



"MA with PADMANAV Bhagwan on the lap."

# 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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# A R A T I

( Tune : Om Jay Jagadisha Hare )

Om jai Ma Anandamayī, Om jai Ma Anandamayi,  
Tuma karuṇa kī sāgara, Tuma sabakī Mātā |  
Merā pāpa naśāo, hé sabakī Trātā || Om jai...  
Tuma ho akath anāmaya, Sat-Chit-Ānandā |  
Mai nashwara ajñānī, kātho Mā phandā || Om jai...  
Hama suta hai Mā Téré, Tuma Pālaka mérī |  
Mai mūrakh khala kāmī, vipadā kā mārā |  
Tuma ho Māta ! Dayāmay, sāgara sī dhārā ||  
Tuma bina bīcha, bhaṇvara, paḍi hai Ma nayā |  
Ākara pāra lagāo, hé Ānandamayā ||  
Kāma, krodha, mada, lobha, moha me, Mā huṇ urajāyā |  
Jñāna prakāsha dikhākara, dūra karo māyā ||  
Tuma avalamba sabhī kī, Tuma sadgati sabakī |  
Kahe “madhupa” nija suta ko, tāro Mā abakī || Om ...

## Translation

Om Jai Ma Anandamayī !  
O Thou Ocean compassion, Mother of all,  
Destroy my sins, O Saviour of all !  
Ineffable art Thou and pure, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss :  
I am perishable and ignorant, tear away the meshes,  
We are Thy children, Mother, Thou art the Protector,  
Foolish, wicked, passionate am I, beset with woes,  
Thou art, O Mother, compassionate, the Ocean of mercy.  
Without Thee, O Mother, my boat is caught in a whirlpool,  
Come, come and save me, O Anandamayi Ma, Om jai...  
I am entangled in lust, anger, pride and delusion  
Show me the light of Knowledge and dispel māyā,  
Thou art the Support of all, Thou art the final Goal.  
Says ‘Madhup’, O Mother, do save us now, at once !

# Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

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

Book-learning may be compared to studying the time table before going on a journey. But so many things are on the way that cannot be indicated in the timetable! What is of special importance, whatever can be mentioned, is of course to be found in the timetable. Guided by that only, when actually on the journey one finds that there are so many other things to see and learn about. Is it possible to write down everything in the timetable? Similarly can all details be described in the Śāstras? Those who tread this path came to understand that whatever the Scriptures say is true, but apart from that there are so many other things to be known. How much can be described in the Śāstras? And those who have attained to direct perception have even much wider vision and knowledge. All the same, just as the traveller is guided by the timetable, so one has first of all to follow the injunctions of the Śāstras. Moreover infinite significance lies hidden in the words of the Scriptures.

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*A brahmachari* : These people come to you because they find in you the bliss which they miss in their own lives. They gaze at you in the hope of hearing your sweet words.

*Ma* (smilingly) : What you say implies that they already know the taste of sweetness. This is why I maintain that everything is contained within one's own self. Temporary, partial happiness does not satisfy the heart, for this reason man is constantly engaged in the quest for lasting, undisturbed happiness. All human beings long for peace and bliss. Again, worldly peace and joy cannot keep them contented, for they are out for absolute peace and absolute joy. Yet it has to be understood that the experience of absolute bliss is concealed within them and so they are not satisfied with fragmentary happiness. Hence *sāadhanā* is needed. Mind you, everyone has to reach the ocean, but there are many paths that lead to it. Will you all do a favour to this small daughter of yours and devote a little time to advancing in *that* direction. In your homes you have to yield to so many whims and fanices of your children, so you may at least to some extent comply also with the request of this little girl !

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*Someone said* : “Ma, since we see that man has no power to do what he wants and that things happen according to God's Will, so also if He pulls us towards *that* path we shall be able to proceed, otherwise of what avail is our own effort ?

*Mataji* : Look, we have no right to say this, because when you say ‘God’ it is just a word. Actually, we do not know anything about Him. It is a fact that by engaging in *sāadhanā* regularly for a prolonged period, a state is reached when man



*Mataji* : Only the Name — everything can be achieved by the Name. To Him devote as much time as you possibly can ; if you are unable to repeat the name for long, then talk about Him or take part in kirtan or read spiritually elevating books — somehow or other try to keep your mind engrossed in Him for as long as possible.

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At some gathering, a dispute arose : “Who is greater, Kṛṣṇa or Śiva ?” Finally Ma said with a smile : “Everything is all right. Whosoever is saying whatsoever, is right from his own standpoint.”

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Beings in subtle bodies also assist you in your work. By whatever line you may proceed, along that very line they come to your aid. They are always helping you, only you are unable to see them, this is how it is.

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One should repeat God’s Name and besides, in order to create interest in the Name, one has to regulate one’s life, one’s diet and disport. Just as a patient not only takes medicine but must also keep to a strict diet — otherwise he cannot be cured. Behave exactly like sick people : rely fully on *that* Doctor, just as patients take medicines according to the physician’s prescription and also follow his advice as regards rest and activity, relaxation and exertion, in every detail ; then only can there be success.

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“Ma, if I just repeat ‘Hari, Hari’, that itself is sufficient — what need is there of initiation ? And

if it so happens that having invoked Hari all my life, when I am fifty my *Kula Guru* comes along and initiates me into *Śakti* mantra, what to do then ?”

*Ma* : You yourself don't know what Name would be efficacious for you. But the Guru who has inner vision will give you a mantra according to your inner disposition. After practising it for some time, you will realize that you needed that very mantra, but you did not understand this. Look, if you really yearn for Him, then nothing can go wrong.

And if you hold fast to the conviction that, as you are repeating “Hari, Hari”, this name itself will suffice — that you do not need initiation, then that itself will accomplish everything. Do you know how ? Suppose I don't know your proper name, even so, if I call you by any ordinary name, you will come to me. Having come, you yourself may say : “Well, my proper name is this !” Having said this, *Ma* began to laugh.

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*Question* : I don't know what path my *Kula Guru* is going to show me ; may be he himself does not know the right path. But if instead of taking initiation from him, I take initiation from some *sādhu*, then people will accuse me of abandoning the *Kula Guru*.

*Ma* : Look, according to one principle, a person should take initiation from the Guru for whom he or she feels spontaneous devotion. For, taking initiation with reluctance, just because it is the custom to do so, is of no use. Yet, there is another



side to it — if there is any doubt in your mind about the propriety of abandoning the *Kula Guru*, then I say : suppose a child gives you a seed ; neither you nor the child know what kind of seed it is. All the same, if you sow it in the earth and take good care of it, a plant will appear after some time and will yield its fruit. Then you will come to know of what plant the seed was. That neither you nor the child knew anything about the seed did not prevent it from sprouting and giving fruit. Application is needed, that is the main thing. Practise, devote time and long for Him with real fervour — you will see that everything will fall into place. For He is Self-effulgent.

*Question* : Only by His grace shall we be able to long for Him.

*Mataji* : You say “He”, but you are not at all acquainted with Him. When you talk of His Will, it is mere words. You people study and pass exams, you get married and accomplish all kinds of work, for you are confident that you have the capacity to do all these things. With that very capacity remember Him also a little. How can you at the same time say, “Only by His grace” and sit idle ? That nothing can happen without His Will is perfectly true, but we have really no right to say so.

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Devote as much time as you possibly can to Him. Without uninterrupted contemplation the undivided One cannot be realized.

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Addressing a few teachers, Ma said : "You are teachers of boys, now become also teachers of your mind."

"But Ma, this is even more difficult than conquering the world !"

"Even so, everything can be achieved by sustained practice. Just as today these children are ignorant but by studying regularly they will gradually become learned. This proves that by protracted effort it is also possible to remove the ignorance of this restless mind. Just as there is a veil of ignorance inside, there is also a gateway to knowledge."

"But Ma, we don't at all feel inclined to make that effort."

"Even though not feeling inclined, do dedicate some portion of your time to Him daily with regularity ! Just as at present these children have to be coaxed to sit and study ; but gradually as they go on learning, they become more and more interested. At last a time comes when they themselves refuse to get up from their books. They try their level best to pass their exams and there is no longer any need to compel them to study. By this you can understand that even though you are in ignorance at present, if you go on exerting yourselves continuously, you may some day become enlightened.

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A Muslim munsif was talking to Ma. In course of conversation he asked : "Repeating the name of God is the means of realizing Him ; but suppose a

person has no interest in God's name, what should he do ?”

*Ma* : One has to practise diligently like a child. Just as by prolonged, regular study an ignorant child can gradually become a learned scholar, so you too, by persevering practice may have your knowledge unveiled. But, Baba, at the outset, blind faith is needed ; faith has no eyes.

“But for one who has neither faith nor devotion, nor any interest at all in the Name, what is the solution ?”

*Ma* : Baba, if in someone's mind the question of solution has arisen, then it must definitely be said that he *has* got something.

“Ma, I am not capable of doing anything at all, so in this line also, if He makes me do it, then only it may be possible.”

*Ma* : Look, with whatever little ability you perform all your tasks, try to take His name also with that much of ability. The intelligence is your mother, as it were, and the “I-ness” your father. With the help of these ‘parents’ you are doing all your work. So long as these two are playing within you, you have to take their help also for repeating His name and also for striving to go ahead in *that* direction as well. When in spite of your lack of interest you go on invoking His name and performing activities that help you to progress towards Him — this results in some kind of burning ; to endure this burning is called *tapasyā* ; *tapa* means burning and *sahā* to endure. And *sāadhanā* is *sva* one's own, and *dhana* wealth — the

wealth that never decreases, that is, the effort to realize Him.

“Well, is everything achieved by virtue of His grace or as the fruit of my action ?”

*Ma*: Do you know how grace and action function? ( Taking a flower in Her hand and pointing to it. ) It is just as I offer this flower to you and you stretch out your hand to receive it. This is how by grace and action combined the result is achieved. Just like this !

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*Prayer is the most powerful energy one can generate. It is a force as real as Terrestrial gravity. As a physician I have seen men after all therapy had failed, lifted out of melancholy and disease by the serene effort of prayer.....When we pray we link ourselves with the inexhaustible power that spins the universe...Whenever we address God in fervent prayer we change both soul and body for the better. It could not happen that any man or woman could pray for a single moment without some good result.*

—Alexis Carrel

# In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Amulya Datta Gupta

( Translated from Bengali )

*(Continued from the last issue)*

## **The Benefit of Satsang**

Towards the middle of December 1939, Sri Sri Ma arrived in Calcutta from Navadwip and eventually took up residence in the newly built house of Sri U. C. Banerjee in Southern Avenue. In spite of being very busy with my eldest daughter's wedding, I used to visit Ma daily.

*Monday 17-12-39*

In the afternoon I found Ma surrounded by a large crowd. She asked an old gentleman who was seated near Her to tell a story. Later I came to know that he was Sri Revati Mohan Sen, a well-known kirtan singer and disciple of Srimat Vijai Krishna Goswami. He thus narrated the following story :

“Sant Kabirji often used to go out in disguise. One day he was dressed as a labourer when a wealthy man asked him to carry a load for him. He inquired what payment he would take. Sant Kabir replied : “I have no demand, I accept what anyone likes to give.” At this reply the gentleman became somewhat irritated and said : “Just come along with the load and I shall give you whatever

I please.” Sant Kabir complied without further argument.

While walking along, he said to the gentleman : “Even though I am a labourer, I can foretell how long people will live.”

The gentleman replied with an unbelieving voice : “Well, then tell me how much longer I shall live !”

Sant Kabir replied : “Oh, only one *danda* (24 minutes) !”

The gentleman contemptuously rejoined : “All right, we shall see ! I will keep you with me until the truth of your statement can be verified and if you have lied, I shall punish you accordingly !” Sant Kabir said : “So be it.”

Although the gentleman was doubtful about the labourer’s words, he became very perturbed. Whoever can be unshaken at the imminent prospect of his death ? On reaching his home, he said : “Well, is it true that I have only 24 minutes to live ?” Kabir replied : “My words never fail. You have only a few more minutes to live. However, I want to give you a piece of good advice : When after death you are taken to the abode of *Yama* (the Lord of Death), you will be asked whether you wish to enjoy the merit earned by your good deeds before or after your punishment for your evil deeds ; reply that you wish to enjoy first.” Having said this, Sant Kabir took his leave.

When the 24 minutes had elapsed, the gentleman breathed his last. When he was taken to *Yamaraj’s* abode, *Yamaraj* asked his minister *Chitragupta* to

see what the gentleman's good and evil deeds had been. Chitrugupta looked up the records and said : "His whole life has been full of evil deeds with the sole exception of having earned the merit of spending 24 minutes in the company of a Saint." *Yamaraj* informed the gentleman of this and added : "As a result of your numerous evil deeds you are doomed to be relegated to hell for ages ; but for having had satsang with a saint for 24 minutes you are entitled to a brief stay in heaven. Do you want to enjoy the benefit of your good deed first or do you want to suffer first for your misdeeds ?"

In accordance with Kabir's instructions, the evil-doer replied : "First I wish to enjoy the fruit of my good deed !" So the gentleman proceeded to heaven. On arriving there, he beheld the labourer he had met before dying. Kabirji said to him : "Come, let me initiate you at once, then you will not have to go to hell at all !" The initiation took place and the messenger of *Yama* no longer had the power to escort the sinner to hell. So, as a result of 24 minutes of *sādhusanga* the gentleman became entitled to remain in heaven for ever.

After finishing his tale, Revati Babu kept silent for a while and later continued thus : "We come here only for satsang. What is the use of merely listening to good advice ? Have we got the capacity to put the advice in practice ? If we can carry out correctly even a single teaching we receive here, our whole lives will be glorified. In order to imbibe this teaching, words are not necessary. When

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coming here, if we merely study Ma's wonderful patience and try to emulate even a particle of it, our life will be sanctified. But which one of us is able to achieve this much? So I repeat, when we have no capacity to absorb this teaching, what will be the use of merely talking?"

### **There is No Other Way but This**

*20th December 1939.*

On visiting Ma early in the morning, I found that Sri Navataru Haldar had arrived with a doctor friend to see Ma. He pointed to his friend, saying: "A few days ago a son of this friend of mine was burnt to death."

*Ma*: Everything happens according to one's destiny. Such accidents must be regarded as unavoidable. Each according to his fate. Some die burning the body, others die burning within the mind.

*Doctor*: There is a limit to endurance. One must have the strength to bear suffering.

*Mataji*: HE indeed gives this strength. Whatever anyone is fated to suffer, that much he has to endure. Whether you call this the fault of the Almighty or His greatness, what is due to anyone has to be gone through.

*Doctor*: If one has to suffer willy-nilly and if, what has to happen does take place, then is it the aim of man's life not to do anything and just sit still?

*Mataji*: But how is it possible to avoid action? It is He who pulls you into the maelstrom of work. People go on working and working until they get so tired that they relinquish all action. But this cannot



be done until the proper moment arrives. So long as karma has not been exhausted one will have to work and bear the consequences. This is His *līlā*

*Doctor* : This means beating a person after binding him. This is a fine state of affairs ! I am bound to perform the work and thereafter have to bear the consequences. This may be God's *līlā* but he plays at our cost !

*Mataji* (smiling) : Who is it that enjoys and who that suffers ? Who bears the blows ? It is He who hits out and it is He who absorbs the blows and suffers. Nobody exists except the One.

*Doctor* : If you look at things in this light, then nothing matters. HE produces the abscess and then, becoming the doctor.....

*Mataji* (interrupting) : He does not produce the abscess, He becomes Himself the abscess. (Everybody laughs). Look, if you live in the world, pain and suffering are unavoidable. At first you were one, then you became two, and then many. For this you have to suffer. But you can do one thing : Take medicine. Consult a good doctor and his prescription. Thereby your disease will be cured. There is no other way to peace.

*Doctor* : But where can I find a good doctor ? This precisely is the reason why I have come to you.

*Mataji* : Yes, to find a good doctor is most difficult. All the same, procure medicine from whomsoever you consider competent. To get oneself admitted to a hospital is best of all. There one has to take treatment and medicine at proper time. Then there is the added benefit of the atmosphere of the place. But if it is not possible

.to enter a hospital, then take the medicine regularly at home. But there you may not always take the proper dose at the right time and off and on wrong diet will interfere with the action of the medicine. Don't people say that even though they take the Lord's name regularly they derive no benefit? How can good results be obtained when side by side with the medicine they continue with harmful diet? And this is bound to happen in your own homes. Nevertheless, always try to swallow the medicine at regular times and whenever possible take recourse to wholesome diet, i.e. association with sādhus.

### The Mark of the Devil

*Saturday, 23-12-39.*

On arriving near Sri Sri Ma I found Pashupati Babu, Naresh Chakravarti and others there. Pashupati at one time used to narrate amusing anecdotes before Ma and make everyone laugh. Ma said to him : "Baba, we have not heard any stories from you for a long time, do tell us something."

*Pashupati* : I have nothing to say now. The time for making speeches is over.

*Mataji* : What? Have you given up talking altogether? (Everybody laughs).

*Pashupati* : People generally tell pleasing things. I have nothing of the kind to say. Daily I come to sit at your feet and then depart after doing *pranāma*.

After keeping silent for a while, he said to Ma : "Well, I should like to ask you something. Whose karma am I

reaping ? There was a time when I did not exist. Thereafter God created me and this is how all this misery started. In every walk of life we see blind and distressed people. How much misery they are subjected to ! Observing this, one reflects thus : God is merciful, He cannot be responsible for all this suffering. So all this affliction must be the result of their own previous misdeeds. In this way one tries to gloss over the situation. It is God who has created me, yet it is I who have to undergo all the suffering.

*Mataji* : Look, all happiness, sorrow, sickness, bereavement, blindness, distress and so on that you see is nothing but God's own manifestation in infinite forms and ways. He has not created anything, it is He Himself who assumes all these forms. However, if you want to call it creation, it is He Himself who creates Himself in innumerable shapes and guises.

You spoke about action, didn't you ? As action also He alone is revealed. Disease is one of His manifestations. Sorrow and bereavement He Himself suffers, and when it becomes very severe, it is He who cries out : "O, I cannot bear it, it is too much for me !" So long as we are in the realm of Creation, we shall have to express it in this manner. When reaching beyond, there is no more speaking or talk. When knowing and not knowing have become one and the same, then it can neither be said that something exists nor that it does not exist. So then, when it cannot be said that it exists nor that it does not exist, the question of existence or non-existence does not arise at all.

Do you not sometimes say "this is unreal ?" The saying is also unreal. For everything is real

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and also unreal, true and also false. So long as we are confined within our worldly intelligence, there are the opposites of true and false, real and unreal. When one progresses beyond this, there is no more distinction between truth and falsehood.

*Pashupati* : All this is immaterial. It is I who am suffering, yet you maintain, it is not I who is undergoing the suffering, God is suffering.

*Someone else* : I can just about understand when you state that there is neither existence nor non-existence. But when shall we be able to realize that something is untrue.

*Mataji* : So you have understood all this ? (Everybody laughs.) When you will have attained to the status of a Guru, then you will have full comprehension. At present there is the duality of Guru and disciple, so you are unable to grasp all this. When the disciple will merge with the Guru, when there will be only one, not two separately, then only will full comprehension dawn. Of course in that state there will be understanding as well as non-understanding. Otherwise why should all this have been discussed ? You have not yet passed the Matric and you wish to grasp what is on the level of an M. A. Even if that kind of knowledge were vouchsafed to you, you would not have the capacity to absorb it.

*Naresh C.* : This is the age of progress, so there is no consideration of whether anyone is entitled to anything or not. People behave exactly as they please. While in ancient times if anybody without having the proper right dared to question about the Brahman, the Rishis would tell him point blank that he simply had no right to ask such questions. Because without having mastered the first steps in yoga such as yama, niyama,

āsana, etc. one is not ready to ask questions concerning the Brahman. But nowadays all and sundry have questions regarding the Brahman.

*Mataji* : Are the questions really related to the ultimate Reality ? And do you get correct replies ? If the questions are real questions the answers will be accordingly. Nowadays the questions are superficial and so are the answers. Nevertheless it must be admitted that asking questions of this kind is beneficial. And the steps in yoga you mentioned, these cannot be accomplished by effort, they come about spontaneously. Just as flowers and fruits grow naturally on trees, but cannot be fabricated, so it is similar with yogic *krīyās*.

*Naresh C.* : All the same, effort is indispensable. In order to get fruit from trees, the seed must be sown, the plant has to be watered and looked after ; only then will the tree grow and bear fruit. Exactly in what way flowers and fruit are obtained from the tree can be explained by scientists.

*Mataji* : How much can they explain ? Can they explain by what Power fruit and flowers grow on trees ? It is only when the One shows you the way that you will be enabled to understand all this. It is by the movement of His own Nature that all these things come into being. Even the effort or care you mentioned, these also must be looked upon as His endeavour. When you arrive at a certain state of achievement you can comprehend all this. Again, what you say about your own endeavours is correct from your present angle of vision. Whatever you say is all true on your level.

*Pashupati* : Yes, yes, nobody is to be blamed — it is just like the mark of satan !

One day the devil told a number of people : “I shall do nothing except paint a mark on your foreheads.” When they agreed, he made them lie down on the roadside next to a grocer’s shop and put a spot of *gur* (molasses) on their foreheads. After a while, attracted by the sweet smell, ants came and started eating the *gur*. On seeing the ants a lizard arrived. A man, carrying his pet parrot passed by. The bird flew unto the foreheads of the people to catch the lizard. Next a cat belonging to the grocer ran outside to catch the bird. The owner of the parrot hit out smartly with his stick to drive the cat away. And then started a real quarrel between that man and the grocer. From words to blows and thence to blood shed ! God’s Creation is just like this ! (Everybody laughs.)

Ma started laughing loudly and asked *Pashupati* to relate another story. But there was no further time. *Khukuni Didi* came to take Ma away for Her meal.

(To be continued)

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*“God is Himself the Mother and hence will provide you with everything you need. Relying entirely upon Him, keep still and watch what happens. Not until the faith that whatever the Mother does is for the best of Her child awakens in you, can you find the Mother.”*

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

# Integral Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita\*

Swami Ramdas

The *Bhagavad Gita* is the most important scripture of the Hindus, as it comprises the highest spiritual wisdom. It presents what may be called a synthetic yoga. The way of approach as prescribed in the Gita — the three yogas — is unique in that they are combined into one.

The Gita can be divided into three sections. The first section speaks of *Samkhya* Yoga or *Jñāna*. The second part treats of *Bhakti* Yoga and the last section deals with *Karma* Yoga. *Jñāna* is the basis for the upper structures of *Bhakti* Yoga and *Karma* Yoga. *Jñāna* is essential. The knowledge of the *Ātman* is the foundation of the integral yoga. Lord Krishna taught Arjuna in the first few chapters about *Samkhya* Yoga which treats of the one *Ātman*, and of *Prakṛiti* as being witnessed by the *Ātman*.

Then comes the Universal Vision in the second section of the Gita. That very *Ātman* or *Brahman* has to be both seen and realized in and as the universe of names and forms. Arjuna is here shown the *Virat Swarūpa*, the Universe as the manifestation of the Infinite *Brahman* realized through *jñāna*. This is *parābhakti*, the *bhakti* that comes

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after the realization of the *Ātman*. So the real qualities of a devotee are described in the chapter that follows the one describing the Universal Vision. The supreme love for God as the whole universe is born of the Universal Vision.

Last comes surrender to the Divine *Śakti*. We must not merely see the Universe as *Brahman*, but submit ourselves to the Divine *Śakti* that activates the whole universe. We must surrender ourselves to the divine power completely so that Her will may work through us. We must recognize Her power and feel that whatever we do is done, not by our own power, but by Her power. The ego-sense which makes us feel that we are the doers has to be totally wiped out. In the experience of *samādhi*, the ego-sense disappears. But when we open our eyes, regain body-consciousness and move in the world, the ego-sense may again come up on the physical plane and disturb us. When we behold the whole universe as the manifestation of Brahman, the ego-sense will never again obsess us. So all the yogas go to free us from the ego-sense and make us perfect embodiments of the Divine.

The truth is we are the *Purusha*, we are the *Prakriti* and we are also *Purushottama*, beyond *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. In this realization we do actions and don't do actions, at one and the same time. Action and inaction coexist. As *Prakriti*, we do everything, and as *Purusha*, we are not doing anything, but remain the *sākshī* or witness. Arjuna was asked to fight on the battlefield in this spirit. Then it was as good as his not having engaged in



fighting. So we too can live and act in the world without being bound by our actions when we know that *Prakriti* is doing everything. Then what becomes of the 'I' ? It becomes one with the calm, Universal Spirit which witnesses the *Prakriti*, the Divine *Śakti*. We see these three aspects of the Integral Yoga clearly described in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

In the yogas of *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *karma*, *jñāna* relates to our intellect, *bhakti* to our heart and *karma* to the body. So in the integral yoga we completely dedicate to God every part of our being. God is within us, and we are divinised in all parts of our being. We should, as the Gita wants us, realize the *Purushottama*. We are now one with the Universal Spirit, the Universal manifestation and the Universal power.

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“The ego and the universe are both illusory like a dream. If one analyses oneself, one doesn't find any such thing a “I”. Take an onion for instance. First of all you peel off the red outer skin ; then you find thick white skins. Peel these off one after the other and you won't find anything inside. In that state a man no longer finds the existence of his ego. And who is there left to seek it ? Not the slightest distinction is left.”

—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

# Guru Darshan

Acharya Satish Chandra Mukhopadhyay

## PART—IV

### (A)

In the previous section of my letter I have spoken of the case of a *Bhagavat Parshad*, i.e., a Divine Attendant on the Lord Himself. Such a *Parshad*, as we have seen, has a most brilliant, most beautiful, and even fascinating *chinmaya* person, able to captivate by a mere glance the most loyal of Sri Sri Sat-Guru Deva's disciples, and make him forget altogether Sri Sri Sat-Guru Deva Himself.

All *Bhagavat Parshads* have their spiritual or *chinmaya* bodies as just mentioned ; but the possession of a *chinmaya* body is not an exclusive quality or characteristic of *Bhagavat Parshads*. For there are other categories of Divine Personages who may be the possessors of spiritual i.e., *chinmaya* bodies. Among such are Higher Souls who have achieved God-Vision or *Bhagavat-Prāpti*, which represents a stage of spiritual evolution transcending that of *Mukta Purushas*. For *Mukta Purushas* are freed Beings, that is to say are Beings who are only liberated from the bonds of *Prakritik* matter, and so are freed from all the troubles and tribulations attached to the state of identification with the twofold *achit* body. But they have yet to reach the stage of God-Vision. When this last stage is

achieved, they would wear *chinmaya* or Spiritual bodies. Then in their *chinmaya* bodies, these Divine Personages live and move in *chinmaya* worlds, i.e. spiritual spheres of existence, of which *Goloka* and *Vaikuntha* are the best known.

Here I feel that I must revert to one very important point concerning *chinmāya* or spiritual body worn by Exalted Divine Personages who have reached the stage of *Bhagavat Prāpti*, because it brings out clearly the differentiation between *chinmaya* bodies and *achit* bodies, even such as are very very fine and subtle. In other words, for most of us fettered *Jīvas*, there is the greatest danger of falling into the error of confusing spiritual or *chinmaya* spheres with lower but *sukshma achit* or invisible worlds of finer or even finest matter. For the higher spiritual spheres, being *chinmaya* are not constituted of fine *achit* matter. Let me repeat that the former must never be confounded or identified with invisible celestial regions, *Svarlokas* as they are called. They are constituted of very *sukshma*, subtle and therefore invisible, *achit* matter ; and are inhabited by *Devatas* or Gods, such as *Indra*, *Vayu*, *Varuna* etc. The *Devatas* function in these *sukshma* celestial regions, and they have got to put on these very fine or subtle celestial bodies ; for without such bodies they cannot realise the finer forms of *achit* enjoyment which is their due. They cannot realise such fine and subtle forms of *achit* body enjoyments in the grosser forms of body in which fettered human beings are clothed. For these *Devatas* such celestial enjoy-

ments are the necessary outcome of their past *punya* or righteous deeds on earth in their previous births. Of course every unliberated being on the human plane may have to his credit some *prārabdha punyam*. Nevertheless, the quantity or quantum of *punyam* or righteous karmas that human beings ordinarily possess would not entitle them to the finer forms of *achit* body enjoyments which the Devatas enjoy. So, the *achit* Devata body and the *achit* human body belong to different *achit* planes of matter.

Even so, the Devata body, however fine, however subtle and invisible, is liable to disintegration and decay and final dissolution. So the Devatas like human mortals have their day ; and as soon as the motive power necessitating these prolonged celestial enjoyments, namely their past meritorious karmas, get exhausted, they have got to drop their celestial bodies. Then they leave the celestial regions and get back to the human world and begin life anew. Thence forward they may again earn *punya* or *pāpam*, as the case may be, through the kinds of karmas, sinful or righteous, they engage themselves in while on earth.

But while passing their days on earth, they have also the opportunity, by means of *Nishkām* Karma or action untouched by any *achit* (personal) desires, or in the alternative by resort to *Bhakti* Path, to liquidate their already subsisting stock of past *achit* Karmas known as *prārabdhas*. In that way the Devatas, reincarnating themselves as human beings wearing the twofold *achit* body, (after the exhaus-

tion of their original stock of *punyam*), may attain to the state of freed souls, i.e. *Mukta Purushas*. In other words, they may then succeed in attaining the state of exalted beings who have snapped their connection with the Prakritik bonds of matter, and achieved the state of bliss natural to such a state. They may thence forward make even further spiritual progress, and reach the still higher stage of *Bhagavat Prāpti* or God Vision. In other words, they then begin to live in their spiritual or *chinmaya* worlds, from where there is no fall to the lower spheres of *achit* world life.

It follows from the foregoing discussion that the *chit* or *chinmaya* world is far higher than the *achit sukshma* world of the Devatas, i.e. inhabitants of *Swarlokas* or celestial regions, who have been able to make their entry there by reason of exceeding *punyam* earned while they were here on the human plane. Let me point out that corresponding to these celestial regions or *Swarlokas*, there also exist the lowermost regions of *Narak* or hell, inhabited by *sukshma* invisible beings who have only *pāpam* or sinful deeds to their credit. These latter have no option but to work them out in *Narak*, while undergoing a course of most painful and ignoble life.

### (B)

Let me proceed with the subject of Guru-Darshan and of Sri Sri Sat Guru Darshan in particular. It is here needful for me once again to draw your attention to the fact that such *Darshan* is the *Darshan* of the *Chit* i.e. *chinmaya* Self of Sri Sat-

Guru Deva, representing the Inner Self or *Rupam* or Form of His. Now, could there be a *Darshan* (in the above sense) of a *Mukta-Purusha*? Here, I have to point out to you once more that one who has merely transcended the limits of Prakritik matter by snapping his connection with the twofold *achit* body, *sthul* and *sukshma*, (such as belong to all unliberated human beings), — even such a Great One, even such an Exalted Personality, does not possess a *chinmaya* or a spiritual *Rūpam* or Form as His Inner Self. The question therefore arises : if the *Mukta Purush* has no such Inner *Rūpam* as His inner Self, how is He to be differentiated from one who owns such a *chinmaya* Self? The answer is that a *Mukta Purush*, although not owning a spiritual body, lives and functions in His own “*Swarūp*”, as it is called. Now what is this *Swarūp*? This *Swarūp* or Selfhood is of course His *Chit*-Self, i.e. His spiritual self possessing a particular characteristic. I must explain. This *Swarūp* or *chit*-self, not being identified with a twofold *achit* body, as is the case with all fettered *jīvas*, — this *Swarūp* or *chit*-self must be beyond space and time, and therefore must partake of the character of an Infinite Being.

Therefore a Being who lives only in His *Swarūp* i.e., in Himself i.e. in His *chit* or spiritual self, must live an Infinite Life. In other words, having transcended the limits of both time and space, He necessarily pervades all (*achit*) existence. *Per contra*, an unliberated or fettered being does not pervade all existence, and is therefore finite. In other words, the latter is bound to live and function

as a limited entity ; that is to say he is limited to his twofold *achit* body. Therefore this infinity of being, as above explained, is characteristic of every *Mukta Purusha*. Percy Bysshe Shelley, in one of his exalted spiritual moods, calls such a high soul as “wantoning in Endless being” (Vide his poem entitled ‘Queen Mah’). But of course Shelley could have no conception of *Jivanmuktas* or *Mukta Purushas*. He wrote what he wrote in one of his exalted moods, where his intuitive imagination touched the very borders of mysticism.

Then what about the Exalted Divine Personage, who has gone beyond the limits of *Mukti*, and has achieved God-vision or *Bhagawat-Prapti* ? The answer is that He is equally beyond space and time, and must therefore be also infinite in character or essence. Notwithstanding this characteristic, the Divine Personage in question, He having also attained God-vision, naturally possesses a *Chinmaya* or Spiritual body. This *Chinmaya* Self, as Sri Sat-Gurudeva has definitely assured us, (Vide p. 94 Vol. IV of Sri Sri Satguru-Sanga), closely corresponds in Form to the outer physical body. Nevertheless, this Inner Body, being *chit*-constituted, is incapable of partaking of the character of ever-changing *achit* entities.

The difference between an Exalted Personage who has not gone beyond snapping his connection with the twofold *achit* body of mind and matter, and another who has gone beyond the limits of *Mukti* as above understood and has established an intimate relationship with *Bhagawān*, the Universal

Soul, (through *Bhagawat Prāpti*), may therefore be described as follows. Both have transcended the limits of time and space and are therefore Infinite, looked at from the lower standpoint of limited existence. But the Divine Personage who is in intimate contact with *Bhagawan*, the Universal Soul, the Super-Soul or *Parmātman* as He is called, is not only Infinite but something in addition. He possesses some special characteristics of His own. Thus it is that He is the possessor of a *Chinmaya* i.e. Spiritual Body, which *Chinmaya* Body exists only to subserve a particular purpose. That purpose is the purpose of serving *Bhagawān* or the Lord Himself, with the help of the spiritual or *Chinmaya* Body referred to.

The next point to remember is that the Lord or *Bhagawan* does possess a *Chinmaya* Body, or *Vigraha* as it is technically called. Therefore if a Divine Personage, who owns an Inner *Chinmaya* Body, must serve the Lord *Bhagawan* with His own *Chinmaya* Body, the latter body must be equally divinely constituted so as to be fit to serve the Lord Himself. Whence it follows that the Inner *Chinmaya* Body of a Divine Personage serving the Lord must have *Chinmaya* Limbs, also *Chinmaya Indriyas* or sense-organs, a *Chinmaya Chitta*, and even a *Chinmaya Ahankār* so to say. For without them the Lord or *Bhagawān*, who is Himself *Sat-Chidananda Vigraha*, cannot be rendered any personal service at all. Such a *chinmaya* Body, with all its characteristic features as above described, is possessed by the Gopis



of Vrindavan, which in *Vaiṣṇava* Literature is styled their *Siddha Deha*. This *Siddha Deha* lasts through all time and beyond all time; and the spiritual or *Chinmaya Loka* or region, where such service is rendered by the Gopis to the Lord Sri Krishna, is known as *Goloka* or *Aprakrita* Vrindavan. By a *Prakrit* entity you will have to understand an entity which forms part of *Prakriti*, which is the region of *achit* existence (matter); while on the other hand an *Aprakrita* entity is one that, transcending such *achit* existence, becomes part and parcel of *chit* or *chinmaya* Life.

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“One should never speak ill of anyone. Also when anyone is held up in praise, in that too is indeed implied that we are speaking ill in another way of those belonging to another group.”

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

# Birthday Awakening

Stephen M. Quong

In the stillness of the quiet heart  
I see the wondrous plan :  
From love and light, a blazing start !  
As God is born in man.

No need to wander far from home,  
The quest ends in the mind.  
'Tis ocean only, the waves and foam —  
There's nothing else to find.

My Self, my search, my God, my goal,  
My life, my time, my breath, my soul :  
All stopped, and not a single thought —  
No seeker, seeking, nor object sought.

I woke not to a heavenly song,  
Nor heard the voice of angelic throng.  
All was still, when alone I sat,  
Knowing the Knower of "I AM THAT".

# Our Mother : The Wonder of Ma

H. H. Marthanda Varma

Both my wife and I had the privilege of Sri Ma's darshan in Trivandrum in 1952, when Mother was touring the South. It was in the right hand pavillion in the grounds of Kaudiar Palace. At that time, both Swami Ramdas of Kanhangad and Rama Devi of Mangalore were in Trivandrum. This was a vision, but we understood little of what we had glimpsed.

In July 1971, while we were staying in Bangalore, my wife saw an article on Mother in the 'Illustrated Weekly of India' and was eager to have Her darshan. It was possible to find out from friends in Bombay that Mother was at Hardwar. On Saturday, July 10th, 1971, my wife, daughter and I flew to Delhi and motored to Hardwar the next day. We reached Hotel Gurudeva by about 8-30 p.m. Leaving both of them at the hotel, I went to Kankhal to find out when we could have Ma's darshan. I was asked to wait and in a few minutes was given the joyful news that all of us could come to the Ashram at 9 p.m. I rushed back to bathe quickly and returned to the Ashram with my wife and daughter. When we were taken to the terrace, I saw two friends : Sri B. K. Shah and Srimati Bharati Sarabhai. Very soon we went inside for Mother's darshan. She was seated on Her couch, with a few people sitting in front of Her

on the floor. We did our *praṇāmas*, offered fruit and sat down. Peace and serenity pervaded the whole place.

The next day we went to the Ashram at 11 a.m. for darshan and later were served our lunch there with great care and attention.

When we returned to the Ashram in the evening, Mother told us that She would be leaving for Dehradun the next day. We were anxious to go to Dehradun as well and gracious permission was given.

Thus we motored to Dehradun on Monday, July 12th, reaching the Kishenpur Ashram by midday. My wife and daughter were given rooms very near Mother's room. I was allotted a cottage in "Kalyanvan", the last one in the grounds.

In the evening, when I got back to the cottage, I was surprised to find in my room a table covered with brocade and an *āsana* for my *pūjā*. After dusk we went to the Ashram hall for *satsang* and *bhajāns* and then had our dinner.

### Experience I

I retired for the night by about 9-30 p.m. My bed was near the left hand window of the cottage. Being a good sleeper, I went into deep slumber at once. It must have been around 11-30 or 12 midnight that I became wide awake for some unknown reason. I am absolutely certain that all vestige of sleep had left me. There was a glow outside my window. I sat up and looked out and beheld: "The entire space as far as the eye could see was

a brilliant blaze of light.” I recollected the words of the 11th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, particularly the *slokas* (verses) 12 and 13 which say :

“*Divi Sūrya sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā |  
Yadi bhāh sadṛṣi sā syād bhāsas tasya  
mahātmanah ||*

(If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out at once in the sky, that would be akin to the splendour of that Mighty Being.)”

“*Tatreikastham jagat kṛtsnam pravibhaktam  
anekadhā |  
Apaśyad devadevasya śarīse Pāṇḍavastadā ||*

(There, in the body of the God of gods, Pāṇḍava (Arjuna) then saw the whole universe resting in one with its many groups.)”

And also sloka 20—

“*Dyāvāpṛthivyor idam antaram hi  
Vyāptam twayeikena diśaś cha sarvāh |*

(The space between the heavens and all the quarters are filled by you alone.)”<sup>1</sup>

The experience is very clear in my mind but I struggle to find words to convey what I saw. This wondrous sight was Mother — encompassing the boundaries of my vision fully and completely ; Mother, magnificent, lustrous and universal ; Mother in Her *Mahimā* form but as always seen by us, and most remarkable was the radiance in and around Her hands in which She held Padma-nābha Bhagavān.

1. Translation from Swami Chinmayanandaji's Gita.

This experience lasted for about five to six minutes. I was thrilled and so profoundly at peace that I was able later to get the sleep of wonder and joy unalloyed.

(This experience was followed very soon by the second one on July 14th which in turn became the forerunner of events which came to pass on September 26th and 27th.)

### Experience 2

On July 14th, 1971, while still in Dehradun, I had a call from Delhi that I should go there to meet someone on the 15th. So we had to ask Mother's permission to leave on the 14th night. On the 14th morning someone from the Ashram suggested to me to show my *Bhagavans* or *Thakurs* (Deities) to Mother. I asked for permission and was allowed to take my pūjā box to Mother's room on the first floor of the Ashram. It was about 5.45 p.m.

### Adoration

Mother was sitting on Her bed and I placed the box on the carpet and opening the box, started to take out its contents. When I was about to take out Padmanābha Bhagavān, Mother asked me to place Bhagavān not on the floor in the tray but on Ma's bed, next to Her. I also put the other *vigrahas*<sup>1</sup> there, namely Mahalakshmi, Sri Krishna,

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1. *Vigraha* Concrete External Presence as Form. An image consecrated through mantras or through the devotion and adoration of the worshipper becomes the Deity Itself.

Ayyappa (Sastha), Ganeshji and Śiva. For the next half hour I stood entranced as Mother adored the *Bhagavāns* and when She got up She told me to pack the pūjā box only after She would go down to the hall. Thus after Mother left the room, I packed the box and went downstairs, took leave of Mother and departed for Delhi.

Later I heard that when some girls of the Ashram went to Mother's room the next morning, they found Her lying down on Her bed just like Padmanābha Bhagavān on Ananta. From the next day a snake came to the Ashram daily and when Mother was told about this, She said that Ananta had come and soon Padmanābha Bhagavān would also come. The snake used to come and do *pradakshina* (circumambulation) of the Panchavati, next door to Kalyanvan.

On the 24th of July Sri B. K. Shah telephoned to me to Bangalore. After the trunk call I wrote to him : "I was enthralled to hear what you so kindly conveyed to me over the trunk lines. I have no words to express the feelings that come to my mind and heart about Mother's decision to have a *Padmanābha Swami Vighraha* and I am already arranging to get a *vighraha*, similar to the One that I am privileged to do puja."

August 9th brought a letter from Sri B. K. Shah which reads as below :

"It is Mother's *kheyāla* that *Sri Padmanābha Swami's vighraha* installation should take place on September 29th, which is *Mahānavami* (of Durga Puja). However, I appreciate that it will not be

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possible for you to be present, because *Vijaya-daśami* (the day after *Navami*) is the most important celebration for you. If Rani Saheba is there, she can represent the family.”

As is usual in South India, a wax model was made and then covered in mud and then the wax melted away with hot water. Then the silver is poured and the mud cast broken up. Instruction were left to purchase the silver and keep it ready. But when I came to Bangalore on a Sunday morning, I found that the silver had not been procured. The casting was to be in the early hours of the following Monday morning. On a Sunday afternoon or evening it was not easy to get 6 kilos of silver. The markets were scoured and all of a sudden the required quantity of silver was found and bought. Next morning, at the proper *muhurta* (moment), it was cast and when, after cooling, the mud mould was removed, a perfect cast emerged.

*Padmanābha Bhagavān* and all the other articles for the puja were got ready. Permission was taken from my brother to be absent at the *Dussera* as the installation (*chal pratishta*) of *Padmanābha Bhagavān* was all important.

On the *Saptami* day of *Dussera* my wife was ready to leave for Delhi but due to a bereavement she was unable to do so. Since she could not go, I got ready and sent the pūjā boxes to Madras. Motoring to Kerala in the evening about 400 miles from Bangalore, I was able to get there by 2 a.m. and catch a flight to Madras from Cochin and a connecting flight to Delhi, reaching there by 9-30



a.m. On the morning of the 29th I was in Dehradun and the astonishing things that happened there are well known.

Mother was in *mouna* at that time. As soon as I arrived and had darshan, I was asked to go to a cottage in Kalyanvan and wait for Mother. In Her presence I unpacked the box and submitted the newly made image of *Padmanābha Bhagavān*. A procession was immediately organized and Mother, leading everyone, went to the cottage where I had stayed before and had the wonderful first experience. *Bhagavān* was kept and *pūjā* done where I had slept previously. From nowhere seemingly, all the requisites for a *pūjā* appeared and then *Bhagavān* was taken to the Durga Puja pandal. *Bhoga* had been prepared for all the Deities there as is the custom on all Durga Puja days. When *Padmanābha Bhagavān* was enshrined in the pandal, it was seen that there was an extra *thali* (tray) of *bhoga* ready for Him. Mother then remarked that *Padmanābha Bhagavān* had already begun to see to all arrangements for Him. The *Chal Pratishtha* (installation) was performed by the Nambudiri pujaris from Trivandrum.

On the 30th I was able to fly to Trivandrum from Delhi. It so happened that due to a difference in the calenders of North and South India, *Vijayadaśami* that year was one day later in the South. So I was able to be present in Dehradun for the *Chal Pratishtha* and also to get to Trivandrum for the *Vijayadaśami* !

As mentioned earlier, Mother was in *mouna*

and would only occasionally pronounce words like "*Bhagavān, Nāme, Krishna, Hare, Padmanābha Bhagavān.*" It is a magnificent recollection that during this Durga Pūjā it was my good fortune to be called "*Padmanābha Bābā.*" In course of time the cottage at Kalyanvan where I had the first and most marvellous experience has become a temple for *Padmanābha Bhagavān.* It is also a matter of joy and bliss to know that wherever Mother went *Padmanābha Bhagavān* would also be taken.

### Experience 3

The year 1972 was very gratifying, in fact a year to be treasured, for Mother made it possible for my wife and me to be with Her for many days. She came to Trivandrum for the *Lakshadeepam* ceremony in the *Sri Padmanābha Swami Temple* which was celebrated on the 14th of January (*Śankranti* day). Mother was in Trivandrum for 5 days, from 10th to 15th.

My wife flew to Bombay and then to Pune on January 23rd and I joined Mother on the 28th. We were with Mother in Pune for seven days.

Again in February we were fortunate to be able to have daily darshan of Mother at Vile Parle, Bombay for three days.

In July it was possible to be in Pune once more and have the joy of darshan from the 9th for 21 days. During that time I was obliged to go to Trivandrum and had to rush to Cochin to catch a plane as the usual service was cancelled that day.

I was sitting in the back of the car and at about 3-30 p.m. we were in a place called Haripad, some 70 miles from Trivandrum. I was dozing and suddenly woke up feeling that something was wrong. On becoming fully awake, I saw to my horror that we were speeding on a narrow bridge and coming head on to a big lorry. There being no way but to collide and stop, I was prepared for the worst. The bumper, then the engine, then the windscreen were smashed. Then all of a sudden, the crash was over in the sense that both vehicles came to a complete stop. I was only slightly hurt. No one who had witnessed the accident could believe that I had an escape.

Both my wife and I were with Mother for fifteen days in November. On the 25th of November we were in Hardwar with Her and accompanied Her to Kanpur via Lucknow, where we arrived at 10 a.m. From there we motored behind Mother to Kanpur; it was 12 noon when we got to the Singhania Guest House.

It has been my practice and custom to perform my devotions, that is pūjā, between 4 a.m. and 12 noon; otherwise I stay without food and water, do my pūjā at dusk and then eat something. This happened that day. At lunch time I was sent for and when I submitted that I could not eat and Mother had enquired and found out the reasons, I was the most fortunate of beings for Mother blessed me with the most all-encompassing glance, so much so that I would gladly give up my food everyday for such a gift — *katāksha viksana*.

In December both of us were in the Varanasi Ashram for twenty-one days ; so during 1972 we were privileged to be with Mother for seventy-one days !

(To be continued)

### *SURRENDER IN A NUTSHELL*

“At every moment you must know that the **DIVINE WILL** alone is supreme.

Whatever happens should be attributed to it.

The sense of good and evil will disappear the moment you do so.

Your mind will be perfectly at rest.

That is what is meant by surrendering ourselves to the **DIVINE WILL**.

That is the easiest way to transcend the *Dwandas*”\*

—Swami Ramdas

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\**Dwandas* are the pairs of opposites like attraction and repulsion, honour and dishonour, etc.

# Narayan—Ma

Pratap Singh

Revered and venerated Divine Mata Anandamayiji completed Her earthly *līlā* on the 27th of August 1982 at Her old Anandamayee Ashram at Kishenpur, Rajpur Road, Dehradun. This was a severe blow to all Her ardent devotees as they could not conceive the idea that they would be left in this world without Ma. All that can be done now is to live in Her constant remembrance and contemplate Her unforgettable divine qualities which are unique in the history of mankind.

It has taken me almost a year to muster the courage to pay my humble homage to Her divine Personality, as it was impossible to reconcile myself to the fact that She had decided to discard Her divine body to join Her eternal abode, from where She had come to help those who were praying to Her and were adjudged fit to receive Her guidance and benediction.

This humble soul, perhaps due to good *samskāras* (tendencies) of the past, had the good fortune of Divine Ma's first darshan in August 1947 at the Lucknow Railway Station by the grace of my mother-in-law, the late Rani Trilokya Kumari. Sri Ma's darshan exercised a spontaneous attraction of an intensity I had never experienced before. It made me follow Her like a mad man to Varanasi where I witnessed divine Ma's boundless, unequalled

love and kindness. Neither I nor Prema, my wife, had ever before encountered anything at all of this kind. Our entire life was changed by receiving *dīkṣā* again at the Ashram in Sri Ma's presence. Thereafter we felt so irresistibly drawn to divine Ma that we seized every opportunity to be in Her presence, whether it meant taking leave from service or abandoning family engagements.

Thus having in all humility had the privilege of receiving Sri Ma's blessings and guidance for the last thirty-five years, during which we experienced some outstanding incidents in our spiritual growth, which it would not be appropriate to relate here.

Divine Ma, "*Pūrṇa Brahma Nārāyan*" was an incarnation of Nārāyan, the Eternal Spirit, who blessed the world in *Śakti* form to guide those who were ready for it. It is only by Her divine Grace that a very few quite realize Sri Ma's godly qualities. All Divine Incarnations keep their identity carefully concealed. But Divinity does not incarnate alone in this world, it is accompanied by a galaxy of spiritually advanced souls and Deities.

It seems appropriate to mention here three saints that are significant. Divine Ma always looked at saints with great reverence. She constantly kept Swami Paramanandaji by Her side and entrusted to his care all great functions and other responsibilities which were carried out to perfection. Thus Swami Paramanandaji may well be called 'Sri Ma's Hanumanji'.

Another saint to whom Mataji gave Her very special attention was Sri Haribabaji Maharaj. A

Sri Gouranga Mahaprabhu Chaitanya Deva of modern times, he was constantly engrossed in God's bhakti. Divine Ma directed this soul in its unhappy days to seek Haribabaji's blessings. It took several days in Vrindaban to get his blessings through his personal bhakta.

The third saint to be mentioned is Swami Akhandanandaji Saraswati whom divine Ma held in greatest respect. Swamiji himself has declared that he received more love and affection from Her than from his own mother. Swami Akhandanandaji may be looked upon as a messenger of Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning, as he has made the Srimad Bhāgavata, which is considered the living *avatāra* of Lord Krishna, easily accessible to the Hindi speaking world. Sri Ma always encouraged Bhagavata Saptahs and the reading of the Bhāgavata and must have listened to the Bhagavata probably hundreds of times.

Divine Ma used to see right through every soul and directed each one according to his needs and capacities.

Sri Ma was extraordinarily kind to our family in every way, giving us guidance and protecting us from catastrophies. We all owe everything to Ma and pray to Her to guide us for the rest of our lives to be Her worthy disciples.

**Jai Ma !**

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# My First Meetings with Anandamayi Ma, February, 1959

Swami Kriyananda

(Introduction. The following is based on a long letter I wrote — but never completed — to the SRF monks in Los Angeles, on notes that I made after each meeting with the Mother, and on accounts contributed by Mohini Chakravarty, an SRF/YSS devotee.)

Sri Daya Mata and her party, consisting of Ananda Mata, Sister Revati, and myself, had been visiting Sri Yukteswar's seaside hermitage in Puri. On about February 9th, we returned to the YSS Baranagar ashram, outside Calcutta, where we were living. Soon after our arrival, we learned that, during our absence, Anandamayi Ma had come to Calcutta.

What a thrill! Paramhansa Yogananda's beautiful account of Her in *Autobiography of a Yogi* had inspired all of us, his disciples, with Her example of divine love, with Her ecstatic absorption in God's infinite Bliss. One of our greatest hopes in coming to India had been that we would have the opportunity of meeting Her. Now Divine Mother had brought Her figuratively to our doorstep! We looked forward with keen anticipation to meeting Her.

My own eagerness, however, was not unmixed with a certain anxiety. On Friday of that week I was scheduled to fly to Madras to lecture at the



SRF/YSS center there. Would I be able to see the Mother before then? It all depended on whether I could find someone to take me to Her, as I had no way of getting there on my own.

On Wednesday evening, February 11th, the four of us were sitting with two or three Indian friends around the dining room table. Talk turned (inevitably!) to Anandamayi Ma, and to our prospects for visiting Her. "But," we lamented, "we've no idea where She's staying!"

"It must be in Agarpara," said Mohini Chakravarty, one of the friends who were present. "That's where She stays when She comes to Calcutta."

"Do you know how to get there?" I asked.

"Yes, I could take you."

"At what time does She generally see people?"

"At about this time."

This was not an opportunity to let slip away! I said, "Why don't we go there right away?"

My proposal was a bit sudden for the others in our party, but Mohini agreed to accompany me, and minutes later we were on our way.

I meditated as we drove through the darkness. A peculiar joy filled me. Did the Blissful Mother already know we were coming? Was She blessing me before I even met Her?

"Mohini," I said, "please don't tell the Mother who I am (that is to say, a disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, who was of course well-known to the Mother's devotees.) I don't want the formality of an introduction. Let me just slip quietly into the

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back of the room and sit there in meditation. That will be a sufficient joy for me." I wanted a spiritual, not a social, contact with the Mother. Also, I felt timid at the thought of representing Master before such an exalted Being, unworthy disciple as I am. Better just to come in and sit unnoticed.

I saw Her first through a series of french doors which run the length of one wall of the assembly hall. At once, and every time I saw Her again during the days to come — even in semi-darkness, when I couldn't distinguish Her features — I understood anew the meaning of Master's words when he wrote of the blessing that flows from the mere sight of a saint. There was no mistaking it. I was beholding a truly divine Being.

I slipped quietly into the room and sat cross-legged on the floor at the back. There must have been about 150 people present. The Mother was speaking and laughing amiably. Her voice, as pure and bell-like as a little girl's, thrilled my heart. I closed my eyes in meditation. Soon I began to lose myself in inner peace and devotion.

After a time, the congregation stood up. The meeting had obviously come to an end. I couldn't bring myself to move or to open my eyes, but the people around me began talking, so I assumed that the Mother had left the room.

I hadn't wanted to be introduced to Her, but now that She had retired I thought a little sadly, "It would have been nice to exchange just a glance with Her — even a loving smile!" But She was

gone now. And who was I, anyway, to expect any favours? I contented myself with the inner blessing I knew I'd received.

I continued meditating for several minutes. Then Mohini tapped me on the arm.

"I am going to inquire if the Mother can be persuaded graciously to come out again and meet you."

"No!" I exclaimed, "*please* don't! It would be too much of an imposition. Her evening with the public is over. Who am I to deserve special favours?"

But Mohini lovingly disregarded my reluctance. (He knew what I really wanted!) Approaching one of the Mother's devotees, he made his request. Presently word came back that She would see me. I went and stood by the door of Her room, my heart beating with a mixture of dread and joy.

As I stood there, Sri Anil Ganguli, a devotee of the Mother, sounded a note of mock warning: "Beware of the cobra's poison. Once you get it into your system, you may never be able to get it out again!"

Presently She came out. Sweetly She asked where I had come from, how long I had been in India, and a few questions of a general nature. I told Her that I am a disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, adding that, thanks to Him, all of us in his ashrams in America felt great love for Her.

At this She smiled appreciatively, then added quietly, "There is no love except the love of God. Without His love, it is not possible to love people."

This answer, and the way She uttered it, so thrilled me that I could make no reply, but only smiled happily.

After a few moments, She asked me when I was planning to return to America. I replied, "We'll all be going back to our ashram in April."

"Our ashram' ? Can you tell me where your ashram is, that you must go back to it ?"

With a smile of appreciation, I corrected myself. "This body is my ashram, because it is here I sit for meditation."

"No. Why your body ? Your body is temporary. Ashram is everywhere. It cannot be limited.

"In a spiritual sense," She continued, "the meaning of the word, *ashram*, is, '*ār shram noy*' — cessation from all compulsory activity. In this effortless divine state, all is perceived as one.

"In another sense, *ashram* refers to the four stages of life [ *brahmacharya*, *grihasta*, *vānaprastha*, and *sannyāsa* ]. But the Divine can be known in all of these states. So these, too, are all one." Everything is one — all one." ( That last word, "one," she uttered in English, laughing merrily at Her own use of a foreign word.)

Mohini said, "Brother Kriyananda asked me on our way here to let him just come in quietly and meditate, and not to tell you who he is."

The Mother, gazing at me quietly and affectionately, replied, "But I saw him come in, even though he was unannounced. I was watching him meditate.

"What do you mean, however, by the expression, 'Who he is' ? Who *is* he, indeed, anyway ?

Who is anybody? This little girl [ the Mother, I learned, generally referred to Herself in this way ] forgets Herself so much She can't even remember who *she* is supposed to be! Occasionally, someone who has been close to this body for years will be sitting nearby, and I will ask, "Where is So-and-so?", calling this person by name. Sometimes people are disappointed when I don't recognize them, but it is because I don't use this mind as others do. I am led by *kheyāla* — by *moods*!" ( Again She used the English word, *moods*, and laughed happily. By 'moods', however, She didn't mean that She is moody in the ordinary, human sense. But just as human moods are irrational and unpredictable, so the *kheyāla* is above reason and is not dependent upon the logical process for its perceptions and decisions. *Kheyāla* may sometimes *seem* whimsical to the limited intellect, but it never is. )

The Mother mentioned that the following day was the festival of Saraswati *puja* ( worship ). Saraswati is the Hindu goddess of learning and music. The Mother urged me, if I could, to attend the function.

Mohini then told Her that I could sing a few devotional songs in Bengali. She replied, "That is very nice. But it may not be possible to listen to them tomorrow. We shall certainly be able to hear them the following day."

"But," remonstrated Mohini, "our brother's difficulty is that he is scheduled to leave for Madras on Friday morning."

Impulsively I intruded : "I am *supposed* to leave then. But I am seriously considering postponing the journey."

Everyone, including the Mother, laughed appreciatively. Sri Ganguli remarked, "Aha ! What did I say ? The cobra poison has begun to take effect !" Everyone laughed again.

Mohini then relayed the wish of Daya Mata to meet the Mother privately. Because the Mother had not yet met Daya Ma, She somehow got the impression that it was I who wanted the appointment.

"Father," She replied, "you know I do not like to bind myself with appointments. Once I make a promise, I must keep it regardless of all other considerations. Please speak to Swami Paramananda downstairs and ask him to make the appointment for me."

She rose to leave. With a full heart I thanked Her in Bengali for having come out again especially to see me.

The Mother smiled. " 'Thank you' is too formal," She remarked. ( In Bengali the expression is used less frequently than in English, and has a formal ring to it : '*dhanvawād*'. ) "Will you thank your own self ?" When I looked puzzled as to what I might offer as an alternative, She addressed Mohini : "Ask him, would he thank his own mother ?"

"Yes," I replied after Mohini's translation, "in English it is customary to show appreciation in this way, even to our loved ones,"

The Mother, smiling, then conceded, "Well, if it is customary with you it is all right."

Lovingly She gave me a flower and a tangerine, upon which I said with a smile, "Now what can I say to you? Must I accept these in silence?"

She replied with a gentle laugh, "Say what you want. It is all the same."

I thanked Her in English. (I guess I'm just too much of a Westerner!) Then, with a full heart, I said how happy I was to have met Her. As She turned to go, I touched Her feet lovingly. (Later I was to learn that it is strictly against the ashram rules for anyone to touch Her feet. But no one, least of all the Mother Herself, corrected me for my unwitting breach of etiquette.)

My heart was full. Eagerly I looked forward to the following day, when I planned to urge the rest of our group to come, too, and attend *Saraswati puja* at the ashram.

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Thursday, February 12, 1959

Daya Ma and the others had been planning to visit the Mother on Friday, but changed their minds on learning that *Saraswati puja* was a special day at the Agarpara ashram.

We arrived there at about eleven in the morning. Daya Ma was as anxious as I'd been to internalize the experience. She didn't want it turned into a ceremonial encounter between two heads of religious organizations. At her request, therefore, care was taken not to disclose her identity and those of the other sisters. The three of them took

their seats a bit away from the crowd, and at a distance from the Mother. I sat at the back of the crowd.

Standing up at one point to locate the sisters, I caught the Mother's eye. Sitting down again, I found my meditation instantly deepening.

Public curiosity about us couldn't be stifled. When the *puja* ceremony had ended, people approached Prabhas-da (Master's cousin) and Mohini Chakravarty and asked who we were. Thus the truth came out. Daya Ma and the rest of us were immediately invited to come up on to the platform and sit near the Mother, who blessed each of us, giving Mataji a garland, and the rest of us, roses.

Many people came forward for Her blessings. One woman pressed many gifts on Her, but not in a spirit of devotion. The Mother turned away from her to face us. Her magnetism drew us into a meditative state.

Then She asked me to sing. Nervously at first, I complied by singing Ram Proshad's beautiful song, in Bengali, "Will that day come to me, Ma, when crying, Mother! my eyes will flow with tears?" I soon lost myself in the inspiration of the words.

"Most beautifully sung!" exclaimed the Mother at the song's end. Turning to the crowd, She remarked concerning us, "They are soft!"

Then, rising, She told us, "Please remain seated. I will be away only for a little while."

After She'd left I sang Master's chant, "In the Valley of Sorrows," in English. She returned after



I'd finished, and told me, "I was listening to you. Please sing it again."

I did so, then sang to other songs in Bengali : "Blue Lotus Feet," and "Take Me on Thy Lap, O Mother !"

"What sweetness you express through your singing !" She exclaimed.

I said, "It gives me much joy to be able to sing for you," to which She replied :

"Joy cannot be measured in terms of 'much' or 'little.' It is absolute."

A devotee then sang a devotional song in Hindi. While the woman was singing, the Mother looked at Daya Ma long and deeply. Afterward, She remarked to the crowd, "Look, here you see an example of the unimportance of understanding the words literally. These Americans have not literally followed a single word of the Hindi song. But See how, overcome by the spirit of the song, water is flowing down their cheeks !" She tossed Daya Ma a garland, then gave us all garlands. Of Daya Ma She said, "She has come a long way to make this contact. Her meditative state is beautiful."

The time came at last for us to leave. Using the Bengali expression for "goodbye," I said, "*Tabe asi*" (literally, "Then I come" again).

"To say you will come again," She replied with a gentle smile, "implies that we shall be separated for a while. But there can be no separation between us."

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Friday evening, February 13th.

I postponed my trip to Madras, so as to take the fullest possible advantage of Mother's stay near Calcutta.

Friday evening I went again, accompanied by Mohini, but without the others. The Mother asked me to chant again. I sang "Blue Lotus Feet," and, "Will That Day Come to Me, Ma?" Later, still under the impression that I, rather than Daya Ma, had requested an interview, She asked me if I didn't want to see Her privately. At first, embarrassed to take up Her time, I declined, but almost immediately corrected myself and said 'Yes'.

Mohini came into Her interview room with me to act as a translator. But once we got there, I could think of nothing to say! Then I remembered that Brother Turiyananda, in America, had told me the only thing he wanted from India was Anandamayī Ma's blessings, and some item that She had used. I made this request for him.

"Very well," She replied.

"Also," I continued, recalling a problem that was bothering me, "my sādhanā has been a little difficult in recent weeks. Might I have your blessings, and any advice that you'd care to give me?"

*Mother*: "Always think the Divine grace is with you. Depend on it, and you will never find it wanting." She paused, then continued, "Now, then, tell me what you want me to give you of my belongings."

*I*: "Mother, that is for you to say."

*Mother* : “No. Take anything — bed sheet, shawl — anything.”

I hesitated.

*She* : “Will you be shy about asking from your own mother ?”

*I* : “But please, I don’t know what you need most.”

*She* : “I don’t need anything !”

*I* : “Please, at least let one of your devotees choose for you.”

*She* : (firmly) “No, you must choose. Are you not my own ?”

*I* : (wanting to make the smallest request possible) “Then Mother, might I have a handkerchief ?”

An attendant rose instantly to fetch one for me. Thinking suddenly how nice it would be to have a memento of my own, I said hastily, “Mother, might I have *two* handkerchiefs ?” Everyone laughed.

*Mother* : (taking off Her shawl and giving it to me) “Here, this is for you. I have worn it for five years.” She gazed at me lovingly. Then, in Her “mood to give me more, She ordered the attendant to bring me a flower bouquet also. Of the shawl, She told me, “Wrap your body with this shawl, but always remember that *Nāma* — God’s Name — is the best thing in which to wrap yourself.”

Overcome with emotion, I held the shawl silently to my heart for some moments. Then I told Her, “We all feel we are not meeting you for the first time.”

*Mother* : “The more you advance in meditation, the more you will realize your identity with me.”

*I* : “Mother, would you give me some personal advice for my spiritual practice ?”

*She* : “Always practise *japa* (taking God’s name). Keep your mind busy chanting God’s name, and you won’t have time to think of anything else. Say, ‘Hari ! Hari !’ — here She clapped her hands joyfully once, as if to indicate that everything of this world disappears with the thought of God — “or any other mantra you like. Filled with His joy, you will laugh at all dangers.”

*I* : “I like to take my Guru’s name.”

*She* : “That is good. Everything you have attained has come to you through his blessings.”

I was so full of inner joy by this time that I could only close my eyes in meditation. While I meditated, the Mother spoke briefly with Mohini. He told Her that I and the others in our party meditated five or six hours a day.

*Mother* : “I can see that. Your American brother and sisters are highly advanced in the spiritual path. Daya Ma, especially, enjoys perfect calm, both inside and outside.”

*I* : “Mother, you are so *good* !”

*Mother* : (sweetly) “It takes goodness to see goodness.”

She gave me the bouquet She had ordered, and the handkerchief, adding to them a large towel. Love filled my heart.

“*Tomar chhele khub kusi,*” I said as we left, meaning, “Your child is very happy !”

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Saturday, February 14th

We went again to Agarpara this evening. Mother asked me to sing "Blue Lotus Feet" for Her again. I sang it gladly.

*Mother* : "How many times I have asked him to sing this song ! In spite of so many repetitions, it never loses its charm."

Later I told Her, "Daya Ma would like to spend some time with you alone — not to talk ; just to meditate."

*Mother* : "She is always welcome."

I had brought a scarf to give Her. Hesitantly I gave it at last, whereupon She said playfully, "I was going to snatch it from you, but waited to see if you would give it !" She then asked me to put it around Her shoulders.

When I had done so, she repeated ten times, solemnly, "*Tomar ghare ami thaki*" — "I dwell in your heart (literally, *room*)."

"I know," I said, thinking of a blessing I had received from Her in meditation that morning. I added, "*Ami tomar chhele* — I am your child."

*She* : "This is not a new relationship. It is eternal."

*I* : "I know." I was thinking both in the human sense, and of Her as a manifestation of the Divine Mother.

In time I became known affectionately as Her "*chhoto chhele* — little child."

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Many were the meetings we had over the months and years after that. Always She showered me

with grace. One time She said, "Many thousands have come to this body. None have attracted me as you have." The translators emphasized several times to me that she had said, "None."

Another time She said, "There are people who have been with me for twenty-five years and more, but they haven't taken from me what you have."

And to others I'm told She once said, "Here is a lotus in a pond. Many frogs sit under the lotus, croaking. Then a bee flies in, takes the honey, and flies away. Kriyananda is that bee."

She surprised me once by asking, "What would you say if I asked you to stay here?" Why did She ask me that? Perhaps She saw what I would suffer from my Guru's organization. But even had I known what the future would bring, I would have faced that suffering rather than forsake my dedication to him. Perhaps She didn't want me to devote my life to service, but purely to *sādhana*. I could have remained faithful to Master in Her ashram. Certainly She would not have asked me to leave him; that is not Her way. But I couldn't set aside his words to me: "Your life is one of *intense activity* — and meditation"; his statement, "Your work is lecturing and writing; and his frequent charge to me, "You have a great work to do." Moreover, I had dedicated this incarnation to spreading his work. I live for nothing else.

After my separation from SRF, Anandamayi Ma later told me, She would gladly have taken me in. But Master himself seems to have prevented

that possibility, for I was not granted an Indian visa for ten years.

Nevertheless, Anandamayi Ma occupies a more than special place in my heart. I see Her as the Divine Mother Herself. Through Her, next to Master, I have received the greatest blessings in my life. Indeed, with Her I was able to have the relationship that my greenness on the path never permitted me to have with Master during his lifetime. It was a relationship which, far from taking me from my Guru, served to deepen my relationship also with him.

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# Ma Anandamayi

(Some Reflections on Her Eighty-seventh  
Birthday Anniversary)

Prof. G. D. Shukla

If it had not pleased Sri Sri Ma to shuffle off Her mortal coils on the 27th day of August 1982, we should have been celebrating her 87th birthday this week in Her physical presence. But as it is, this was the first anniversary of Sri Sri Ma's birthday which Her devotees would be observing all over the country, and abroad too, in Her physical absence. And, as we do so, several questions arise in our mind. Is Ma really absent? Who was Ma? What impact did She make on the persons who came in contact with Her? And how long will that impact last when She Herself is no more in the visible form?

The first question is easy to answer. Ma is still with us and shall continue to be with us. The Indian mind has been so trained and conditioned over the ages that it just cannot entertain the idea of the dissolution of the soul with the dissolution of the flesh that encases it. Ma perhaps felt "cribbed, cabined and confined" when in the flesh. Space and Time restricted Her. But now She has gone beyond them and pervades the entire universe.

Who was Ma? As I try to grapple with this question I am reminded of a simple worded but



profound observation made in a famous story entitled "The Little Prince" by Antoine De Saint Exupery, which asserts : "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly ; what is essential is invisible to the eye." The range of the human eye is limited. Besides, it can see only what is on the surface. What is beneath very often escapes our attention. So, to understand Ma we have to take recourse to our heart ; the heart goes deeper into things. It is not hemmed in by the logic chopping intellect ; the impressions it forms have the harmony of wholeness.

Ma evidently was a manifestation in human form of the Supreme Power. Very early in life She gave evidence that Her heart and soul were in perfect communion with the Divine Power. Whatever She said or did was at the prompting or inspiration of that Power, when, as She termed it, the *kheyāla* came to Her. Her utterances had a universality of appeal which is not found in the sayings of many great men. She was not interested in founding any new order ( सम्प्रदाय ) or any new sect. She came, and lived, to draw men's mind to, and re-establish their tottering faith in the eternal Truths or सनातन सत्य. She knew that real Truth is the same all the world over and holds good for all human beings irrespective of the religion they profess. These truths may be worded differently but in substance they are the same. It was these eternal truths that She spoke of in a plain, homely language so that they could be understood by both the highbrows and the lowbrows. Ma never claimed any greatness for

Herself which She was only too glad to assign to others. Everyone knows that Ma spoke of Herself as an "ignorant little daughter". We all know how Christ also did not claim any wisdom or power for Himself. Ma, like Jesus Christ, looked upon Herself as a mere instrument for conveying the Higher Wisdom. And, it is this simple fact that explains why men and women of all faiths and all countries flocked to Her and revered Her as their Teacher.

Ma was an embodiment of Love and Compassion, an undying fountain-head of affection for one and all. Nobody was shut out from that source. It was as much meant for an important person as the present Prime Minister of India as for an ordinary postman of Dehra Dun. I need not dwell on this aspect any further, for everyone who has come in contact with Ma will recall any number of incidents to illustrate my point. Let them turn to their own experiences. Verily, it must have been a very inspired person who first realised this aspect of Ma. Indeed, She is the Universal Mother.

The impact that Ma made on those who came in contact with Her cannot be measured by a uniform standard, for the simple reason that men are made differently. The nature of the impact is as much determined by the sensitivity and receptivity of the receiver as by the force or energy of the maker. It is also determined by their personal predilection and feelings towards him or her. Ma did not behave like a dictator. She did not wield the baton or any other instrument of force to compel obedience. Sweet persuasion was Her only weapon. Sensitive

and intelligent persons responded to Her influence, and shall continue to do so. The ignorant and the dense remained as they were. That is the way of God also. He does not force anybody to obey Him and respect Him. If they do, they stand to gain something, if they do not it is their own choice and their own outlook.

A very peculiar thing about Ma was that everyone who came in contact with Her had the feeling that he was a special recipient of Ma's grace and favour, whereas actually this grace and compassion was lavished on all without any distinction. When Sri Rāma returned to Ayodhya after fourteen years of exile, the whole town came out to welcome Him, and anxious to meet everyone individually and separately He multiplied Himself into innumerable Rāmas so that every resident of Ayodhya had the joy and bliss of embracing Rāma. (अमित रूप प्रगटे तेहि काला, जथा योग मिले कपाला) Ma also had that unique gift, and She made everyone feel as if he had the singular distinction of receiving special attention from Her.

It is difficult for an ordinary person like me to fathom the great qualities of this extraordinary messenger of God. Whatever little I have been able to discover is due to Her own infinite grace and mercy.

The story of Ma cannot be told in voluminous book even, let alone a short article like this one. Suffice it to say that we who had the good fortune to know Her should consider ourselves blessed, and blessed also are the land and the places which have been sanctified by the holy touch of Sri Ma's lotus feet.

# A Sign of Grace

Stephen M. Quong

For many weeks I had been seeking employment in the area around Santa Cruz, California. Because of the state of the local economy, job opportunities in my field were quite scarce. Day after day I submitted resumes and filled out job applications, and day after day I received notices of rejection in the mail. My savings were being depleted at a rapid rate, and I knew that I had to find a job soon in order to stay out of debt. I began to worry about my future, and I was becoming discouraged by my deteriorating financial situation. And so then I thought about praying to Sri Sri Ma for help.

Usually I never pray for worldly favors or success. I pray for purity, for surrender to God's will, for forgiveness for my faults, and for strength to accept everything that happens to me as the will of God. Sri Ma has said so many times that we should not pray for worldly fulfillment, for there is no peace to be found in this world — only pleasure and pain, the endless cycle of *samsāra*. But then I was very discouraged about money and finding a job, and so I prayed to Sri Ma to take care of my worldly needs too, since I was depending on Her for everything else. I did not pray for money or a job, I only reminded Ma that it was Her duty as a Mother to feed Her children.

I remembered the story of Swami Vivekananda asking Ramakrishna Paramahansa to pray to Mother Kali for money to support his starving family. But Ramakrishna could not ask the Mother for money or worldly things, so he told Vivekananda to go to the temple himself and ask the Mother on his own behalf. Three times Vivekananda went to the temple to ask for money, and each time he was so engrossed in spiritual ecstasy that he forgot to pray for money. He wept at the feet of Ramakrishna and pleaded for grace, and Ramakrishna promised him that his family would never have want for simple food and shelter. The Mother would always provide for that.

Thinking of this story, I did not want to be the faithless one who went to the Treasury of Spiritual Wealth only to beg for a few crumbs. It is really God that I want, not the money. But God is also the provider of all of our needs, both spiritual and material, and there is no one else to turn to. Verily, all is He.

On the morning of June 23, 1983, I was walking along the seashore in Santa Cruz, praying and wondering about my future prospects. Then to my surprise, a wave from the Pacific Ocean washed a ten dollar bill at my feet. I picked it up and looked at it. It was real money, and it appeared apparently without cause or explanation. I was quite dumbfounded by the significance of this event. I had prayed to Sri Ma for Her grace in meeting my worldly needs, and a few days later money came directly from the ocean, the eternal symbol of

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the Universal Mother. For me it was a sign of grace, a reminder from Sri Ma Herself that we should never lose faith. She is watching over our lives, She will provide for everything that we need — both in this world and on the path to the Beyond. We need only to keep the remembrance of God's Presence in our heart at all times, for that remembrance will result in the fulfillment of our only true destiny : Peace Supreme, and oneness with Sri Sri Ma, the Mother of the Universe.

One week after the money came from Mother, I was offered a very good position in the County Government of Santa Cruz. I truly believe that everything happens only by Her grace. Jai Ma !

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### The Way to the Supreme State

“Whether it be in the Gita or the Bible or the Koran or the Zind Avesta, we find the same note insistently ringing, namely : *self-surrender is the supreme way to liberation or salvation.*”

—Swami Ramdas

# Teachings of Rebbe Nahman

Translated by  
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I. At the time of prayer — So long as a man can still hear someone else, that is, as long as he hears and feels that another person stands nearby as he prays — it is not good.

For it is necessary that during one's prayer one should imagine that there is no one but myself and God alone.

There is though still another higher level of annihilation in prayer :— a man should so annihilate himself at the time of his prayer to the extent that he is no longer aware of himself at all, but only of God alone.

Then, at the time of prayer, one stands in the palace of the King as it is written elsewhere : “Who is he? Is not his existence annihilated and there is no one present here but the King himself !”

II. He ( Rebbe Nahman ) said that the most essential thing in solitude and perfect conversation between a man and his Creator is that he speak to God in such a manner that he reaches the point where his soul may depart, until he almost expires, — to the point where his soul is tied to the body by a very thin thread due to the immensity of his pain, yearning and true longing for God and so the Sages have said :

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“A man’s prayer is not heard unless he put his soul in his hand.”

III. He told us that he had always been very firm in his spiritual practice and never allowed himself to be confused in any way whatsoever. And his way was this : He would choose for himself a particular certain direct mode of practice for his worship. He would then proceed with these practices according to the way he had himself chosen and would continue thus for some time. And when other thoughts came to confuse him and try to convince him to leave this way and to follow another, he would not listen to them at all but would push them away, out of his mind, not even allowing them to enter. Instead he remained unwavering and faithful to his decision and continued along the path that he had chosen for a time.

Later on, after some time had passed, perhaps several weeks, again these thoughts came to his mind that he should now change his practice to another way. And then, as quite a while had passed, he himself considered and chose another method of practice and order according as it seemed fitting to him at that time. But he never allowed himself to be confused and distracted each and every time from one way of worshipping to another or from one practice to another, but would remain firm in one way for a certain length of time.

IV. The evil inclination continually harrasses a person inciting and arousing him in various ways. And even though one may not listen but turns away from it, still it bothers him again and again and



again. But if one is firm in his mind and stubborn regarding the evil inclination, and does not turn toward it at all, then it will disappear and go off.

And it is the same also with prayer regarding the thoughts that come to confuse and distract a person as he prays. Just as above those thoughts come again and again in order to distract one. Therefore, one must remain firm and not pay any attention at all to it, — then that distracting thought will disappear.

V. Regarding the obstacles that everyone has in worshipping God, — as, for example, those one encounters in trying to make the journey to see the True Tzaddik<sup>1</sup>, and so on. To each person it seems that his obstacles are greater than anyone else's and it is very difficult for him to withstand them. But know, that each one is beset by obstacles only according to his strength, that is, according to his ability to deal with them, — if he so desires. And in truth there is no obstacle at all because even in that very obstacle is hidden the Divine.

And the greatest obstacle of all is one's mind, as when one's mind and heart are in conflict over God or over the Tzaddik. Because even though one may be able to overcome the difficulties in travelling to the True Tzaddik and arrive there, if, despite this, his mind is divided with doubts and questions and he has crookedness in his heart

<sup>1</sup> Tzaddik — lit. 'the righteous one', a saint. For Nahman it is an extremely important concept, and the True Tzaddik is a perfected being who is the spiritual leader of his generation, similar in many respects to 'Sadguru'.

regarding the Tzaddik, this then is the greatest obstacle of all and hinders him more than all the others.

So it is also with regard to prayer. At first when one is about to pray, there may be a few obstacles which he is able to overcome but then when he comes to pray, if his heart is crooked and perverted in its relation to God, this is the greatest obstacle of all.

Thus the questions and doubts within one's heart are the greatest hindrance. In this state one must cry out to God a great and strong cry from the depths of his heart. And it is possible that by this means alone all the doubts and obstacles will fall away and be entirely erased. In any case, at least God hears his voice and this is his salvation. One *must* call out to God when such doubts and denial overcome him.

This is somewhat similar to the following parable told in the name of the Baal Shem Tov<sup>1</sup> :

Once a king left a great treasure in a certain place and enclosed it with illusory walls. And when people came to these walls it seemed them that they were real walls, difficult to break through. Some of them left immediately but others broke through the first wall and came to a second which they could not break down. Again some of them went on to break through that second wall but could not break down those remaining.

Finally the King's son came and said to himself :  
"I know that all these walls are but an illusion and

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<sup>1</sup> Baal Shem Tov — Founder of the Hassidic movement.

that in reality there is no wall at all here." And so he went on confidently until he had passed through all the walls.

From this the wise will understand that which is alluded to in this parable. The walls are the obstacles and enticements which surround the treasure of the fear (awe) of heaven and which are, in truth, nothing at all.

And the essential is a strong and unwavering heart, for then there can be no obstacle.

VI. Know that one must go to the Tzaddik to find that which has been lost to one. For before a person comes out into the air of this world he is taught and shown all that which is necessary for him to do, worship and to attain in this world. However, as he enters into the atmosphere of this world, it is all forgotten. And the sages have said that forgetting is losing.

So one must return and seek that which he has lost and that which he has lost is with the Tzaddik because the Tzaddik seeks what he himself has lost until he finds it and afterwards he seeks after the loss of others until he finds also theirs, until he recovers the losses of all the world. Therefore one must come to the sage to seek for and to recognize that which he has lost and to receive it back again from him. But the Tzaddik will not return that which one has lost unless he seeks it.

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## Glimpses of Sri Ma's Worldwide Ashram

*"This body does not establish any Ashrams.....  
Transcending the world and pervading the whole  
universe there is but one single Ashram, 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

We received the following two reports of Sri Ma's birthday celebrations that arrived too late to be included in the July issue of *Ānanda Vārtā*.

### Los Angeles, U.S.A.

"Mother's birthday was celebrated in Los Angeles on Sunday, May 29th at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Hemant Pathak. 40 to 50 devotees were present, including members of the Pathak family who had prepared the *bhoga* and set up a lovely altar with Mother's picture in the centre. The altar was canopied with a beautiful purple and gold sari. Beside Mother's picture was a photo of Didima, an imprint of Mother's feet and the padukas of both Mother and Didima. A grand profusion of flowers filled the altar.

"The worship started at about 3-45 p.m. as Dr. Pathak performed the puja in the following order: Ganesh Puja, Śiva Puja, Nārāyan Puja,

Śakti Puja with *ghāt stāpanā*. Then Mother's *āratī* and *bhoga*. The worship was so beautifully done that everyone was filled with a heightened sense of our purpose in being there — the joy of turning the mind always to Ma.

We were very blessed to have with us Premananda and Sheela Trikannad and their young son. They drove up from San Diego, Calif. for the pūjā. Premananda is the grandson of beloved Pappa Ramdas of Kanhangad. He is noted for his inspired kirtan. He graced the event with many beautiful bhajans and his little son also sang two bhajans.

For those few hours we all felt transported to India where God's Name vibrates in every atom of the air.

Among the devotees who came was Corporal Devang Patel who is in the U. S. Marines. His father, aunt and uncle were on a visit in California, so it was a joy that they could come too. Many old friends were re-united. A good number came from Northern and Southern California.

After taking *prasāda* there was more kirtan and then Jayananda showed some beautiful slides he had taken of Mother in 1977.

Mother's presence was strongly felt throughout the whole evening and everyone's hearts were full of joy as we shared that special bond which is *Mātri Parivar* ("Mother's Family").

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### **New Delhi**

The devotees of New Delhi were inspired by a special upsurge, so to say, to organise Mātri Satsang at the residences of various devotees during the period from 19th Vaisakh (3rd May this year) and the Tithi Puja on May 29th — 30th. It was a special outburst of devotion, so much so, that there were ten organisations during these 26 days at ten different homes in rotation. Devotional songs, Mā Nāma Kīrtana, collective meditation, discourses by Br. Nirmalananda, Dr. Niranjana Chakravarti, Sri B. C. Bose enlivened the Satsang. Sri B. N. Ghoshal was there every day to perform puja and āratī. Distribution of prasāda by Sm. Sharama Mukherjee in the same fashion as Ma used to do, brought back the unforgettable memories of the past. In fact, when the series of satsang were over, the devotees were heard to say that they felt a vacuum after going through such a period of bliss. On the 29th of May there was kirtan during the night preceeding the special puja in the early hours of the morning at the local Ashram. On May 30th also the special Tithi Puja (worship at the time of Ma's advent) was performed in the private temple of Sri Bagala Charan Bose at his residence at Chittaranjan Park, as is done every year.

### **Germany**

A young German couple who have been in contact with Sri Ma since 1977 have now a large country house near the Swiss border which they have

named "Sri Sri Ānandamayī Bhavan". In 1980 they published in their own "Mangalam Verlag & Versand" a book of over 300 pages of Sri Ma's teaching in German translation with many illustrations. Since 1981 they are arranging off and on evenings in various German towns to show Ma's films, play recordings of Her singing and read out Ma's teaching to audiences of about 100—150 people. Recently they arranged for a fire sacrifice that was kept up without interruption from Guru-purnima, July 24th until September 5th. They also celebrated Sri Ma's birthday, Guru Purnima and Jhulan. Just now they have brought out an album of 144 pages with 69 photos of Sri Ma, 8 of them coloured, with short quotations of Ma's sayings in German and English translation. The album will be available also in India after some time.

"Sri Sri Mā Anandamayī Bhavan has a pūjā room where Ma's *ārati* is performed regularly morning and evening. They have taperecorded the songs that are sung at Kankhal and are singing in Hindi. They are aware of Sri Ma's presence and constant help and assistance.

### Kankhal

The Kankhal Ashram, being the main Ashram now, is extremely active. Guru Purnima was celebrated very solemnly on July 24th. Quite a number of devotees had come from various places for the occasion. The Delhi kirtan party performed *Nāma Yajña* from sunrise to sunset, with *adhivāsa* the evening before. Special pūjā was celebrated at

Sri Ma's Samādhi, in Didima's Samadhi Mandir, Padmanabha Bhagavan's pūjā and Sri Adishankaracharya's pūjā in the hall. Special *bhoga* was served to all at midday.

On August 15th, Didima's Tirodhan was observed by solemn puja in the night and silent meditation for an hour round 1 a.m., the time when Didima left her body. The next day special bhoga was served to sādhus and to all present.

On August 20th, Jhulan Dvadashi, Bhaiji's Tirodhan was celebrated by puja and sādhufeeding.

The Jhulan festival was celebrated on a small scale from 19th to 23rd, with the swing being placed in the Śiva Mandir.

On Jhulan Purnima there was special puja at Sri Ma's Samādhi and midnight meditation, as every year, in commemoration of Sri Ma's self-initiation on August 3rd, 1922.

One day, during the Jhulan festival, Sri Bhagavad Dayal Sharma, the Governor of Madhya Pradesh, came specially to pay his respects to Sri Ma's Samādhi. He stayed overnight in the Ashram and took his meals there and performed pūjā in the Śiva Mandir.

When Ma visited Puri after Her birthday celebrations in Bangalore in 1979, Sri B. D. Sharma who was then Governor of Orissa, invited Ma specially to grace Bhuvaneshwar. The train was late by many hours and reached Bhuvaneshwar at 1-30 a.m. Even at that hour Sri B. D. Sharma received Ma at the station and took Her and Her whole party to Raj bhavan where they remained



until midday, when they proceeded to Puri. When Ma left Puri, he again came to the station with many offerings and had Ma's darshan.

The spiritual Mother of an Ashram at Harlingen Texas, called, "Abbey of God's Love" came to visit Sri Ma's Samādhi with a few disciples and stayed at Kankhal for a few days and also paid their respects at the Kishenpur Ashram. The Gurumother and Swami Dayananda had come to Mataji in 1981 and attended the Samyam Vrata.

Another visitor from abroad was Dr. Bernard Pernel, a Neuro psychiatrist from Paris, who has been devoted to Ma for several years. He also visited the Kishenpur Ashram twice this time.

From August 24th to 26th a special Ramayan party from Bareilly performed "Akhandā Ramayana", at the request of the son of Sri Gopal Swarup Pathak, who had left his body a couple of days after Ma.

On August 27th, the anniversary of Sri Ma's Mahāsamādhi, *śodaś upachār pūjā*, i.e. pūjā with sixteen different offerings including a garland of 108 lotuses, was celebrated at the Samādhi, followed by the recitation of the entire Bhagavad Gita. In the evening there was silent meditation for half an hour.

On August 31st, Janmastami midnight pūjā was performed to the Narayan Shilā in the hall. The next morning Nandotsava was observed by offering curds at Ma's Samādhi and walking round it.

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Swami Paramananda's health was not satisfactory for some time. On July 31st, Dr. Durga Das Sen took him to Delhi, where his illness was properly diagnosed at Willingdon Hospital. A few days later Dr. Surabhai Seth and Sri B. K. Shah took him to Bombay for treatment. Dr. Seth is the head of Nanavati Hospital, Vile Parle. He was in charge of Didi throughout her illness. He is now looking after Swamiji who is responding to the treatment and improving gradually. Sri Ma's last injunction to Dr. Seth was: "*Take care of Paramananda!*"

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We are extremely sorry to report that Brahmachari Monindra, who was an inmate of the Ashram for many years, had a stroke on August 5th which caused paralysis on the left side. He was admitted to the Ramakrishna Hospital at Kankhal, where his condition improved somewhat, but he had another stroke to which he succumbed on August 21st, during the auspicious constellation of the Jhulan festival at the age of 67. He was known to all devotees as an excellent khol (drum) player who took active part in all kirtans, especially to accompany Vibhu Brahmachari's singing. Until his illness he was also in charge of the general Ashram kitchen.

Special kirtan was performed for him and reading of the Bhagavad Gita for six days. On the 13th day, September 2nd there was Brahman feeding. We mourn the loss of a dear friend and coworker. May he rest in peace at the feet of Ma!

According to the Hindu calendar the anniversary of Sri Ma's Mahāsamadhi falls on September 15th. *Akhaṇḍa japa* had been kept up near the Samādhi from sunrise to sunset for the whole year and on *Shukla Navami* of every month *Akhaṇḍa Rāmāyana* had been recited.

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### Dehradun

In Dehradun also Gurupurnima was celebrated by very beautiful kirtan and a feast for all present. From early morning till late at night, devotees came to offer praṇāma at the Kishēnpur Ashram. Jhulan was observed only on Jhulan Purnima. On August 27th, the special Ramayan party of Bareilly arrived from Kankhal and recited Sundarkandh until 10 p.m. Although very short notice had been given and the telephone line was out of order, devotees from all over Dehradun visited the Ashram on that fateful date and the hall was full in spite of heavy rains.

Janmastami was celebrated on a large scale at the Raipur Ashram and on a smaller scale at Kishenpur by kirtan for several hours and midnight puja.

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All the main festivals are of course observed in all our larger Ashrams, such as Delhi, Calcutta, Varanasi, Vrindaban, Pune, Ranchi etc. but we have received no reports.

### Kedarnath

Already a few years ago a plot of land for building a small Ashram at that special place of

pilgrimage had been donated to the Sangha. A house was built and it was hoped that Ma would grace the inauguration with Her presence. But Her health did not permit such a strenuous trip.

At last, on June 20th, Ganga Dasehra, a very auspicious day, the Ashram was ceremonially opened. About 15 Ashramites arrived from Kankhal. Dr. Gouri Shastri was present and Sri Bhola Pandit of Varanasi performed Narayan Puja. Sri Ma's large picture was carried in procession and put into Her room to the accompaniment of kirtan. *Homa* was performed in Ma's room. Brahmacharini Udas arrived from Uttarkashi Ashram for the function and remained at Kedarnath for about two months as the first inmate of the Ashram.

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Durga Puja will be celebrated from 12th to 16th October and Lakshmi Puja on October 21st on a large scale at Varanasi and Kali Puja in New Delhi on November 4th. Durga Puja is an annual function at Kankhal and Agarpara and will thus be celebrated in those ashrams also. The Samyam Mahāvratā will be observed also at Kankhal from November 13th to 20th.

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“At all times and under all circumstances you must keep yourself in readiness to tread the path of the Supreme. Who can tell at what moment your giving, serving or obeisance will become an act of consecration to the One? Everything is possible.”

—Sri Anandamayi Ma



“Whether or not the results of meditation are obtained is of no importance. The essential thing is to arrive at stability; it is the most precious thing that one can gain. In any case one must trust with confidence in the Divinity and await His grace without impatience. The same rule applies to japa; japa pronounced even once is a benefit, whether one is aware of it or not.

—*Ramana Maharshi*

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