetan Giri Kutia was most illuminating and full of wisdom.

On the 25th, we read the last six chapters of the *Gitā*. The high-light of the evening session was an unexpected but wonderful lecture on *jñāno yoga* by one of our oldest *sādhus*, Swami Virajanandaji. His style of talking reminded most of us of Ma and 'Matri Satsang'.

How quickly time passed and the last day of the *Jayanti* came ! The whole *Gitā* was read and though both Tanmayanandaji and Billoji, were not well, they read all the 18 chapters, reciting each and every *Shloka* as it should be done. There was

a special 'pjūā' after that with offerings of eighteen items, representing the eighteen chapters of the *Gītā*. The pūjā was done beautifully, as always in Ma's ashrams. Everyone felt Ma's presence. The entire hall was charged with Her divine power. One could clearly make out that Ma was with us. I wished that time would stop and the atmosphere remain the same for ever and ever. But wishing does not help and we came out of the hall. We went to Ma's Samādhi and did pūjā.

In the evening, there was a competition on the recitation of the Bhagavad Gītā for children. Students of local colleges participated in the debate. All through the debate the Mahantji of Nirvani-Akhara was present and he was kind enough to distribute the prizes. After the debate, once again, we had the privilege to listen to a beautiful discourse on the whole Gītā by 1008 Swami Brahma Hariji of Chetan Dev Kutia.

As the sun was setting, the *Gītā Jayanti* came to an end. It was one of the most beautiful functions I have ever attended. There was something divine in it. Not for a moment did we feel that Ma was not there. We were aware of Her presence all the time. That is why everyone in the ashram participated in the *Jayanti* like a family. It was not a function of an individual but of all of us and the divine presence of Ma was there at every step to guide us and make us happy.

The people I really missed were Nirmalanandaji, Atmanandaji, Puspadi, Chitradi and Dasuda. Dasuda was the one who had told me about this

function on New Year's day in 1981, and if it were not for him I would never have known about this.

On the 27th evening, I bid goodbye to all the ashramites, who had done everything possible to make *Gītā Jayanti* a success. I did not want to leave them or the ashram. The attachment was much stronger on this occasion. For the last time I went to Ma's *Samādhi* and with lingering steps turned to go back to Lucknow.



MOKSHA (Immortal life)

Do you know what Moksha is ? Getting rid of non-existent misery and attaining to Bliss which is always there, that is Moksha.

—Maharshi Ramana

Some Reminiscences of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Rameshwar Sahai, I.F.S.

Retd. Chief Conservator of Forests, U. P.

In summer 1941, at Nainital, I together with my wife had my first *darśana* of Mataji. With a couple of Her followers including Didi Gurupriya Devi, Mataji was staying in a small room attached to Naini-Devi Temple. Mataji told me that She had seen me before which surprised me as I had never met Her.

In 1938, when I had been posted in Orissa, my wife had gone to visit her parents at Allahabad. There she had had her first *darśana* of Mataji, together with her father, Dr. Pannalal, her mother and her younger sister Chandra who later became the wife of Sri Govind Narain, till recently Governor of Karnataka.

Since I had been transferred to the U. P. in 1940, my wife and I came in ever closer contact with Mataji. We visited Her whenever we could and She also was so gracious as to stay in our residences both at Nainital and Lucknow which were my headquarters until 1960. From 1961 to 1963 I was posted in Delhi and then retired.

In 1963 I built a house at Lucknow with a small room especially for Mataji. Under Her instructions late Narayan Swami performed japa in that

room all night during the *Grihapravesh* (ceremonial house opening) days. This room is used by us only for pūjā. At that time Mataji and Her party occupied our whole house before we moved into it.

In the course of our lives we had to pass through many vicissitudes and severe tribulations. In 1957 we lost our only son, Kameshwar, aged 25. He was a brilliant atomic scientist and suddenly died in France. Mataji gave us the strength to bear all our misfortunes with fortitude, so that our faith in God could not be shaken.

In 1954, when I was Conservator of Forests of the Eastern Division, U. P. I arranged for the planting of a *panchavati* at the foot of Chunar Fort in Mirzapur District. Mataji came from Vindhya-chal, was present throughout the function which took 2½ hours, and gave many suggestions. There is a mysterious history to that particular place. In September 1927 Mataji had boarded the train to Jaipur from Chunar. Bhaiji had come to see Her off. She indicated to him this particular spot near Chunar Fort, saying : “Go there on returning from the station. You will find a garland of hibiscus flowers on the hillock. Take it with you and preserve it carefully.” Bhaiji found the garland. Later it was discovered that Brahmachari Kamlakanta who daily offered a garland of hibiscus flowers to Goddess Kālī at Dacca had forgotten to do so on that very day.

Ma showed the spot in Chunar to Dr. Pannalal when he motored to Vindhya-chal with Her a few

years earlier and we had the desire to plant a Panchavati there ever since.

In 1958, when I was Chief Conservator of Forests, U. P., Mataji did us the honour of coming to our residence at the Forest Rest House in Lucknow where Kāli Pūjā was celebrated.

In 1960 *Samyam Vrata* and Bhagavata Saptah were held at Naimisharanya, soon after heavy floods of the Gomati river, on the banks of which Naimisharanya is situated. I had the privilege to help with arrangements for these functions. Before proceeding to Naimisharanya Mataji was so gracious as to stay with us in Lucknow for 3 days and on Her way back for a whole week.

I was also of some help in establishing Shree Anandamayee Charitable Hospital at Varanasi. In December 1965, one evening while we were at Vrindaban, Mataji sent for me. Didi Gurupriya Devi was present. Mataji told me that Didi wanted to start a Charitable Hospital at Varanasi. Could I help in any way? I told Mataji that I was a free man as I had retired from service. Mataji laughed and told Didi that she could not find a better man for this work. From Vrindaban I went straight to Delhi to enquire from the Medical Secretary, Govt. of India, about the details how to get a Government grant for the hospital. I was very happy to find that the Medical Secretary was an old friend of mine. He told me that normally applications for grants for new hospitals were made in July but that he would distribute the grants only in March. So I should apply for the grant at once.

The maximum amount that could be granted was a lac of rupees for the building and Rs. 10,000/- for equipment. So I asked Panuda, the then Secretary of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha to do the needful and by 31st of March we got from Government of India a cheque of rupees one lac and ten thousand, and thus the construction of the hospital was started.

From January 1967 to March 1982, for about 15 years, I was a member of the Governing Body of Shree Anandamayee Sangha and so became more familiar with the activities inspired by Mataji.

Wherever Mataji stayed, the atmosphere became intensely spiritual. Recitation of Scriptures such as Bhagavad Gītā, Durga Saptas̄ati, Upanishads, Bhagavata, Rāmāyana as well as kirtan and religious discourses were the usual routine.

All Hindu festivals were celebrated with great eclat in Mataji's presence. In addition there was the Samyam Mahavrata once a year and frequent Bhagavata Saptahs. Mataji always had a camp at Prayag (Allahabad) during the *Kumbh Mela*.

Mataji would not enter the house of a householder, so special arrangements had to be made for Her, such as a tent, a new cottage or a new building. A number of Ashrams were therefore constructed where Mataji would go and stay freely. These are situated in various parts of India, but the largest number is in the U. P.

The above engagements kept Mataji extremely busy throughout the year. She attracted large crowds wherever She went. Sometimes festivals

and functions were performed in the ashrams and sometimes in the residence of devotees at their request.

Everything about Mataji seemed enchanting and special, but the most wonderful thing was that to whomsoever She talked, that person felt that Mataji loved him or her most !

I want to conclude this brief article with a personal experience. Once my wife and I were at Mataji's ashram at Varanasi when a solar eclipse took place. In the evening we went for a bath in the Ganges. As the *ghat* (bathing place) below Mataji's ashram was very crowded we went a little further down, where it was quite solitary. There the Ganges took a bend and the current was swift. As I got down the steps, one step was missing and I was being washed away by the turbulent current. I did not know how to swim. I shouted to my wife that I was drowning. Suddenly I discovered a long bamboo within my reach, thrown out and held by somebody on the bank. As the saying goes, a dying man catches hold of a straw. So I was able to reach the bank with the help of the bamboo. When I came out of the water I did not find anyone who had thrown the bamboo for my rescue. It was nothing but Mataji's mercy. I feel convinced that it was none else but Mataji who had given the bamboo to save me.

One can imagine our anguish when we learnt by telephone on the night of August 27th, 1982 that Mataji had taken Mahasamadhi and that Her

body would be moved from Dehradun to the Kaakhal Ashram on the 28th for *Thal samādhi* on the 29th afternoon. We left by rail on the 28th night to be in time for the last *darśana* of Mataji's body, for which hundreds of Her devotees had assembled from all over the country, including Srimati Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India.

“You see it is the nature of water to flow downwards, but the suns' rays lift it up towards the sky ; likewise, it is the very nature of mind to go to lower things, to objects of enjoyments, but the Grace of God can make the mind go towards higher objects”

—Sri Sarada Devi (Holy Mother)

Obituary

With deep and sincere regret we report about the demise of Sri M. L. Khaitan on February 17th at the age of 76, at a nursing home in Calcutta, where he had been treated for heart trouble. Sm. Raja Khaitan was present throughout.

Sri Khaitan was a staunch devotee of many years' standing. Mataji called him Premananda. In the early 1960s he and Mrs. Khaitan acquired a large plot of land adjoining "Kalyanvan", one of our Ashrams on Rajpur Road, Dehradun. They built a house for themselves and a lovely, spacing cottage for Mataji near "Panchavati", where She stayed on numerous occasions for lengthy periods. In 1966 Sri Ma's birthday was celebrated in a huge pandal in Sri & Sm. Khaitan's compound and in 1968 Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Divali Puja and Samyam Mahavrata. In May, 1980 Sri and Sm. Khaitan arranged for an Ati Rudra Mahayajña in a specially erected structure at the far end of Mataji's lawn. Mataji attended twice daily. In 1982 Guru purnima was celebrated there on July 6th and Mataji remained in the cottage until July 24th.

The devotees of Dehradun and many visitors will ever remember gratefully the wonderful *darśanas* of Sri Ma on the covered terrace of Her cottage whenever She was there.

Sri Khaitan, being an experienced and powerful solicitor rendered invaluable service to Sri Ma's institutions. He was an important member of the Governing Bodies and Executive Councils of both the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha as well as the Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society and until recently also a Trustee of the Sangha. It will be difficult to replace him. May he rest in peace and bliss at Sri Ma's feet.

* * *

We have just received the sad news that Sri Ramananda Roy, the only son of Sri Ma's foremost devotee "Bhaiji", Sri J. C. Roy, passed away on March 6th at the age of 71 in his flat at Calcutta. He also had been suffering from heart trouble. May he also find peace and bliss at Sri Ma's feet.

"Whole—souled devotion means giving up every other refuge and taking refuge in God."

—Narada Bhakti Sutras

Glimpses of Sri Ma's Worldwide Ashram

"This body does not establish any Ashrams. Where śrama (toil, forced labour) is not, there is an Ashram. Transcending the world and pervading the whole universe there is but one single Āsrama where there are lakes as well as oceans, where no distinction exists between one's homeland and foreign countries. In whatever way you may express it so it is."

Sri Sri Ma

Ma was never identified with Her temporary body, however blissful, however divine. For our sakes She had assumed a physical form to draw us away from the fleeting pleasures of this world that invariably end in suffering. Ma is now what She has always been, for Her there is no change. She is within and without, above and below, all-pervading, all-permeating, all-embracing, all-encompassing—*where is She not?* All we have to do is to become aware of this Truth.

If we sit down for five minutes and contemplate this, we feel Ma's presence palpably, unmistakably, undeniably, we are engulfed in Her Love, in Her Ānanda.

Not only in India but all over the globe, devotees have Ma's *darśana* in dreams and visions, some have even received mantras and instructions.

Evidently Ma has not withdrawn into some distant realm. Though invisible, She has remained with us right here and now, as active as ever, without the limitations of time and space.

The following is quoted from letters of devotees :

U.S.A., 4-3-83.

“I have experienced some sadness that I will never see Ma’s beloved form again. Yet, Her presence in my life is more than ever, my commitment to meditation is stronger than ever before. Surely She has blessed me ; and I hear my friends here feel the same.”

California, 16-12-82.

“At Kankhal on the first day of the Samyam Vrata I sat and tried to meditate but was unable to ; so I was looking up at Ma’s painting on the dias, when it began to come alive and Ma’s whole body in the painting was alive and three dimensional. She sat there very sweetly and looked out at each and everyone of us with such a loving smile on Her face that I was captivated and could not even attempt to meditate but just sat and looked at Ma. Then Her face started changing very quickly and became for a second the same as every photograph I have ever seen of Ma from youth to old age ; and then Her face took on the appearance of Didima (very old, with no hair and no teeth). Then I noticed a white aura about many people who were in my line of vision to Ma. Ma’s painting continued this way for some time.

I tried to meditate but all I could do was to sit and feel Ma's presence all around us,...Ma hasn't gone anywhere. If we just open our hearts we shall receive Her there and the messages will flow. Thou art God, Ma, Thou art peace, Thou art Love. Surrender to Ma and all will be well ! There were many incidents during this short trip that proved this to me..."

Last summer at Kankhal, a European lady had come to India exclusively to be with Ma for the first time. *Darśana* was only from a distance for a couple of minutes every evening. Ma was always lying in Her room. To talk to Her was out of the question. Yet the lady was deeply impressed. Recently she wrote in a letter : "...My love for Ma is growing stronger and stronger. It has invaded everything and whatever is foreign to it does not exist anymore. Ma is before my eyes in waking, dream and sleep. Uninterruptedly She lives every moment of my life.

"As a result all interest in the affairs of this world is gradually disappearing. Affections, friendships, human love are becoming less strong and less important. I can't work anymore, nothing interests me anymore except God's Name, the Divine Mother, Ma.....

"I have hardly seen Her, yet it seems to me that my future depends on Her glance, on Her Will. My quest for God can only proceed through the Love of Mataji....."

When Ma was moving about in Her body, everyone tried to be near Her as often and as much

as possible. Now we are all eager to be constantly in Ma's presence and so we are trying, more than before, to live according to Her instructions. And what are these instructions? "Live in the presence of God. Remember Him constantly by some device or other, be it meditation, japa, kirtan, study of Scriptures or satsang."

Mataji's Ashrams seem to be very active, even more than before. Detailed reports have reached us only from Varanasi and Calcutta but we know that, for instance, Saraswati Puja on Febr. 18th was celebrated very beautifully in Kankhal, Dehradun, Delhi, Varanasi, Vrindaban, Calcutta and Agartala and presumably in most of our other Ashrams as well. So was Sivaratri on March 12th.

Kankhal

It goes without saying that morning and evening pūjā at Ma's samādhi is continuing regularly as well as the worship at Didima's Mandir, the Siva Temple and Adi Shankaracharya shrine; besides morning and evening kirtan recitation of Gita, Chandi, Upanishad and lecture on the Bhagavata in the morning and Ramayan Recitation and lecture in the afternoon. A temporary solid structure has been erected near Ma's *samādhi* for people to meditate undisturbed by rain, storm or sunshine. There uninterrupted japa is being kept up daily from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Once every month Akhanda Ramayana is held. At least four Bhagavata Saptahs took place since last October. About the Gita Jayanti in December

there is a special article in this issue. On Jan. 14th, Sankranti was celebrated by an elaborate Padma-nābha Puja. On Jan. 26th-27th the first anniversary of Brahmachari Gadadhar's demise, there was special pūjā at Ma's *samādhi*, Kumāri Pūjā and feeding, *Daridra Nārāyan bhojan* (poor feeding) and *bandhārā*. Saraswati Puja on Febr. 18th and Sivaratri Pūjā on March 12th.

Varanasi

Many devotees assembled for Lakshmi Puja on the full-moon night after Durga Puja. Since there is a Vighraha of Mā Kālī at the Annapurna Mandir of the Ashram, Kālī Pūjā is naturally performed there during Divali night without fail. This is followed by the *Annakut* festival. Since about 50 years Sri Atul Brahmachari has been the priest of Annapurna Mandir, first at Dacca and later at Varanasi. He still carries on faithfully in spite of his age. Every *Annakut* 50 kg of rice and an adequate quantity of vegetables, dal, khir, sweets, fruits etc. have to be offered to Goddess Annapurna, the giver of plenty—physically and spiritually. Everyone who comes along, without any distinction, partakes of the *prasāda*. All the items for the *bhoga* (food offering) were prepared this year by the brahmacharinis of the Kanyapeeth. *Samyam Vrata* was observed by the students of the Kanyapeeth in the last week of November and Gita Jayanti at X'mas, similar to the one at Kankhal. Every evening different brahmacharinis gave talks on the Gita. On the last day Dec. 26th, the func-

tion was graced by the presence of the Governor of the U. P. The same morning a new wing of 12 beds for female patients aged above 50 was ceremonially opened by the Governor at our Charitable Hospital. On Jan. 14th, the anniversary of the great *Savitri Mahayajña* that had taken place at the Ashram from 1947-1950, was observed, as every year, by kirtan from 5 a.m. till sunset, led by the pupils of the Kanyapeeth. On Febr. 12, they celebrated Didi Gurupriya's birthday by pūjā, kirtan and discourses on Didi. On Febr. 18th Saraswati Puja was celebrated and on Febr. 26th Satyanarayan Puja.

Calcutta

Since Sri Ma's *Mahaprayan*, Swami Chinmoy-ananda is arranging every month on *Śukla Navmi Tithi* for Matri Puja, Satsang, Kirtan etc. This will continue for the whole year till August 27th.

The devotees of Calcutta are performing *Nāma Yajña* every Sunday in different private houses. In some of them Ma had stayed. On Sunday, January 23rd, which was the monthly Tithi of Sri Ma's Mahasamadhi, 2 other functions were held in Calcutta proper as well. Sri Pratibha Kundu celebrated the occasion of Ma's first entry into the Matri Mandir built by him in his compound in 1972, on the occasion of the Bhagavata Saptah at Jodhpur Park. He arranged for uninterrupted kirtan and japa all day long and for Km. Chhabi Banerjee's kirtan in the evening. The third function on that day was arranged as a *shraddhanjali*,

-all day programme, at his residence at Bhasha (where Mataji had stayed on several occasions, and for the last time in April 1982), by Sri Vibhuti Chakravarti. He himself performed an elaborate Mātri Pūjā, besides there was recitation of the Gita, Chandi etc. and *akhaṇḍa kirtan* and *bhandara*. A very large number of *Daridra Narayans* (the Lord in the guise of the poor) were entertained to a feast and presented with alms and clothing.

From 8th to 28th of February, Br. Nirmalananda who is now in charge of our Vrindaban Ashram, lectured every evening on the Gītā, Bhagavata, Upanishads and on Ma; the first 10 days in a special hall and then at various places. His talks were much appreciated by the large audiences. On February 26th he talked at the Annual function of the Bengal Women's Educational League on Sri Ma's teaching.

Dehradun

In the Kishenpur Ashram, recitation from the Gita, Chandi, Rāmāyana and evening kirtan are of course performed daily as well as the worship in Siva Mandir and Mātri Mandir. Every Sunday there is special kirtan for at least 2 hours. On the 2nd Saturday and Sunday of every month *Akhaṇḍa Rāmāyana* is recited. Gita Jayanti, Saraswati Puja and Sivaratri all night puja were celebrated very beautifully. Sri Ma's room upstairs, where She spent Her last 35 days and took Mahasamādhi, is kept in complete silence. Visitors from far and near come for darśana of this sanctified place.

.Naimisharanya

The Siva Purana was recited in Sanskrit and explained in Hindi for 9 days, ending at Sivaratri in our Purana Mandir. A number of devotees had come from various places, even Calcutta to attend the function.

Bhagavat Bhavan at Bangalore

After Sri Ma's birthday celebrations in Bangalore in 1979, a very spacious and beautiful Bhagavat Bhavan was built at Jayanagar, an extension of Bangalore City, by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Trust. It was inaugurated on September 24th, 1982 by H. H. Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Dwarka. H. H. the Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Sringeri has graciously agreed to be the Chief Spiritual and Religious Patron.¹

The very spacious and imposing hall overlooks vast fields and coconut palms. There are broad verandas on all four sides. Its 18 large doors are beautifully carved and the inauguration plaque says that the construction was inspired by Ma. The Bhavan vibrates with Ma's love and grace.

There are 3 rooms, one for Ma which is kept as a shrine with Ma's picture, and two rooms for Mahatmas to stay in. In the basement there is a large veranda, a dining-hall, kitchen and store room and a large dormitory. There is a separate building for the office.

A three days' retreat was held at the Bhavan for the first time from Jan. 7th '83, organised by the

1. See October 1982 Ananda Varta, pages XXIV—XXV.

devotees of Sri Swami Ishwarananda Giriji of Mount Abu. There was daily satsang, pūjā and discourses by the Swamiji in two sessions. The President of the Shree Anandamayee Trust, Sri Lakshman Rao, delivered the inaugural speech. The caretaker of the Bhavan and his wife are devotees of Sri Ma. The Trust is making efforts to arrange for satsang programmes.

* * *

The foundation stone laying ceremony for Matri Mandir has been postponed probably to October as no design has been chosen as yet.

Sri Ma's birthday will be celebrated at Kankhal in the last week of May.

* * *

We feel that one of the tasks of "Ānanda Vārta" is to record and give information to our readers about activities inspired by or connected in any way with Sri Ma. We therefore request those who are in charge of our Ashrams as well as devotees all over the world to help us by communicating such information to us whenever possible. It may be addressed to the Editor C/o Publications, S. S. A. C. S., 31, Ezra Mansions, 10 Govt. Place, Calcutta-69.

"Love is the gate of all the secrets of the Universe"

“There is, O monks, a state where there is neither earth, nor water, nor heat, nor air ; neither infinity of space nor infinity of consciousness, nor nothingness, nor perception, nor non-perception ; neither this world nor that world, neither sun nor moon. It is the uncreate.

“That, O monks, I term neither coming, nor going nor standing ; neither death nor birth. It is without stability, without change ; it is the eternal which never originates and never passes away. There is the end of sorrow.

“It is hard to realize the essential, the truth is not easily perceived ; desire is mastered by him who knows, and to him who sees aright all things are naught.

“There is O monks, an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed. Were there not, O monks, this unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there would be no escape from the world of the born, originated, created, formed.

“Since, O monks, there is an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, and unformed, therefore is there an escape from the born, originated, created, formed.”

—The Gospel of Buddha

SRI SRI MA ANANDAMAYEE KANYAPEETH

Bhadaini, Varanasi

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth is a residential school for young girls. The aim of the Institution is to awaken an interest in spiritual life in young students by imparting an education in accordance with Indian traditions consonant with Indian ideals and religious life.

The Institution is affiliated to the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi, and the curriculum is in accordance with the requirements of the University. The School admits students to the Primary classes only and imparts education upto Graduation or Post Graduate Degrees.

The examinations of the Sanskrit University are equivalent to Matriculation, B.A., and M.A. respectively.

The life of the student is planned with a view to physical, emotional and intellectual unfoldments. Ancient ideals are sought to be inculcated along with contemporary ideals of self reliance and dedication to social duties. At the same time every effort is made to prepare the students for either to adopt the life of a housewife on leaving the Institution or opt for an independent life as an inmate of the Ashram.

Extra curricular activities include : cooking, embroidery, music, games and play and cultural activities.

This Institution is Government aided and receives grants from the Central as well as from the State

Govts. It functions under the aegis of Sri Sri Anandamayee Sangha.

Applications are invited for admittance to this Institution. The age of the girl should not be more than 6-8 years. Parents may apply with particulars with family references to the Secretary to Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, Bhadaini, Varanasi upto May 1st, 1983.

Any further particulars may be supplied on request. In general Rs. 100/- P.M. is charged for each student.

—Bithika Mukerji