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Worldly happiness alternating with periodical troubles that cause much sorrow are characteristic of the householder's life at every step. With great patience endeavour to do your duty to the best of your ability. Always pray for God's grace.

Pray for God's mercy. Under no circumstances must you allow yourself to be knocked down. It is God's law to end suffering by suffering. Your present condition is His gift of the results of your past actions. Bear in mind that it is because God will take you unto Himself that He is purifying and cleansing you.

If you are able to love God really — this is the consummation of all love.

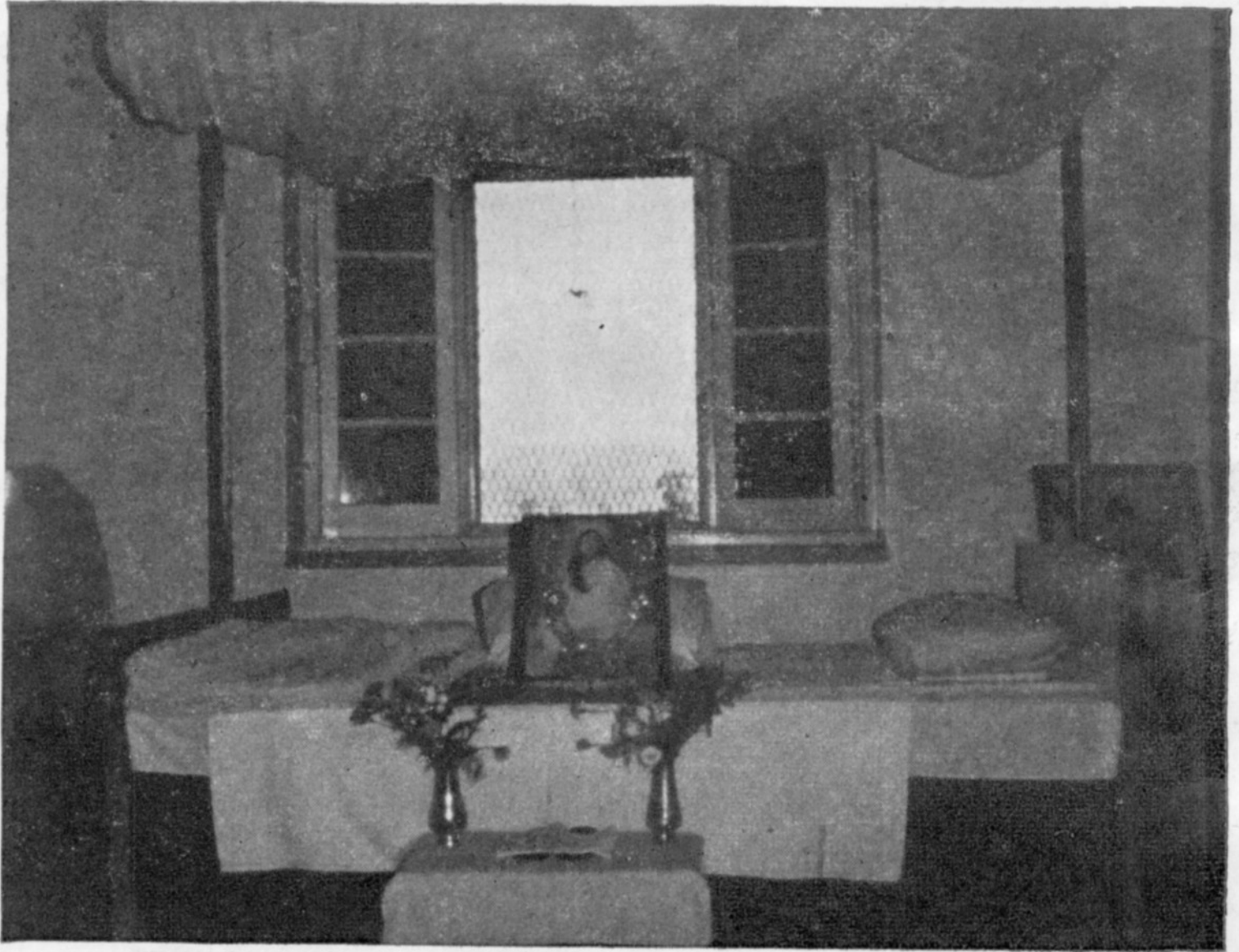
—Sri Sri MA Anandamayi

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The room at Kishenpore Ashram, Dehradun where MA  
left Her body on August 27, 1982.

# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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# Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

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

*Ma*: So long as there is language, there is karma, so long as there is karma, there is language.

\* \* \*

*Ma*: Actually nothing is ever destroyed, only a transformation takes place. Do you know what destruction is like? For example, when a tree grows out of a seed, the seed is being destroyed — only to create thousands of seeds of exactly the same kind. This is why it can be said that all things are destroyed and also that nothing is ever destroyed; both statements are equally valid.

\* \* \*

In a particular context someone remarked: "Ma wants to take everything!" *Ma* replied laughing: "But who will give all? People carefully consolidate their own and whether they part even with a little of what is left over — that also is doubtful!"

\* \* \*

*Ma*: Sometimes when you make me lie down for a rest, you see this body lying still, but actually

I at that time communicate with disembodied spirits of various kinds at a subtle level in exactly the same way as I communicate with you at your level. There is no difference at all. That is why, what you call taking rest does not actually take place. Again those beings do not always express restlessness as you do, and then I too remain quite still.

*Question* : What are these beings like ? Do they have hands and feet like ourselves, or does one become aware of their presence just as a particular scent is perceived in the air ?

*Ma* : There are all kinds. Some are exactly like you, with hands, feet and all, and there are also others whose presence is felt like scent in the air, as you have just said. Again, sometimes only a voice is heard, and nothing else appears. Further, there are others without even a voice but their presence is felt distinctly. Like this there are any number of different kinds of them.

You may say : “But we do not see any of them, how then can we believe it, just because you say so ?” There are many who talk in this strain, but the reply to this is : if you could see them, then you too would belong to that level of consciousness. While you are on this plane, how can you see all these things ? For example, there are so many germs in water, so many bacteria in the air, but you are unable to perceive them with your naked eye. And yet, can you disbelieve what the doctors see with the help of the microscope ? The doctors had to do so much study and research, had to undergo such strenuous discipline for so

many years before they could acquire this knowledge : they know that the germs can be seen with the help of a particular instrument. Everything depends on study and practice ; how will the eye of Knowledge be opened without strenuous *sādhana* ?

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*Question* : If it is true that nothing can ever happen that is not God's Will, why then do I myself reap the results of good and evil deeds ?

*Ma* (smiling) : Do you really firmly believe that nothing ever happens that is not willed by God ?

*Questioner* : Yes, I do.

*Ma* : In that case there is for you no question of good or evil deeds at all. But since this question has arisen in your mind, I will say that you do not have a firm faith that all happens by God's Will.

Upon this the questioner admitted this.

Then *Ma* continued : Faith is always blind. What is direct perception ? Just as I am seeing you and you are seeing me. At first one must have blind faith and then direct perception supervenes. Study is a must, Pitaji. But what has to be studied ? I do not mean the study of books of the external world. Just as by the perusal of books on external matters one gains knowledge of the outer world — even an ignorant child gradually becomes a learned man — exactly in a similar manner there is a book

hidden within everyone. Try to read that ! Then you will not have any doubt about anything, no question will remain unresolved, for whatever you want to know will automatically and without delay be understood by you.

\* \* \*

*Ma* : People keep on clamouring for a *sadguru*, but can a Guru ever be *asat* (bad, untrue) ? “Guru” does indeed mean *Sadguru*. Look, the World guru is the only Guru ; *Iswara*, the Lord of the world is the one Guru. When one talks of a *kula-guru*, the Guru of a clan, this refers to the family deity who takes one across the ocean of worldliness to the shore of liberation. For *kula* also means “shore, shelter”. The question of shorelessness does not arise at all. The Shore of the Lord is the only shore, the clan of the Lord is the only clan. You cannot possibly pass judgement on Him. So, He who is established in His true nature (*Svabhāva*), He is a Sadguru. Again, he who is endeavouring to become established in his *Svabhāva* is also a Sadguru. For if a student of the B.A. or M.A. class teaches a student of a lower class, he thereby helps him to be promoted to the B.A. or M.A. class. In this sense the teacher is also a Sadguru. Moreover, whoever gives you even a little bit of instruction about what IS, is your Guru. He who assists you to realize your true Being, your Reality, He is a Sadguru.

\* \* \*



One day a discussion was going on comparing Brahman to the ocean and *jīva* to the wave, also about various aspects of the Brahman, such as qualified and without qualities, with form, formless and so on. Someone asked : "Ma, who created the wave ?"

*Ma* : This is verily His nature, for He is said to be with attributes and with form. Again why is He spoken about as being attributeless and formless ? Because you cannot express His forms and qualities by language. Just as when you see a flower or eat a *rasagulla* you cannot fully describe how beautiful the flower is or what the taste of the *rasagulla* is like — only he who himself sees the flower or eats the *rasagulla* will know what it is like. You express a little bit (by what you say the natural qualities of that particular thing are revealed) and part of it remains unexpressed, you are unable to put it into any language. Because this much is reserved for the experiencer ; it cannot be stated in words.

But even here, something has to be pointed out : "formless" and "with form" are expressions in language — these also have to be transcended. Again, all this talk of coming and going, seeing and experiencing will not do. THAT is Self-revealed, this is why whatever can be revealed has to be revealed naturally. Further, look, waves are rippling on the surface of the ocean, while its depths is profoundly still, steady, waveless. You say that there are currents within the ocean, but its flow is not broken thereby, and so, its steadiness,

its uninterrupted continuity and profundity remain intact.

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*Question* : Well, Ma, how can the threefold suffering (*tritāpa*\*) be mitigated ?

*Ma* : The suffering which one has to undergo in order to realize God, this helps in alleviating the rigours of worldly suffering. For example, while performing a *yajña*, one endures the heat of the sacrificial fire and at the same time offers oblations into it. When you are performing japa but are feeling disinclined to do it and yet are trying to continue, this means enduring the hardship of *tapasyā*. Again, when you resolve to sing the Lord's Name from sunrise to sunset and arrange for a *Nāma yajña*, what are you actually doing ? You are offering futile thoughts and futile talk as oblation to the sacrificial altar of the Name, just for the sake of keeping your vow, even though it may be very difficult. After all, for how long do ordinary people feel the joy of invoking God's Name ? Therefore I say, the hardships that one undergoes in order to realize God, help to appease the threefold worldly suffering. This is what is called *tapasyā*. Moreover, just as fire has the power to dry water and water has the power of cooling,

\* *Tritāpa* The threefold suffering of the individual, namely *ādhibhautika* — bodily suffering ; *ādhideivika* — suffering due to the inclemency of the elements of nature, such as earthquake, flood, cyclone, etc ; *adhiātmika* — mental and emotional suffering.

similarly if you can endure the hardship of penance performed for the sake of God, the threefold suffering of the individual will not affect you anymore. The eager restlessness, the agitation of the mind for the realization of God does indeed aid on the path of Self-realization. "Of what use is doing pūjā, japa or meditation when the mind is restless?" — why do you think so? Unless you lose your peace of mind for the sake of finding God, there is no hope of real peace.

*Ma* continued: All the difficulties that you encounter in worldly life, these are also a kind of *tapasyā*.<sup>\*</sup> For instance, in spite of heat or rain boys go to school and college, employees go to attend to their jobs — all this is also *tapasyā*, provided one's gaze is turned towards God. Whether one has any spiritual aim or not, even then, through all these strenuous activities a kind of *tapasyā* is being performed. Because Creation, Preservation and Reabsorption are taking place at all times.

In a similar context *Ma* further observed: Worldly activities performed in spite of disinclination do not create new karma but merely exhaust the accumulated karma of the past. Verily, it is desire that creates karma. But the aspiration for God-realization is not a cause for bondage. If worldly actions are performed reluctantly due to one's desire for God-realization, then they do not lead to any bondage. Hence the longing to advance towards God is needed.

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<sup>\*</sup> *Tapasyā* Hardships undergone with the definite object of attaining to the Spiritual.

Just as it is said, in order to perceive one's true complexion, the dirt of one's body has to be washed away with the help of soap. But even the lather of soap is a kind of impurity which has to be cleansed with water, so that one's true physiognomy may be revealed. Look, even here there is a collaboration of *jñāna* (knowledge), *bhakti* (devotion) and karma (action). For it is not enough to apply soap to the body, one has to rub the skin with the lather and then cleanse it with water. Then only will one be able to see one's true complexion. Do you know with what one cleanses oneself in the spiritual realm? One is purified by the Ganga of Knowledge (*Jñāna Ganga*).

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### It is there

I looked at the sky,  
It was cloudy.  
Yet the glow of sun  
Was clearly there.

I looked at a human face,  
It was gloomy.  
Yet the glow of Brāhmān  
Gleamed clearly behind.

# In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Amulya Datta Gupta

*(Continued from the last issue)*

Mataji was sitting on the eastern veranda of the Ashram. We also were squatting there. Prof. Shyama Charan Babu of Agra College was amongst us. He asked Mataji why She had been laughing so excessively the day before.

*Mataji* : Smiles and tears are indeed such with this body. You saw me laughing only at the time of reading. In the evening also I laughed heartily on hearing the sounds coming out of the water-tap in the Ashram yard. You must have noticed that when a water-tap is turned, air often comes out of it with a hissing sound. Yesterday evening the tap of the Ashram yard was emitting a similar sound. When I heard it I was convulsed with laughter. This is because there are some screws loose somewhere in this head. Again, when Swamiji was reading at night, a slight touch of his hand turned the book-stand upside down. This gave me more convulsions of laughter. But the incident itself was nothing to laugh about. That shows that laughter comes to this body without any apparent reason. Anything may give occasion to a fit of laughter. Any attempt to check it at the time has the effect of only pouring oil on fire.

Once at the Dacca Ashram there was a *Kirtan* party. The *Kirtaniya* was singing in an inspired mood. His face was suffused with tears. The listeners were visibly moved. Though the singer had plenty of emotion, his literary attainments were no better than those of this body. While thus singing he mispronounced a word. Though the slip was slight and did not affect the emotional flow either of the singer or of the listeners, it made me laugh. Khukuni tried hard to compose me. She whispered to me that it would hurt the feelings of others. But it was all in vain. They then felt compelled to remove me to some other place. Even there I was rolling with laughter. This may give you some idea as to the character of my laughter.

It is not that this body laughs only when there is something comical. It is shaken with laughter even when there is little or no occasion for it. At the sight of people's grief this body has often burst into laughter. Those who are unacquainted with the vagaries of this body may very well be offended. They may think that I simply laugh at them which would be far from the truth.

Sometimes it so happens that the incident which seems to move this body to laughter is not the real cause at all. Some incidents of the past or future swim into my ken and give occasion to the laughter.

### **Various States of Ma during Her Lila of Sadhana**

There was a Gujerati lady amongst us named Miss Mani Ben. She asked : "Mataji, you have just referred to your visions of the past and future.

How do you have them ? Do you see them with your two physical eyes, or (pointing at the space between the two eye-brows) do you see them with the third eye that is here ?”

*Mataji* : How do I see them ? Why, the eyes are all over the body. Don't you know that everything has in it (the essence of) all other things ? Hands, legs, hair, in fact every part of the body can be made the instrument of sight. Of course, it is quite possible to see through the two eyes which all possess ; and the existence of a third eye of which you speak is also true. People do possess such eyes. This may sound strange to you, but nonetheless it is true.

Once this body lived on three grains of rice daily for four or five months. Nobody can live for so long on such a meagre diet. It looks like a miracle. But it has been so with this body. It has been so, because it can be so. The reason for this is that what we eat is not all necessary for us. The body takes in only the quintessence of the food, the rest is thrown out. As a result of *sādhanā* the body becomes so constituted that though no food is taken physically, it can imbibe from the surroundings whatever is necessary for its maintenance. In three ways the body can be maintained without food : One way has just been referred to *viz.* the body can take from the environment the nourishment necessary for its maintenance. Secondly, one can live on air alone. For I have just said that in everything there are all other things ; so that the properties of other things are

in the air in some measure. Therefore by taking in air alone we get the essence of other things. Again, it may so happen that the body is not taking anything at all, yet it is being maintained unimpaired as in a state of *Samādhi*. Thus you find that as a consequence of *sādhanā* it is quite possible to live without what we call food. In a similar way *sādhanā* can effect such transformation of the body that by virtue of it any part of it can discharge the function of the eye.

*Shyama Charan Babu* : We hear that sages can take over the sufferings of other people.

*Mataji* : This is true. Sages can mitigate the sufferings of other people in three ways : they can take the suffering upon themselves and thus relieve the sufferer ; or without taking those sufferings upon themselves, they may distribute and apportion them amongst some other persons. This lightens to some extent the intensity and acuteness of the suffering. Also, it may so happen that sages out of supreme Grace can relieve an individual from all the consequences of his actions and restore him to Life Divine, which is his true Self. But such incidents are rare. Hence it is said that purification comes through suffering.

*Myself* : Mataji, how is it possible to distribute sufferings amongst others ? This looks like sheer injustice.

*Mataji* : No, there is nothing wrong in it. Sages would divide the sufferings only amongst those who are only too willing and anxious to share them.



*Shyama Charan Babu* : Why should I allow a sage to bear my cross ?

*Mataji* : That is well said. A *bhakta* would speak in this way. A devotee would not have the object of his devotion share his sufferings. He would rather bear his own cross. But sometimes such sufferings are too much for him, and his only concern then becomes how to get rid of them. In such cases only the question of mitigation or extenuation arises. With me, however, everything has happened spontaneously. I have seen that this body has taken upon itself the sufferings of others, not purposely, but without an effort of the will. Once I went to see a patient who was attacked by a severe type of dysentery. On my return I found myself attacked by that very disease. I had frequent motions and passed blood and mucus. This went on for twelve hours. Then I was all right again. For some time something like a blizzard passed over this body, then everything was quiet. The man who had the original attack came round as soon as this body had the disease.

At another time this body took upon itself the fever from which another person had been suffering. Every third or fourth day I used to have a violent paroxysm of fever which lasted for three hours. The temperature shot up to 103° or 104°. We were then at Cox's Bazar. The nature of the fever convinced Dina Bandhu Babu that it was nothing but malaria. Bholanath was of the same opinion, and was anxious to administer quinine. But I flatly refused to take the drug. Dina Bandhu Babu had

an almost paternal affection for this body, which used to address him as father. He often would humour me by complying with my requests. Though a Brahmin himself, he had given up the Brahminical practice of uttering *Gāyatrī Mantra*. But I induced him to resume it.

However, when he found me suffering from repeated paroxysms of fever he lost all patience and wrathfully declared: "These devotees have conspired to kill my daughter. I won't listen to anybody. I intend to administer by force, if necessary, quinine this very night." I heard all this, but said nothing. In the afternoon this body fell into a trance-like condition. True to his words Dina Bandhu Babu came with quinine at night. Seeing me in a state of unconsciousness he shook me hard. Though his shaking and hustling made me open my eyes, they remained unmoved in a fixed stare. This pricked his curiosity. He examined me by focussing the light of an electric torch on my eyes and even thrusting his finger into them to see whether they would wink. When all his endeavours failed to restore me to a state of consciousness, he gave up the attempt to administer quinine that night. But he could not abandon the idea of trying the drug on me. Of course I knew how long the fever was to last. So I told him that if the fever persisted beyond a certain period I would take the medicine. But I did not take it, because within the specified period I was all right.

I have just now referred to the incident of my living on three grains of rice per day for four or

five months. That is an illustration of how creature comforts can be overcome by renunciation. I have not had that sort of renunciation which you understand by the term in its ordinary sense. For this body has lived with father, mother, husband, and all. This body has served the husband, so you may call it a wife. It has prepared dishes for all, so you may call it a cook. It has done all sorts of scrubbing and menial work, so you may call it a servant. But if you look at the thing from another standpoint you will realize that this body has served none but God. For when I served my father, mother, husband and others, I simply considered them as different manifestations of the Almighty and served them as such. When I sat down to prepare food I did so as if it were a ritual, for the food cooked was after all meant for God. Whatever I did, I did in a spirit of Divine service. Hence I was not quite worldly, though always engaged in household affairs. I had but one ideal, viz. to serve all as God, to do everything for the sake of God.

At that time I lived as one who had taken a vow of silence. I found enough time at my disposal even after the completion of all my household work. Usha lived near our house. She used to read out the Mahabharata at noon. One day I went to hear it. She handed over the book to me for reading. I took it in my hand but could not read ; because at that time God's Name always bubbled out of me as from a spring. Somehow it got itself tacked to my natural respiration. Hence

I found that any attempt to read the book only resulted in my suffocation. Moreover, you have some idea as to the range of my literary attainments. In order to read I had to spell through every word. When I attempted to read I found that I could not take in two syllables at a time. Suppose I was to pronounce 'ami'. I could pronounce 'a' all right, but when it was time to pronounce "mi" I found that I had cleanly forgotten the 'a' and the effacement was so complete that I could not trace its existence in me. In this condition no intelligent reading was possible. But when I sat down to spin, I found that it was no hindrance to repeating God's Name. Both could go on simultaneously. I have spun a good deal of yarn. When I was at Bajitpur I myself prepared a towel and, with the help of a weaver, a pair of *dhotis* with my hand-spun yarn.

At this stage a lady remarked : "Ma, once I have seen you singing and weeping."

*Mataji* : There is nothing uniform with this body. *Svabhāva* (*Nature*) takes Her unhampered course. The singing and weeping you mention are possible at a certain stage of *sāadhanā*. Suppose I sat down to sing. At that time my idea was that it was through God's Grace I was uttering His Name. As I went on repeating the Name, another idea took possession of me, and I thought : "Alas ! I am praying so fervently and for such a long time, yet God is not revealing Himself to me !" This sense of frustration created a pang in my heart, and at once tears would trickle down my cheeks.

These are, of course, stages of ignorance, for with the dawn of Knowledge prayers and *sādhanā* cease.

When the different stages of *sādhanā* were being manifested through this body, what a variety of experiences I then had ! Sometimes I used to hear distinctly : "Repeat this mantra". When I got the mantra a query rose in me : "Whose mantra is this ?" At once the reply came : "It is the mantra of Ganesh or Vishnu" or something like that. Again the query came from myself : "How dose he look ?" A form was revealed in no time. Every question was met by a prompt reply and there was immediate dissolution of all doubts and misgivings.

One day I distinctly got the command : "From to day you are not to bow down to anybody." I asked my invisible monitor : "Who are you ?" The reply came : "Your *Śakti*" (Power). I thought that there was a distinct *Śakti* residing in me and guiding me by issuing commands from time to time. Since all this happened at the stage of *sādhanā*, *Jñāna* (Knowledge) was being revealed in a piece-meal fashion. The integral knowledge which this body was possessed of from the very beginning was broken, as it were, into parts and there was something like a super-imposition of ignorance. At that time I was *mouni* (observing silence). This was also due to particular commands. The father of this body came to see me at that time. I could not make obeisance to him. Not that I refrained from doing it intentionally, but this body refused to do anything contrary to the commands it received

from time to time. When the father of this body saw that I was not doing my duty by him, he took it to heart. But as I was *mouni* at that time I could not explain the situation to him. He came to regard me with suspicion. He argued that if my various moods and experiences had a spiritual origin, there was no reason why I should be disrespectful to those to whom respect was due. This led him to consult different persons regarding my condition.

In the meantime *Śiva Rātri* (auspicious night for the worship of God Śiva) came. On such occasions it was customary with the father of this body to sit up the whole night and worship the God Śiva. Corresponding to the four quarters of the night he used to perform *pūjā* four times. Each *pūjā* was meant for the well-being of a particular individual. This time also he proceeded as usual with the *pūjā*, and I sat up with him to make arrangements for it. When after finishing *pūjā* three times during the first three quarters of the night, he proceeded to perform the *pūjā* for the fourth quarter for the benefit of this body, a curious thing happened. He found that as he was proceeding with the worship, this body was uttering aloud all the relevant mantras and prayers quite automatically. This surprised him very much. Though he said nothing, he could not help looking at me from time to time.

However, to proceed with the account of my *sādhana*. After some time I again heard the voice within myself which told me: "Whom do you

want to make obeisance to? You are everything." At once I realized that the Universe was all my own manifestation. Partial knowledge then gave place to the integral, and I found myself face to face with the ONE that appears as many. It was then that I understood why I had been forbidden for so long to bow down to anybody.

*Myself*: How long was the period intervening between these two stages?

*Mataji*: Quite long. But in the meantime various *vibhūtis* were being manifested through this body. These manifestations have again occurred in various ways: Sometimes they have been manifested in ignorance, e.g., I found that as soon as I had touched a particular patient he recovered in no time; but I did not know beforehand that he would be cured in that way. Sometimes the manifestation occurred with knowledge mixed up with ignorance, e.g., on seeing a patient I used to argue in this way: "I know from my past experience that my touch has a healing effect. If I touch this patient he may also get well." To verify this I touched him and found that he was cured immediately. Then again manifestations of *vibhūti* have taken place with full knowledge and consciousness on my part. Thus I knew for certain that I could cure a disease by a mere touch, and I touched in full confidence of success.

*Jiten Babu*: In what other ways have your *vibhūtis* been manifested? And how do they manifest themselves now?

*Mataji* : *Vibhūti*s have now become a part and parcel of *Svabhāva*.

*Jiten Babu* : I do not quite follow you.

*Mataji* : *Vibhūti* becoming a part of *Svabhāva* means that everything is now regulated by *Svabhāva* or the Supreme Self. Here there is no scope for the play of a limited self. This was so with this body from its very infancy. Such disclosures are not always made by this body. Since they are coming spontaneously now, I give them out. Let me tell you that what I am, I have been from my infancy. But when the different stages of *sādhana* were being manifested through this body there was something like a superimposition of *ajñāna* (ignorance). But what sort of *ajñāna* was that ? It was really *Jñāna* masquerading as *ajñāna*. Let me tell you a story relating to my childhood. In childhood when this body was at Vidyakut, a woman became pregnant, and her child was born when I was still there. I knew from the beginning that the child was not to live long. He came only to complete his cycle of births and deaths. However, the child became one year old. He was not very nice to look at. His complexion was jet black, but his body was very soft. That is why he was always seen in the arms of others, who all wanted to have the luxury of the touch. And the child was all smiles. When he was over a year and a few months old, his span of life came to an end ; and he became seriously ill. I went to see him on the day he was to die. On my way I took with me a hibiscus flower, but rubbed it so that the people might not



know what I had in my hand. I left the flower under the child's pillow. Those who were present there thought that I had left some '*nirmalya*', seeing that the child was near his end. I did all this under the urge of *Svabhāva*.

At the stage of *sāadhanā*, *vibhūti* first manifests itself as joy which comes from the recitation of God's Name. When people experience this, they think that they have got everything that *sāadhanā* can yield ; and their upward progress is thereby arrested. But he who keeps himself always on the move without being overwhelmed by such manifestations of joy, finds himself in possession of various miraculous powers. But those powers are not meant for display. They should be carefully kept under control. He alone can know his true Self, who keeps alive within him an insatiable thirst for the Divine without being contented with the possession of supernormal powers — powers which enable him to cure any disease by a mere touch of the hand or which lead to the instantaneous fulfilment of all his desires.

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*When thou art quite and silent, then thou  
art as God was before nature and creation.*

—Jacob Boehme.

# Matri Satsang in Vrindaban

## Can God be Realized without Suffering ?

*Samyam Mahavrata,*

*Nov. 23rd, 1969*

*Question:* In order to find God, is it necessary to inflict suffering on the body ?

*Mataji:* Under no circumstances is it justified to inflict suffering on the body. There is no need to make the body suffer.

*Question:* Can God be realized without suffering ?

*Mataji:* To realize God is a different matter. One has no right to make the body suffer under any conditions. Why not ? There is a reason for this. To whom does the body belong ? HE whose body it is, who has created the body, who has manifested in that shape, has given it to you that you may do service. The body is God's dwelling-place. Keep your body clean, keep it pure, keep it undefiled. This what you have to do. God resides in the body, it is His abode. Try to live in His presence, yearn for His revelation. You have no right to inflict suffering on the body. Why not ? Because everything belongs to God. God resides in the body. Regard the body as a temple of God. Everything is God's creation, nothing exists outside of Him. With form and without form, all is God. However, seen from a certain

position, there is a veil of ignorance, a screen that hides Him. In order to remove the screen you have to scrub the temple clean, purify it. The practise (*kriyā*) which will cleanse the body, that is your duty.

But the person who is addicted to sense enjoyment (which is poison — slow poison and provides him with a “return ticket”), so long as he is in that condition, it is like this : When he craves for the pleasures of the senses and does not get what he wants or the way he wants it so that he may remain engrossed in enjoying these experiences, he feels miserable. When someone yearns for the pleasures and comforts of this world and his desires are frustrated or not fulfilled in the manner he would have liked it, this is painful for him. What happens to the man who is bent on sense enjoyment ? It acts as slow poison : step by step it takes him towards death and he leaves with a return ticket to come back to this world. Why ? According to what he thinks at the time of death he is born again so as to fulfil his longings. Seen from this angle, indulgence in the pleasures of the senses may be likened to death by drinking poison : In small doses he has taken poison until he finally dies. Where death is, there the revelation of immortality is not ; and consequently one has to be born again. One obtains a new body in order to fulfil one’s desires for sense objects. One appears in a body, and thus embodied, what happens ? God has made certain laws : so long as you go on pursuing the objects of the senses

you can never be released from the wheel of birth and death.

But if you proceed in the other direction, if, having stilled with great patience and endurance the agitation of the senses, you take to the path of : "Who am I? From where have I come?" so as to remove the veil of ignorance, then the realization of your immortality will dawn. The problem of birth and death will disappear and death will die. Do you understand?

Therefore, in order to reveal your immortality, to bring to light that you are the offspring of the Immortal, that you are deathless in essence, you are practising *sādhana* and are all taking part in the *Samyam Vrata*. Why *samyam* (self-restraint)? Without leading a life of self-restraint the road to God-realization does not open out. When do egoism, passion, desires, which are your enemies, show their face? When your desire is thwarted, when you are obstructed in what you want to do, then these enemies come to the forefront, assert themselves. Even against your better judgement and will, they make their appearance. When this happens you feel remorseful and unhappy. Through aversions and dislikes also these enemies make their appearance. All this is but natural in the life of man, it is the usual thing with everyone.

For this reason, if the understanding dawns on the aspirant that the practice he does for the sake of God is spoiled by giving way to the promptings of these enemies, and he conceives the desire

to aspire after Supreme Knowledge (*Brahmavidyā*), what will be his endeavour? To lead a restrained, disciplined life. When he abstains from self-indulgence, what happens? People come and participate in the *Samyam Vrata* who are used to cater to the appetites of their senses, to behave as they feel like, to say what they please, to act according to their whims, to give full freedom to the ego.

Their habit has been to eat what they fancy, to put on the clothes they feel like wearing, to behave according to their own sweet will. They have become accustomed to this kind of life. On no account are they prepared to forgo their worldly comforts. Driven as they are by desires for comforts and enjoyment rather than aspiring after yoga, it is but natural that they should experience back-ache, pain in their legs, a burning sensation in their body, great restlessness of the mind. This is what one hears. Many have told this body (Ma), about these things.

You lack in practice, you are not used to meditate. Consequently, when you are trying to practise yoga, to realize that you are eternally united to Reality, that you are a yogi, joined indissolubly to God, that you are a supremely great *sādhaka*, the offspring of a Rishi, that Rishihood is within you — when your mind turns in that direction and you are attempting to sit still, then the habit that you have formed of doing what you please, will pull you and make you feel ill at ease. Note this carefully, this is what you called suffering when you

asked whether it is necessary to inflict suffering on the body in order to find God. You should remember that what seems painful to you is endured to find the Beloved.

Why do we experience pain and suffering, sorrow and trouble? Because we have not yet found the Beloved, Him who is the eternal fountain of all goodness and well-being, who is all-merciful and all-gracious. We are not experiencing Him as such. If those who are sitting here felt desperately eager for the bliss of God-realization, they would not feel what you call suffering, the sensation of physical discomfort or pain. To inflict suffering on the body is not right.

To sit down comfortably and indulge in easy, familiar talk will nourish one's personal desires, one's ego. Now discover for yourself where the suffering lies. If it were really irksome, you would never come and sit here. You come because you do aspire after God-realization, after the revelation of the one Supreme Self which is Ultimate Reality, of your true Being, the bliss of the Self, the Lord (*Swayam Bhagavān*), Divine Love, Supreme Delight — each according to his own particular approach. You long for His revelation, His touch, His vision, this is why you have taken recourse to *Samyam Vrata*. Now say, how is there suffering or hardship? And he who engages in *kriyā yoga* tries to become established in the one Self by the practice of his *kriyā*. Everyone aspires to God-realization along his own chosen path.

### The One appears in many shapes

*Mataji* (in reply to a question)\* : Narayan Swami said the other day : “So many people are sitting here together for collective meditation, each contemplating his own *Iṣṭa*, proceeding along his own line of approach, pursuing his own aim.” What he said was sensible and quite right from a certain point of view. You call the same person husband, father, son. He is one and the same person, not one thing more and the other less. The man who is a father is also a son, whether he is someone’s husband (*pati*) at that time or not. The Supreme Lord (*Parama Pati*) is certainly present within you, whether you call Him Krishna or Balgopal. In every single form is God, everywhere is He alone. Where is He not? The “not” is also He, there is nothing that is not He. How marvellous is God’s law! What has manifested in the shape of a question is also very lovely. That which occurs to the mind — Who is it that arises in the mind? There is none beside you. Whatever appears, in whatever form and to whom it appears, you alone ARE. You are the Beloved, you appear as Bliss. How as Bliss? You do not give pain or trouble to anyone, you are calm and tranquillity, call it God, call it Self — there is only One Self.

When you burn incense in the morning, its scent does not remain in one place, it spreads

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\* Narayan Swami had asked, “Since the *Śāstras* say *sādhana* should be practised by each person in solitude, why do we come here to practise together?”

through the entire atmosphere, its perfume reaches everyone, it fills the whole vicinity. You take the incense all round and also to the centre and it permeates everything. Similarly, God is present in all alike. Men and women, following each their own method, are sitting together in meditation. There is only one God. He responds exactly according to the way He is appealed to by every single person. Because He is the ONE and the *only* ONE. Just as a mother of several children tries to satisfy each of them by giving them whatever they need individually.

To come back to Narayan Swami's question : *Svayam Bhagavān* (God) is one, He is everything. Who appears in so many different shapes and forms? Who is within and without? HE and no other. Why have you gathered here, why have you united? It is God's play. He is playing with Himself, has manifested in this way. Just as it is said : Thou art father, mother, friend, master, son, everything art Thou. *Swami, Swayam* — the Self verily am I. In these words is also contained "*Sva-mayi*" — (The Self is all-pervading.)

You are His child, the son of the Immortal, Immortality. He comes to each one in precisely the form, the way that will take him to his ultimate good, that will open up his path. According to whatever method a person meditates, along what current or line, God will open up his path to perfection for him along that very line or current. One word can have infinite meanings. As you play so you hear the sound. According to your



question and the way you put it, you got the reply.

### How to attract God's grace

*Question :* By practising *sāadhanā* one cannot attain. Does it depend on God's Will, on His Grace ? Please explain how we can attract God's Grace !

*Mataji :* God's Grace is streaming down at all times like torrential rain. If you keep your vessel turned upside down,\* the grace will flow down the sides. Keep your vessel straight up and open and it will be filled. This is one aspect of the matter. And for those who proceed along the line of grace, how is it possible to be vouchsafed the vision of God without His Grace ? You say attainment does not come by effort. But the Lord is present right in front of you, you have only to look in His direction right from here, you have to advance towards Him. Truly, God (*Swayam Bhagavan*) is ever present. You come and go, but actually neither come nor go. The veil of ignorance is cast over you but God is ever present. He has left only this little bit of distance for you to traverse—this is called *kriyā*. He is ever present right here and everywhere. His revelation cannot come by any *kriyā* (spiritual practice). Why then have you taken to spiritual exercises ? Lives and lives you have spent trying to gratify your desires and longings.

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\* Mataji explained on other occasions that to keep one's vessel upside down means to be outward turned ; to keep it the right way up is to be inward turned, to keep one's attention on God.

If after wasting countless births in this manner, a person has the intelligence (*sad buddhi*) the good sense (*subuddhi*) to decide. "Let me get out of this endless round of birth and rebirth, let me not be born again", what does he or she do? He takes to serious *sādhana*. While the person who does otherwise suffers misery life after life due to his cravings and longings, his desires and passions.

There is only God and nothing else. Not to aspire to Him—this is the veil of ignorance. You should engage in the practice (*kriyā*) that is appropriate to your stage, that is within your line of approach. Who is disguised as *kriyā*? Who am I who is practising the *kriyā* in order to realize God? So long as this is not revealed, so long as the knots (*granthi*) that constitute the ego are not cut asunder, it is but natural that questions should arise.

*Question* : How can the knots of the ego be undone?

*Mataji* : By carrying out the Guru's instructions without arguing. That is not the place to use one's knowledge and intelligence. Here knowledge and intelligence will not do. They are useful up to a stage. They provide you with information. The *Sāstras* have been read, studied and committed to memory. One has acquired knowledge along a particular range. This is but the knowledge of ignorance. When even this knowledge leaves one, then only can Realization come. Therefore follow the Guru's instructions without arguing. As long as the reason of the individual is in power, how can the knots be undone?

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**Faith**

*Question :* How does unquestioning faith in the Guru come ?

*Mataji :* By faith. At first one has no faith (although to a few faith does come at once), so what is one to do ? One has to think for oneself, use one's own discrimination. I have heard you people say that according to tantric teaching, one should observe and study one's Guru for one year. Then only one takes initiation. Examine and test your Guru to the limit of your capacity. How can a pupil test his teacher ? You cannot test him as the professors test their disciples. All the same, do as much as you can by questioning and watching. Once you have accepted the Guru as your guide (just as there is only one husband),\* once the bond has been forged, it is for all times. You may go here and there, anywhere you please, stay in any place—but you cannot leave Him—provided He is a Sadguru.†

He teaches you by dealing you one blow after another. What he does is all for the best, for your ultimate Good. Sometimes a child does not study. By being slapped he is taught. There is a saying that a knock brings one to one's senses. A person who has no faith in his Guru will have to continue in this manner. However, a Sadguru will never lose hold of his disciple but keep him in his grip. Once the relationship has been established, it is

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\* Hindu marriage is indissoluble.

† *Sadguru* The perfect Guru who shows the way to the knowledge of Reality.

indissoluble. So long as faith has not come, read books of wisdom, repeat your mantra, be always engrossed in spiritual exercises. Try to remain pledged to such activity, whether you feel the inclination for it or not. To say, "I do not like it" or "I don't find it congenial", is not helpful. To be swayed by likes and dislikes means to remain enmeshed in worldliness. If you have the desire to realize God, endeavour to live according to the Guru's bidding. Do not relax your efforts until you are able to do so fully. Sustained effort brings about a miracle. By trying again and again, by incessantly thinking of God, what happens? The path finally opens out by itself. There is hope that such a state may supervene.

Having succeeded in reaching a state of faith where one is able to accept the Guru's injunctions fully, what happens then? That state of faith manifests if the Guru is one's real Guru. Our relationship with the world is born out of delusion, while the relationship with the Guru is of the Self (*ātmic*). Thus, to start with, one did not obey the Guru's instructions. By persistent practice, by acquiring the habit of it, by striving to improve oneself, by the desire for God-realization, one comes to repent of one's doubts and disobedience. Now the disciple cannot help carrying out the Guru's orders. Every word, every utterance of the Guru that comes to his notice — unless he puts it into practice he does not feel at ease. This is not the ease of the world. In such a situation he feels dejected, engulfed in a void, when he has been

unable to put into practice the Guru's orders. A stage ensues where, unless and until he has succeeded in carrying out the Guru's instructions, he cannot be at peace. He feels completely blank, it seems to him that there is nothing left for him until he has fully obeyed the Guru's bidding. He feels miserable for having failed to comply with the Guru's orders. And what does this misery bring about? The karma of disobedience is consumed by this suffering. Now a state will result when the aspirant will act exactly according to his Guru's instructions, will carry out to the letter every hint, and thereby his own direct path will open out by itself. In this everything is contained.

On the other hand there are certain states that do not let a man proceed or act in the direction. Due to *samskāras* (tendencies) accumulated and strengthened in many former lives, he is made to suffer. He feels the impulse to remain in the world, to continue in the round of birth and rebirth. "What to do," he says, "I am unable to accept the Guru's advice. If I can't achieve in this life, what of it? Let it take another ten or twenty births." He is so deeply involved that he wants to continue with his worldly pursuits.

Here something has to be made clear. There is the one God but there is also *māyā* (delusion) which keeps man entangled so that he does not want to leave delusion. "Let me be born again!" He wants to remain in the world. For instance, people like to live with their families, it gives them extreme happiness. "If I am to marry next life, I

want a husband exactly like my present husband, a son just like my present son." Several people have talked to this body in this strain.

But what happens by God's inexplicable grace? Their minds are weaned away from this kind of thing. Slowly and gradually God is brought to their memory—it is His nature to cause this. They start repeating His name, contemplating Him, doing japa, they seek satsang, read religious books—in fact become engrossed in spiritual pursuits. Just as when a tree is well watered a new shoot grows. Then the state that should come about, namely to aspire after the Supreme, is achieved. And from there the path to complete fulfilment opens up.

People's conditioning has become so powerful, it brings them nothing but sorrow. They have no energy left to tread the path that leads away from misery to final beatitude. Being without strength, what can they do? They say, "We are all right where we are!" This is what happens by the force of tendencies and habits piled up in former lives.

Yet man's duty is to go forward, to tread the spiritual path, to endeavour to find himself, to know himself. This is so at all times and for every man and woman. To be born in a human body is a great boon, difficult to obtain. Who can tell at what auspicious moment, due to the power acquired in some past life, the time will be ripe for full revelation, when everything will become possible. By persistent digging, water is finally touched, by

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prolonged rubbing fire flares up. Having obtained a human body one must not kill the *Ātmā*. The path that leads to the Realization of the Self, which is free from all danger, must open out.

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## Only God I Saw

Kuhi of Shiraz

In the market, in the cloister—only God I saw.  
In the valley, on the mountain—only God I saw.  
Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation,  
In favour or in fortune—only God I saw.  
In prayer and fasting, in praise and contemplation,  
In the religion of the prophet—only God I saw.  
Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance,  
Qualities nor causes—only God I saw.  
I opened my eyes, and by the light of  
His face around me,  
In all the eye discovered—only God I saw.  
Like a candle I was melting in this fire ;  
Amidst the flames out flashing—only God I saw.  
I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,  
And lo ! I was the All-Living—only God I saw.

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Man should address all his appeals and petitions to God and pray to Him regularly. The One who creates, preserves and destroys—in Him is everything indeed. If anything happens in one's worldly life that causes distress and anguish, one should endeavour to cleave to God's Name by all possible devices and cry at His feet. There can be peace only when God Himself, the fountain of peace, who is the end of everything, has been enthroned in one's heart.

Only by taking refuge in Him can sorrow be removed. The troubles and difficulties one encounters as the fruit of one's own actions are but the grace of God. If one can accept them as such, one will progress towards one's real welfare.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# Greetings from a European\*

Richard Lannoy (England)

Some years ago I purchased a small map of India and drew a big green line over a route I planned one day to take. On the map I underlined Banaras heavily, because I had always wanted to visit the Sacred City. But although a small inner voice told me that I might find there something remarkable, little did I dream of ever receiving such a deep experience as was eventually given me when I stayed there for some months. That green line drawn at a moment when I never seriously considered the actual possibility of visiting India was perhaps a mark of fate; the first intimation of an inevitable event, of which, at the time, I could have little understanding.

But if it was in my fate to come to Banaras (in these days of easy travelling not so very difficult), it was with astonished wonder that I looked upon Mataji when I first saw Her. That someone so great, so full of love, someone with such a power to inspire all those around Her, should really exist filled me with amazement.

Reading of Ramakrishna or Ramana Maharshi may convince one intellectually of their greatness, but my own fumbling conception of Mata Anandamayī is but a reminder of how extraordinarily

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\* Reprinted from *Ānanda Vārtā*, Vol. 2/1, May 1954.

ignorant I am of real spiritual greatness. We in the west have a very inadequate conception of the richness of the Hindu religion, and due to the trend of our civilization during the last few centuries we have lost the grace to live as Hindus can, near to God, with the inspiration of a living faith. Therefore it is very difficult for us to have any sensible idea of religion in India.

When, therefore, one has the supreme good fortune to meet Mataji who must surely stand at the very pinnacle of spiritual greatness, one receives that unique blessing which only direct contact can give, which is at once a revelation and so different from any previous experience. Mataji gives without limit, but never beyond the individual's capacity; it is all kindness which makes personal problems vanish. However it is when one tries to write about Mataji that one balks at the difficulties. As a westerner I feel this very strongly because for most of us any spiritual journey is a journey without maps; there are no green lines to help us, none of the guidance, or at least very little to which the Indian may have recourse in the *Śāstras*. To the Indian many elementary and a number of difficult problems are within his immediate command, his traditions come to his aid where we have either discarded or forgotten ours. Therefore I may perhaps be forgiven if I flounder with my words, because I have no book-learning in the Scriptures with which to express myself with accuracy.

It is precisely in this matter that Ma Anandamayī has such understanding. Anyone from any

part of the world may come to Her and receive guidance which no scholarship can ever hope to give. For my own part it has been such a deep experience to be near Mataji because She is so clear and direct. I have been able to receive Her blessing and guidance in spite of my ignorance. The customs of another culture may prevent one from reaching any degree of understanding without having lived there for a prolonged period of time, and it is often held by Europeans that India is mysterious, inscrutable, incomprehensible and one may as well give up the hope of receiving serious spiritual experience there. The correct word for Mataji's conclusive ability to prove this notion entirely unfounded is hard to find, so I will call it Genius.

Not only for Indians, but for people from all countries, all walks of life, from every kind of society, people of great intellectual brilliance, people of worldly eminence or the most humble, it is Mataji's Genius to be able to inspire them with the love of God, to put them again in their own true centre. I had the good fortune to stay near Mataji in Her Banaras and Vindhyachal Ashrams for nearly a month and I was astonished to see so many different kinds of people visiting Her and to see their faces become radiant and transformed by Her Presence. If the path of *sādhana* be hard to live up to, something has been illuminated in the hearts of those who visit Her, which cannot be obliterated by time. Such a great love She gives to all that at once the difficulties of sincere aspiration become simplified.

In the west the current trend of thought is to search for some new formulation of ideas which can stand up to the monstrous conditions of the present age. Nuclear physics, catastrophic wars and terrible human suffering have given the world problems of vast proportions which the institutionalized religion of Christianity has so far failed to encompass. Something new, or newness, therefore has become almost a cult in the west and nine out of ten persons would probably also say that Indian philosophy or Indian mysticism, great though it may be, is old—that what is wanted is something new.

Mataji makes only too clear the fallacy of this search for the new. With Her the new is entirely irrelevant. If anything is new it is surely Her own unique way of helping you to realize instantly, at once and for all time, how to kindle the inner flame. Her Genius suddenly lights you up with happiness, inner and abiding happiness, the vitality of Joy, and shows you that this can never come from cinemas or a fat bank balance, but from within. In this state of happiness She gently guides you to the point where you can know without fear that this Joy comes from God. Many people balk at the word 'God' and profess atheism or agnosticism, but that which one can receive from Her has nothing to do with any 'ism'.

As a photographer certain things have struck me as remarkable and my work changed considerably when I was taking photographs in the Ashram. Always seeking to catch Mataji's natural expression

without any posing, I found Her mobility too fast to render adequately, Her beautiful movements so quick that it was nearly impossible to photograph them. Too many were taken in moments of impetuous excitement. But by being completely quiet there was always a moment She gave my camera and all I had to do was to close the shutter with it safely inside on the film.

Mataji is constantly in movement, which is Her special way of filling everyone with vitality, with laughter and joy, a sparkling quality which has nothing to do with the hectic rush in which we usually live, but a movement which can only be appreciated in quietness. This playfulness which is so entrancing and which animates and makes so expressive every activity in Her Ashrams is a very unusual quality, so different from the stillness with which we usually associate sages. But because this mobility constantly transforms the ordinary into the unique, we can glimpse the way in which all illusory charms of the world nevertheless contain an inner significance which our blunted sensibilities fail to appreciate. With what deft and astonishing charm She brings everything alive and unafraid.

To a westerner accustomed to the diversity and excitements of our fast-moving life, the serenity of the spiritual life is not easy to appreciate, still less to accept, because we are habitually restless. Therefore this seemingly endless play of movement, like the play of light on water, which I associate with Mataji, helped me first by bewitching me with Her grace and the beauty of Her every movement.

This eventually helped me to become quiet and see that such beauty can only proceed from absolute serenity. It can only be understood by oneself as the abiding peace when some small iota of quietness within oneself can be responsive to it.

At the Banaras and Vindhyachal Ashrams there is always beauty in the person of Mata Anandamayi and beauty in everything associated with Her. Everything is animated by Her golden touch. This is not a sentimental beauty but something powerful which comes only from greatness. It can be as gentle as the light at sunrise or it can be of a magnitude expressed by the German poet Rilke in his Elegy :

“Beauty is nothing but the beginning of Terror we're still just able to bear. And why we adore it so is because it serenely disdains to destroy us.”

Worldly life with its splendours and miseries makes us rely on pleasurable distractions. Two problems seem to occur to the novice in the contemplative life : firstly the beauty that may be so abundant in a place of retirement that it may cause distraction ; secondly the fear of isolation, of being cut off or pent up in a secluded spot. I found, when in the Ashram, that there was no alarming feeling of monasticism or unfamiliar seclusion from the robust world, but on the contrary here was total experience, the full vigour of life, enhanced by Mataji's inspiration, difficult to sustain and yet full of Her love.

I have done many jobs, travelled in many different countries, but I found that here, to derive

full benefit from this experience, I must summon up every aspect of my experience in order to respond fully. Living in the Ashram one does not feel guilty of the trivialities of one's life, for it is too positive an atmosphere : but one's human relationships, one's work, one's inner problems receive a new impetus and furthermore a focus.

The diversity and richness of the blessing given by contact with Mataji does not permit one to become dulled to a sluggish pseudo-serenity, does not make one recoil from life nor to be led away into a labyrinth of enjoyment of the beauty around one, but Her love, Her transmission of joy thrills one until one catches a glimpse of the way of love, the way to see God in all things. This harmony of life is total, not unreal ; coming away from the Ashram one may feel the pang of leaving, but one does not receive the shock of a sudden painful actuality, for actuality abides in the Ashram more powerfully than in many a street. Mataji's love is pervasive too, captures our hearts and goes with us from the Ashram, stretches beyond personal existence to inspire more than can be counted in terms of numbers and distance. So many people today are afraid to see what is meant by the Love of God. The two words have lost much of their original force ; but what they mean and what that can do for us, Mataji at once shows by Her unique Genius, by the inspiration of Her presence.

Words cannot very effectively express our feelings on this occasion of Her birthday, when many will be marking the event from the depths of their

hearts. In other parts of the world too, although they could not show any conscious reason for rejoicing, there are many people without the opportunity to see Mataji, who would wish to join with those in India. In some of those distant countries until now concerned with the preoccupations of materialism, there are many who have grown weary of the negation which that implies, and could I but carry invisibly some of this feeling of theirs within these words of mine, then this small tribute would not have been in vain.

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## Announcement

The **Calcutta Zonal office of Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society and its Publications Division** have been already shifted to its new premises at **Matri-Mandir—57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700 019** and therefore all correspondences and transactions should now be made to the new address only viz. at 57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700 019 (Phone : 47-1993).

*By Order*

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# Mother's Cure for Suffering

Elwood Decker (U.S.A.)

Someone asked Mother, "If I do japa, will it be destroyed by my bad actions?" Mother replied, "There is such great strength in the Divine Name that you will not be able to do so many bad actions. Try it and see. When you take His Name sincerely you will spontaneously refrain from wrong actions. It is not necessary to suffer. The sure cure is to lovingly take the Lord's Name. Fill your heart with it and you will be happy. The Holy Name is always Pure. You can repeat it at any time or place. Accept the fruit before you grow the tree. Do not think that the All-Powerful God is separate from you. He is your permanent, One-And-Only, Family Member. You are free to choose the Name you prefer. There cannot be exactly the same rule for everybody, but anyone can spare fifteen minutes a day for God. The human form was created for realizing God. People of all castes and religions could be effectively attracted to God, and become One with God by simply setting aside fifteen minutes a day for God alone. Though this is only a short time, it will have a powerful effect.

First of all decide the time you can give without having to do other work. Keep this time strictly for sitting silent in meditation or doing japa. This is the only rule you have to observe. After some time you will experience the miracle of japa coming

about spontaneously. Consider how the seasons keep their times, also the sunrise and sunset. Even birds and animals act by time. The duty of man is to know God. Time has its own power. You should learn how to use it wisely. Any time is good. Give the fifteen minutes to God every day without fail, and you will achieve."

This is all very simple, so simple that a child could easily do it with a little practice. The implications are profound. The devotee is trusted to have originality as well as faith, sincerity, love, loyalty, concentration, and a rare willingness to be simple...to become blissfully happy for no other reason than God may have for being Bliss. Here there is not the slightest concern for nationality, style of clothes, food, or dwelling place. The only status considered worthy of mention is the human status, created for realizing God. No religion is preferred or denied ; no unique places needed such as a church, temple, mosque, synagogue, or zendo. No regular dues, special donations, or percentage to support a mediating official other than one's own God-given power of choice. No ritual, no juggling of elements, no paper to sign, no vote. Simply give fifteen minutes of every day at the same time to God.

This is the mind-simplifying advice of our Mother. Take it and you will discover it to be the sharp sword of a merciful Goddess, slashing through the cumbersome complications of ignorant resistance to Divine REALITY.

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# The Contemporaries of Sri Krishna Chaitanya and Their Successors

R. K. Banerjee

## Preface

This year, the 500th birthday of Mahaprabhu Sri Krishna Chaitanya is being celebrated. This series of articles is dedicated to His hallowed memory.

The first one deals with the founding of the famous temple at Kalna in Burdwan district, on the way to Navadvip by road from Calcutta, which contains the only full size images of Sri Nityananda and Sri Gouranga that were fashioned in their lifetime and are said to be lifelike.

The last but one Chief-Goswami, engaged in worshipping the Deities hereditarily was the late Ajit Goswami (Mukherji), who was Bhavani's\* first cousin. He has left behind a booklet compiled from the authentic records of the temple from its inception, which forms the basis of this article. Very unfortunately his son, who was ably following in his father's footsteps, is also no more.

## 1. The Goswamis of Sri Mahaprabhu Temple, Kalna

All leading adherents of the Gaudiya-Vaishnava Samaj (combined greater Bengal) have always main-

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\* Bhavani is the wife of R. K. Banerjee, the author of this article.

tained that Sri Krishna, in order to repay in part the debt he owed to Sri Radha for her unequalled *Prema* (love) in the Dvāpara Yuga, resolved to be born again in human form as Gouranga in Kali Yuga at Navadvip in West Bengal, in 1486 A. D. on the evening of Holi. He combined the complexion of Sri Radha with her intense constant love for Sri Krishna. Although known as Nimai or Gouranga in his earlier years, he was after his initiation into *samnyāsa* called Sri Krishna Chaitanya, which means "he who has the consciousness of Krishna."

He incarnated in Navadvip, not only by Himself but with all his *Brajadhām*\* associates, as the 64 Mahantas, 12 Gopalas, 8 Kavirajas† and the 6 main Goswamis: Savatena, Rupa, Raghunath Bhatt, Jiva, Gopal Bhatt and Raghunath Das. Each of them in their own right became a precursor of the Vaishnava Renaissance, which swept from Bengal into Vrindaban after Chaitanya. They were instrumental in propagating Chaitanya's religion of intense love for Sri Krishna and Radhā after his early departure from earthly life. Balaram (Sri Krishna's brother), reincarnated as Sri Nityananda, who lived long after Chaitanya's departure and married to produce the first generation of Goswamis to carry on Sri Chaitanya's tradition.

One of Sri Krishna's chief shepherd boy comrades in Vrindaban had been Subal Sakha, who

\* *Brajadhām* The countryside round Mathura & Vrindaban where Sri Krishna lived among cowherds.

† *Kaviraja* Learned in Ayurvedic medicine.

was reborn as a contemporary of Gouranga, as Gouridas Pandit. It was he who founded the famous Mahaprabhu Temple at Kalna during the life time of his adored Chaitanya and Nityananda. Gouridas's ancestral home was in the village of Shaligram in West Bengal. From childhood he always contemplated Sri Krishna and was eager to find out how to serve his Beloved most effectively. Soon the way was pointed out to him.

By this time Sri Gouranga had swept Navadvip and its surroundings with the flood of his kirtans and his great love for Sri Krishna. Gouridas felt an intense longing to join in the movement. With this object in view, he took his elder brother's permission and migrated to Ambika-Kalna in District Burdwan, at that time on the bank of the Ganga. Ambika-Kalna was already famous for the worship of Goddess Durga (Ambika) but the worship of Sri Krishna was as yet unknown there. Gouridas selected a quiet spot under an old tamarind-tree to build his hut and to spend his time in worshipping his *Iṣṭa*.

After being thus occupied for some time, Gouridas one day beheld a wonderful tall human being coming towards him from the banks of the Ganga, with an oar across his shoulders. When this God-like form drew near, Gouridas at once wondered if this was his beloved *Iṣṭa* approaching him, because the brilliant radiance surrounding him could not have emanated from any ordinary human being. As he was wondering stupefied Sri Gouranga drew near and said, "Pandit, I have come from Santipur

via Harimati, where I crossed the Ganga by rowing a boat with this oar. I now hand over this oar to you, so that you may use it to take other human beings across the river of life.”

Gouridas fell at His feet, but Gouranga held him up, embraced him and instilled power and strength into his very being for his dedicated cause.

In due course Sri Chaitanya took Gouridas along with him to Sri Dhāma Navadvip, where he participated daily in the *līlās* being performed there. Knowing Gouridas as his original Subal Sakha, Sri Gouranga utilized his services to the full in relieving Braja *līlās* during his life at Nadia.

Before Gouridas's departure for Kalna Sri Gouranga presented to him a copy of the Bhagavad Gītā, written with his own hand, which Gouridas reverently brought back to Kalna, and from which he read daily as part of his devotional duties.

Historical relics, such as the oar mentioned above, the Gītā and the sandals of Sri Gouranga are still preserved carefully in the Kalna Mahāprabhu Temple. Furthermore, the tamarind-tree and the stone seat of Gouridas below it, can even today be seen at Kalna by all pilgrims.

Gouridas thus spent day after day in divine ecstasy at Kalna in the worship of his *Iṣṭa* Nitai and Gour and reading and expounding from the Gītā presented to him by Sri Gouranga. But when he heard rumours of the impending taking of the vows of *sāṁnyāsa* by Sri Gouranga, and of his unpremeditated visit to Santipur where Nityananda had led Him instead of taking Him to Vrindaban,

then Gouridas's emotions under-went a violent change and he began to harbour a deep hatred for *sannyāsa*. He mistakenly interpreted it as Sri Chaitanya's longing to fulfil His private ambition rather than look after the welfare of His now considerable flock of devotees. This apparent spurning of his great love for Sri Chaitanya gradually filled him with anger and anguish.

Not for long could the Lord remain indifferent to this deep hurt being nurtured by His beloved devotee. So Nityananda and Gouranga went along to Kalna in person to give darshan to Gouridas whose joy knew no bounds. He started laughing and crying and dancing in ecstasy and then fell at the feet of his two *Prabhus* (Lords), demanding that they should never leave his abode to depart to Nilachal (Puri). He urgently beseeched them, assuring them that he could not continue to live if they forsook him at this stage.

Sri Chaitanya replied to him, saying : "Pandit, how can you imagine that after embracing *sannyāsa* I could possibly live in the abode of a householder ? Here is a simple method of solving your problem. Construct exact images of our two selves, instal them at Kalna, and worship them to your heart's content." In order to convince his disciple and rid him of all doubts and uncertainties, Sri Chaitanya went on to advise him to procure neem wood from a certain tree in Navadvip from which the statues of Nityananda and Himself could be modelled. So at last reassured to some extent, Gouridas travelled to Navadvip and got wood

from the neem-tree under which Sri Chaitanya was born.

It is not known for certain who exactly was the sculptor, but there is a verse in contemporary Vaishnava literature to the effect that the artisan was mainly a tool in the hands of Sri Chaitanya, so that his fingers moved according to the dictates of the Lord. Elsewhere it is written that Gouridas himself was the artisan. From the same text it is known that Sri Advaita was personally responsible for the installation of the two Deities in the temple. From then onwards to this day the annual birthday celebrations of Sri Chaitanya and Nityananda at Kalna temple are entrusted to the successors of Sri Advaita. These records were compiled by a servant disciple of Sri Advaita, called Ishan Nagar, and he published his book as "Sri Advaita Prakash" in the Saka year 1491.

After the installation ceremonies were completed, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Nityananda wished to depart from Kalna, so they took their leave from Gouridas and started on their journey.

Immediately thereafter Gouridas, in order to test his Lords, spoke to the two Deities who remained silent. This was a severe blow to the mind of Gouridas. The two *Prabhus* (Lords) had not yet crossed the Ganga, so Gouridas ran after them, crying out loudly to make them stop. The omniscient Lords at once returned to Gouridas and said laughingly, "Well, Pandit, what do you want now?" Gouridas shouted: "I do not want these images. What can I do with them if they



cannot talk and converse with me ? It is you two who must remain here !”

The Lords smiled and replied : “Oh, is that all ? If you will be satisfied with us, here we are, remaining with you !” Immediately on saying these words, the two Lords stood immobile in the veranda of the temple, while the two installed images got down from their pedestals and started to walk away.

Gouridas realized his problem had merely become more complicated. He endeavoured to attain his objective by trying different combinations of Murtis, but he came to see that whomever he wanted to keep were being turned into images, while the other two would walk away. At last Gouridas fell at the feet of his *Iṣṭas* who clasped him to their bosoms, and smilingly said : “Pandit, you have now realized that there is no essential difference between ourselves and the images. You yourself cannot tell the difference. Furthermore we promise you that as long as you are alive, we shall regularly perform actual *līlās* with you in person here. We shall always have our midday *bhoga*\* which you offer to us. We shall not go elsewhere, but if any ardent devotee were to worship us continuously for two hours or more, we may go away to him.”

On receiving this solemn promise from the two Lords, Gouridas became reassured, and in order to cement the bōnd, he cooked and offered *bhoga* to all four Murtis simultaneously. Afterwards two images remained in the temple, and the other two departed on their way to Nilachal.

\* *Bhoga* food offering to Deities.

It will be appreciated that at the time of disappearance of Sri Chaitanya at Nilachal, there were no other images of the two Lords in existence anywhere else and even the two at Kalna were as they appeared in Nadia *līlā*, not as *saṁnyāsis*.

In fear of the Lord's promise to fulfil the intense prayer of any devotee worshipping Him continuously, by going away to him, Gouridas used to keep closed the temple doors leading to the darshan of the two images.

It was only at the subsequent intervention of Sri Sachi Mātā who was beseeched by hosts of devotees to intervene in this matter, that Gouridas later agreed to open the temple doors for short periods at intervals. (This kind of "*Jhanki darshan*" is also prevalent in Sri Banki Bihari's temple at Vrindaban for precisely the same reason.)

Gaudiya Vaishnavas as a rule like to worship Sri Chaitanya and Sri Nityananda as they appeared in Navadvip, and not as *Samnyāsis*. But there is one image of Sri Chaitanya in the garb of a *saṁnyāsi* in the Howrah Nader Nimai Samaj, and this was fashioned on the inspired advice of Sri Ramdas Babaji Maharaj, the great kirtania saint.

And so, for days on end, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Nityananda continued to enact their *līlā* between *Iṣṭā* and devotee at the precincts of the Kalna Mahaprabhu temple and Gouridas passed his days in an ecstasy of worship, drowned in love and devotion.

One day, Sri Chaitanya appeared before Gouridas and said: "Pandit, you have been drinking so deeply of this nectar of continuous bliss that

you have forgotten your past. Don't you know that you were my old companion—Subal of Braja līlā days? Have you forgotten how we used to drive our cows and calves along the banks of the Jamuna?" Saying this the Lord appeared in front of Gouridas in the guise of a shepherd boy. The pandit lost himself for a while on perceiving this vision. When he had recovered he found his Lord standing as usual on his pedestal.

Another day, when Gouridas offered his customary *bhoga* consisting of several dishes, the Deities remained without partaking of anything. Gouridas was deeply hurt and decided to fast as well since his Lords would not accept any food. Under such circumstances, how long could the Lords remain silent? So Sri Chaitanya laughed and said: "Pandit, you should not prepare such a variety of dishes for us, we shall be quite satisfied with simple food." Gouridas replied: "Very well, I shall cook fewer preparations." Thus he decided to offer only rice and one vegetable in future. The next day he cooked several preparations of the same type of vegetable. The Lords exclaimed: "Pandit, is this your single dish? It pains us to see you working so hard, this is why we asked you to cook less. Very well, we give you full freedom to offer us whatever you wish in future."

The next day the Lords praised the single vegetable dish he had prepared for them and declared they had never before had such a tasty meal. From then onwards, this very same vegetable dish is always included in the *bhoga* of the temple at Kalna.

Gouridas thus passed his days in undisturbed bliss and rapture. One day, feeling his age approaching, he went on a visit to Prabhupad Srila Gadadhar Pandit, who was overjoyed to behold Gouridas. After exchanging mutual confidences concerning Gour līlā, Sri Gadadhar asked the Pandit the reason for his visit. Gouridas replied that due to his old age he was no longer able to do justice to the service of his Lords and so he had come to request the services of Sri Gadadhara's nephew Hriday for this purpose. Prabhupad Sri Gadadhara at once understood everything, and calling Hriday, he placed his nephew unhesitatingly into the hands and under the care of Gouridas. Full of joy Gouridas brought Hridayananda back with him to Kalna and started teaching him all the *Sāstras* from his young age.

Hridayananda had been born with a sense of great devotion and his devotional love increased and was intensified as time went on. In due course Gouridas, realizing that his tuition had been completed, himself initiated Hridayananda with full rites and asked him to take over the worship of his adored Nitai and Chaitanya. To Hridayananda also the Lords were dearer than his own life and he devoted all his physical and mental capacities to the worship of the temple Deities.

So Gouridas, seeing that his choice of a successor had been correct, he felt deeply relieved and confidently turned more intensely to his own *sādhanā* without fear of interruption.

(To be continued)

# The End of Religion

Sister Brigitte

*Christa Prema Ashram, Sivaji Nagar, Pune*

Jesus did not think of himself as founding a new religion : rather he thought his mission was to bring out the true meaning of the religion of his people. Judaism, like Sanatana Dharma, was not so much a religion as a traditional way of life. I am using the word 'religion' in the sense of a set of beliefs together with ritual and rules of conduct. Everyone born a Jew belonged to this community, though not all observed all the practices. Judaism was and is a deeply moral religion : not knowledge of God (gñān) but doing God's will was the essence of Judaism. All around the Mediterranean seaboard men admired this moral tone and the earnestness with which it was practised, but few joined, as the demands were too great. A century or two before Jesus the Law (roughly equivalent to Dharma) was expressed in a large number of written and oral laws covering the entire life of the Jew. Jews divided mankind into Jews and pagans or gentiles (a word which means 'the nations'). Non-Jews were regarded as unclean, sinners, and the Law forbade any contact with them. Other laws governed clean and unclean foods, ritual ablutions, alms, observance of the Sabbath etc. Becoming a Jew, therefore, meant an entire change

of life and culture and resultant separation from one's own people.

Jesus attacked this legalistic attitude to life. Like every Jew he accepted the uniqueness of God : "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." To which was often added : "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."\* We can find no fault with this. But who exactly is my neighbour ? This was the question a certain Jewish pandit asked of Jesus, and he answered by telling a famous parable in which he says that my neighbour may belong to a despised caste, may be someone I consider unclean and treat with contempt. In this parable it was just such a man who came to the rescue of a Jewish traveller who had been attacked by dacoits and left for dead, whereas to Jewish travellers, professionally 'religious' men, had walked past, for to touch a dead body would make them unclean. The irony, so often present in the teaching of great Masters, is that the Jewish travellers were neglecting a universal human instinct to help those in trouble for the sake of keeping a rule.†

This illustrates one meaning of the title of this article : Jesus as "the End of Religion." Rules have their place in guiding man's conduct, and from time to time have served a definite purpose for the good of mankind. But rules are for children and

\* Bible : Deuteronomy 6 : 6 ; Levitus 19 : 18

† ,, Luke 10 : 29-37

are meant to be outgrown. The adult has the "law written in his heart" and will know what to do in any circumstance because his heart will tell him. Evidently this is an ideal state: many never reach this adulthood, this spiritual maturity. They continue to need rules, set prayers, hours, days, places, which 'bring them close to God'. This being admitted, it does not alter the fact that men have the capacity to grow into maturity, into the perfection of their nature, where they know the will of God in any situation and do it. To force laws and observances onto people who have outgrown the need for them is to prevent their growth into spiritual maturity, and this is a tragedy, both for the individual and for mankind as a whole. This growth can co-exist with moral failings or sin, for sin is not the breaking of a law but failure to do the known will of God. In fact men and women sin frequently and repent, and grow in wisdom through their falls. Sin does not prevent men from knowing God and reflecting him in their lives, though while sin exists the reflexion will be imperfect, as it were in a dusty mirror. Nor is it necessary to belong to a given religion and to 'believe in God' in order to grow into one's own perfection. Integrity, incorruptibility, unselfish love, are to be found both within and without the religious context, as are caring, compassion and transparent goodness.

It must be admitted that the followers of Jesus failed to understand his message or to live up to his insights. They became as exclusive and law-

ridden as any other religion, and many unlovely things were done in the name of Jesus. But always the truth was there, contained in the recorded words of Jesus, hidden in the scriptures and understood by those "who had eyes to see and ears to hear".

Once we have reached that deep inner certainty of how to act in any situation and to trust our inner light, we have found our true freedom which is our birthright as human beings. Jesus, by the way he lived his life and faced his death, is the example for his followers of a truly free, a 'liberated' man : He was friendly and approachable, gentle without being weak, strong without being arrogant ; when he was falsely accused he did not need to justify himself ; he met anger, hatred and hostility with equanimity. He accused the religious and political leaders of his time of hypocrisy, love of money and of power, knowing they would never forgive him. When death (in a peculiarly painful and degrading form) became inevitable, he faced it with his habitual courage, even comforting those who wept for him. One is forcibly reminded of Lord Krishna's answer to Arjuna's question "How is the man of serene wisdom (*stithaprajña*) ?" at the end of chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita.

Wherever men, women or children show these characteristics we know that God is at work impressing his image, until everything else falls away, being transitory. Religion has fulfilled its work by bringing the person to the state of surrender. According to Patanjali too, *tapah*, *svādhyāya* and *īshvarapraṇidhāna* stand at the beginning of the



path, followed by the 'limbs of Yoga', ending with *Samādhi*. *Samādhi* is not the end, it is the beginning of the work of God on the person, until all opposition ceases : a co-operation between God and man. "We are God's fellow-workers" exclaims one biblical writer.\* We may still speak of God and man, but these are Not-Two. "I and the Father are one" said Jesus of his relationship with God,† though in practice the I-Thou relationship of the Bhakti path is more usual.

God and man are totally interior to one another. That this was the essence of Jesus' teaching, and reserved for the few who had the capacity to understand it, is clear from the time and place when it was given : the night before his death in a very private place. I will quote just one striking passage :

If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, the Sprit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him ; but you know him because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans ; I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see me ; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me ; anyone who

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\* Corinthians 3 : 9 † John 10 : 13

loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.\*

Asked whether God was to be worshipped in Jerusalem or Samaria (a burning question at the time), Jesus replied : “You will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem—but the hour will come—in fact it is here already—when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. That is the kind of worshippers the Father wants.†

The religious systems of the world have tried to find answers for the fundamental questions of life : how did it all begin ? Is there a purpose to it all ? God or no-God ? Why do men suffer—what happens when men die ? The different answers men have given to these problems have given rise to violence and persecution. But all these belong to the relative, the transient, the imperfect. Increasingly in this 20th Century people are uncomfortable about the conflicting answers and feel there must be a unity somewhere. ‘Religious’ people may reject such reflections, yet they are pointers towards an age when religious differences will no longer matter, when they are seen as part of the growing-into-maturity process of mankind. What will remain is mankind’s longing for union with the One, for Realisation, Mokḥsha, the Kingdom of God, Nirvana, or however it is expressed. This is the second and more profound meaning of “the End of Religion”, i.e. its true purpose. The wisdom of the wise men of old points in this direc-

\* John 14 : 15-21

† John 4 : 21-24

tion. The parallelism of the following questions is striking : the falling away of sacrifice and temple, which belong to the transient, and the presence of the true light :

Unsafe are the boats of sacrifice to go to the farthest shore ; unsafe are the eighteen books where the lower actions are explained. The unwise who practise them as the highest go to old age and death again.

He who knows all and sees all and whose glory the universe shows, dwells as the Spirit of the divine city of Brahman in the region of the human heart. There the wise find him as joy and light and life eternal. There the sun shines not neither the moon nor the stars, much less earthly fire. From this light all these give light, and his radiance illumines all creation.\*

The city had all the radiant glory of God and glittered like some precious jewel of crystal-clear brightness....I saw there was no temple in the city since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were themselves the temple, and the city did not need the sun or the moon for light, since it was lit by the radiant glory of God and the Lamb was a lighted torch for it. The nations will live by its light and the kings of the earth will bring it their treasures. The gates of it will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.†

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\* Mundaka Upanishad I, 2 : 7 ; II, 2 : 7

† Revelation 21 : 11, 22, 26 ; 22 : 3

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Whether it pleases you or not you will have to make the Eternal your constant companion : just like a remedy that has got to be taken. Without loving God you will not get anywhere. Remember this at all times.

What this body always says is : Become a pilgrim on the path of immortality. Shun the road that leads to death ; tread the path of immortality. Bring to light that you are imperishable, immortal.

Become drinkers of nectar, all of you—drinkers of the wine of immortality. Tread the path of immortality, where no death exists and no disease.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

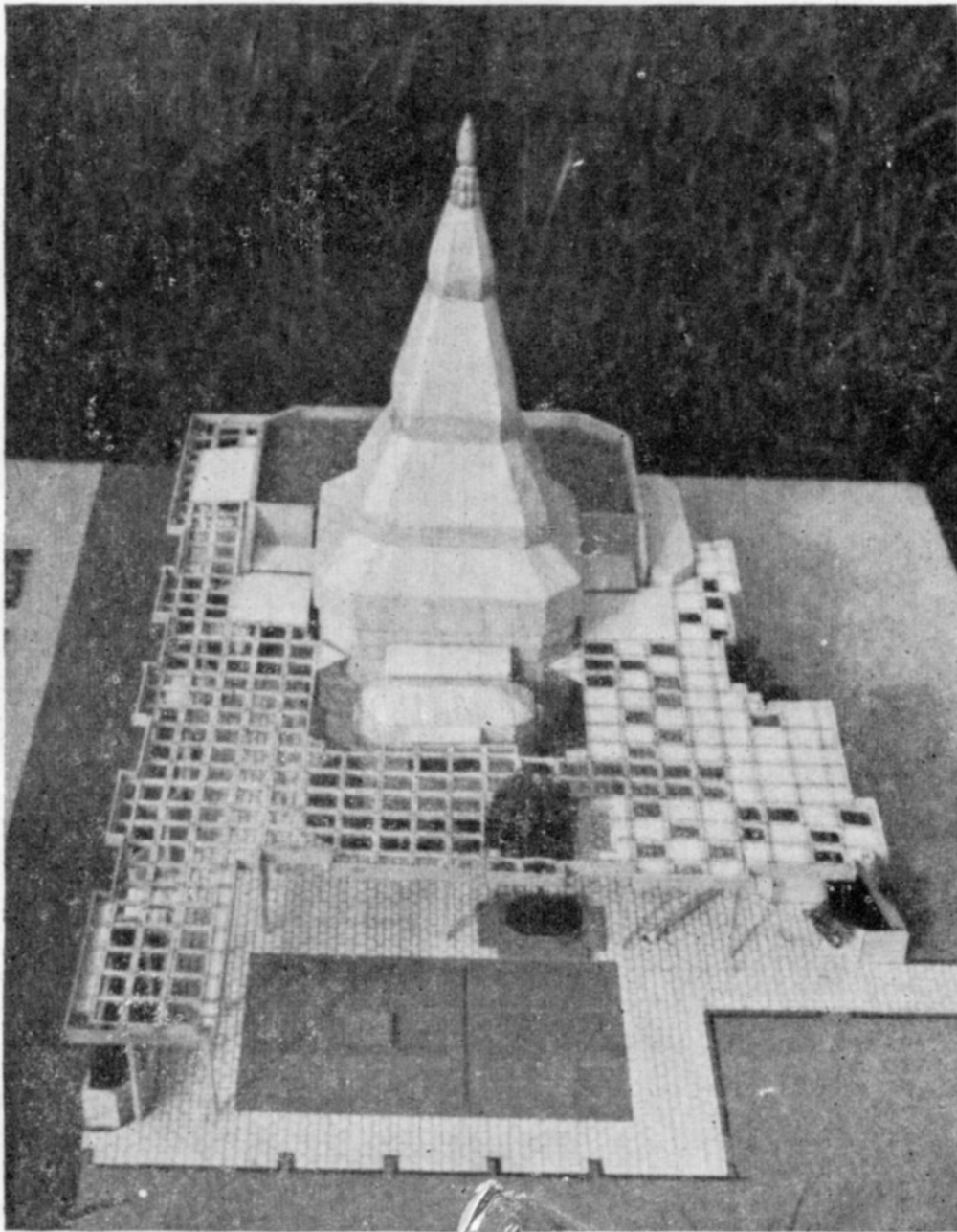
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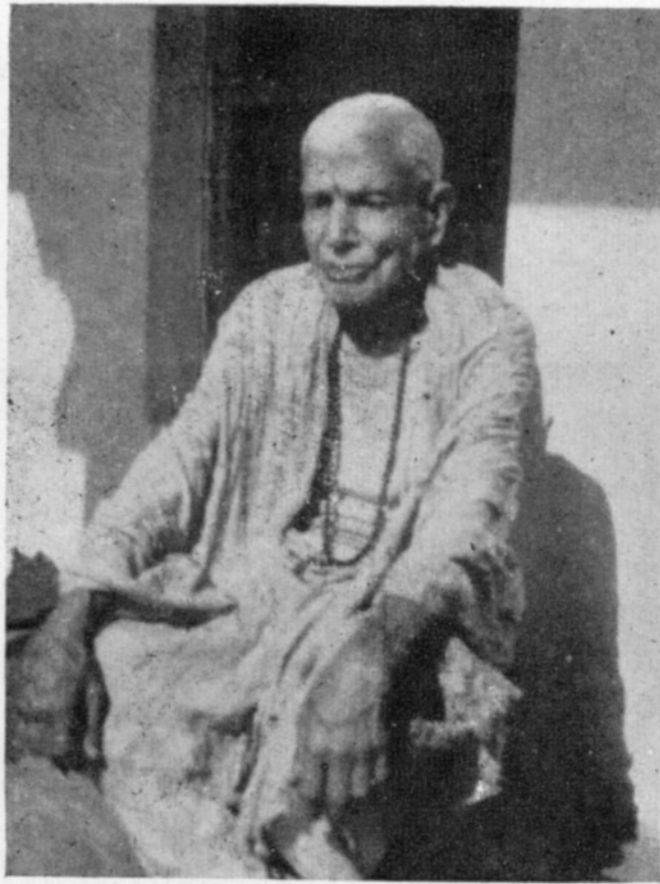
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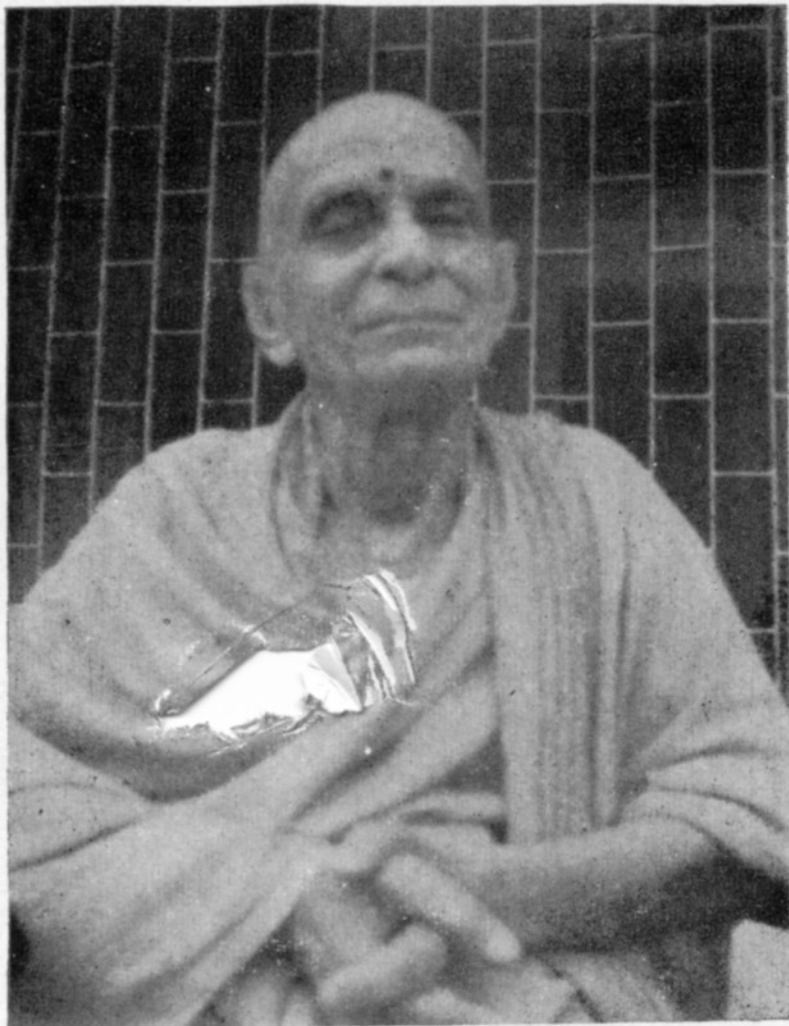
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Architectural View of Maha-Sarada Temple of Sri Sri MA  
now under Construction at Ranchal.  
Estimated Cost—Rs. 50 lakhs appx.—1st phase.  
Rs. 20 lakhs appx.—2nd phase.



Late Abani Mohan Sharma



Late Sw. Krishnananda Giri

# Ma, We Remember Thee So Much !

A. P. Dikshit, I. A. S. ( Retd. )

( Translated from Hindi original by Prof. G. D. Shukla )

## My First Darshan of Ma

Now that Ma is no more, incidents and experiences that occurred during Her life time flash across the mind's eye in an unending succession like images on a silver screen.

It was 1951-52. I had come to Dehradun as District Planning Officer and lived at 21, Inder Road. I was in occupation of the eastern half of the bungalow and Sri Krishna Kishore, I.A.S., the City Magistrate, lived in the western half. His wife, Sheela, used to go to Ma's Ashram at Kishenpur, her mother and her mother's sister were Ma's devotees.

I knew nothing about Ma, neither did I feel any inclination to go to Her. I had been brought up from my very childhood in strict *Sanātani* tradition and belief and had great faith in gods and goddesses, in their temples, the sādhus, etc. Side by side, the influence of the Arya Samaj movement was then also at its peak, and I had the occasion to listen to the witty discourses of its preachers. Gradually, I began to turn away from "idol worship". Reasoning and argumentation began to

take the place of faith and unquestioning belief. Later, the influence of the English language and English culture enhanced my newly born desire to question the old faith and the old beliefs which in course of time were badly shaken. It seemed that they were all fraud and sheer obscuration. I remember that when people prayed before a Deity in a temple I thought them to be steeped in ignorance. I did not even hesitate to exhibit my newly acquired wisdom before the elders of my family, and at times I questioned the very existence of God.

This is a true picture of my mental state in 1951-52. One day Mr. Krishna Kishore's car developed some trouble when it was time for his wife to go to the Kishenpur Ashram. Sheelaji, therefore, asked my wife for the use of our car and also urged her to go along with them for Ma's darshan. Mrs. Dikshit spoke to me about it and just to be of some help to Sheelaji, without any desire of my own, I took out my car and went to the Ashram. We had Ma's darshan in the hall. People were seen doing *pranāma* to Ma with all sincerity and devotion, and I laughed in my sleeves at the spectacle because of my irreverent attitude of mind. However, my wife got attracted to Ma immediately. When Ma rose to leave the hall, the ladies surrounded Her, and the men formed a half circle behind them. I was also one of them. My wife said to Ma, "we shall come tomorrow at 8 a. m.". Ma answered, "Yes, alright".

I got terribly annoyed, for the next day was a Sunday and I had looked forward to relaxing and



rising late in the morning. But now I would have to get up early so that we could reach the Ashram at the appointed hour of 8 a. m. Even if it had been 10 a. m., that could be put up with.

Before we left, my wife repeated: "Ma, we shall come tomorrow at eight." Ma, however, said, "Come by 10 o'clock". I was startled on hearing this and was forced to think, "Has Ma really got some superhuman power? Has She read my thoughts? Has She realised my problem?"

On my way back my mind kept on revolving round this thought. Then my perverted reasoning set my mind at rest. It could be a mere coincidence, I said to myself. But it stirred the innermost depth of my heart and I asked myself: "Am I labouring under an illusion, or is there indeed a divine power in Ma?"

Soon after another incident happened. It was Saturday. We were returning from the Ashram. My wife was sitting by my side. She said "Tomorrow is a Sunday. We have to go to the Ashram at 11 o'clock. Do not fix any other programme". I laughed to myself and told her that I had to go to Chuharpur (now known as Vikāsnagar) for an official meeting that was already fixed up. My presence was absolutely necessary and I could not go elsewhere. Mrs. Dikshit felt disappointed and did not say a word on the way home. The next day too she was wearing a long face and said nothing. I had my breakfast at 9 a.m. and was to leave for Chuharpur at 10 a.m. It was an hour's journey from Dehradun. The driver was

getting the car ready. I came out at 10 o'clock and found the driver trying to start the car. But the engine would not start, try as he might. I asked, "what has gone wrong?" "Perhaps, the carburetor has got chocked", replied the driver, "I shall clear it in no time." Now, helpless as I was, I returned to my room. My wife was in the same mood as before. Sad, disappointed and placed in these circumstances, I too felt bad. After fifteen minutes I came out again, it was getting late. The driver was still working at the engine. Noticing me, he said that perhaps the distributor had developed some defect and assured me that he would open it and clean it. Another driver dropped in at that time, and both started working together. I again went inside the house. I was getting restless and irritated at the prospect of arriving late, and my wife was almost on the verge of tears. At ten thirty I came out again. Both the drivers were still busy, but the engine showed no signs of coming to life. Seeing me, the driver said, "Sir, I just cannot understand what is the trouble. The petrol is freely flowing down, the pipe, the distributor too are alright. I shall see if the engine can start by giving a push to the car." I came back, annoyed and helpless. It did not look nice that I should arrive late, perhaps by the time, I could reach the meeting it would be over.

Inside the house my wife was sitting in the same mood, sullen and disappointed. I addressed her and said "I will not go to Chuharpur now. If the engine starts, we shall go to your

Ma" (now whenever I am reminded of this sentence, I feel sorry. But like an arrow that has already been discharged from the bow it cannot be called back). Just then at 10.45 a.m. the sound of the engine that had started reached my ears. We left for Kishenpur and, at the right time i.e. at 11 o'clock, we entered the Ashram precincts. My wife was overjoyed. Later she told me what Ma had said to her: "So, you have come after all. You were finding it difficult. Weren't you?"

This incident and these words of Ma touched my innermost heart and I felt that Ma had thereby revealed Her greatness, and set in motion a violent churning of my thoughts.

I now was convinced that Ma had the power to exercise control not only over animate beings but also over inanimate things, otherwise what could be the mystery behind the impossibility to start the engine when I had planned to go to Chuharpur and its return to life when I thought of going to the Ashram.

Now where is that Ma with mysterious powers ?  
Ma, we remember thee so much !

*(To be continued)*

# The Two Mothers Met

Shailen Roy

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

On that memorable evening, the Mother of the Ashram was with the group of the smallest children. We, some elderly sādhakas and sādhis also were there. Wherever the Mother is, we always try to be with Her. And Sri Anandamayi Ma was standing among us, becoming one with us, without showing in the least that She was any special or pre-eminent personage.

When the Mother was leaving the place, Sri Anandamayi Ma touched her own heart and said : "Mother, I am your youngest child."

The Mother looked at her and said with a sweet laughter : "Yes, you are eternally young."

From there we passed into the big play ground where hundreds of disciples were waiting for the Mother. Sri Anandamayi Ma took her standing place behind all others, almost like an insignificant non-entity. The Mother of the Ashram was standing far from there at the door of her room, but her far-reaching look fell on Sri Anandamayi Ma ; then, as if by a spontaneous collective instinct, all those who were crowding in front of Sri Anandamayi Ma moved aside, making a free, clear, long passage between the Mother and Ma, who with slow soundless steps came towards the Mother.

It was a marvellous divine concurrence which moved our hearts.

From there Sri Anandamayi Ma went to our gymnasium where children were having their exercises. She was observing their activities with a tender, amused appreciation. I wanted to have a personal experience. So, I went and stood as closely as possible behind Sri Ma. A steady wave of divine ecstasy started flowing from Her into my heart, and I knew why She was called The Joyous Mother, Anandamayi Ma. Even now as I describe that event, the same ecstatic feeling comes to me.

In 1974 I happened to be present in Kankhal during the *Astami* day of the Durga Puja. The Image of Durga was hidden behind a screen. There was a big crowd. Presently Sri Anandamayi Ma arrived and sat on the platform. Some persons were impatiently murmuring near me: "Why are they not removing the curtain to show us the Image?" I was gazing delighted at Sri Anandamayi Ma, and I whispered to myself: "When we have the good luck of having the living Durga with us, why should we long to see an Image."

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## Obituary

We are deeply shocked and grieved to learn of the demise of Sri Sitaram Jaipuria, the well-known industrialist of Kanpur on the 29th of May 1985. He was an ardent devotee of Mother of many years standing, in fact the whole family are greatly devoted to Sri Ma. He was the eldest son of Mangturam Jaipuriaji. Mataji accepted his invitation to "Swadeshi Bhavan"—his residence at Kanpur on a number of occasions. In the holy presence of Ma, Samyam Saptaha was celebrated there once—besides—Durga puja in 1961 and the birthday celebrations in 1967. All the functions were accomplished with great pomp and serenity. Sri Sitaram and his brother Sri Kashiram always made excellent arrangements for not only Mataji and Her party but also for Her numerous guests, devotees, and mahatmas who always joined such functions. In 1973, Sitaramji had arranged in the premises of his new textile factory at Gaziabad—"Mahanam-yagna" with great success. He was a life member of both Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha and Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society and always took keen interest in the affairs of the organisations. He was also a life member of the "Institute for Puranic & Vedic Studies and Research" which was established at Naimisharanya by the special Kheyal of Mataji. He donated a sum of Rupees One lakh at the very initial stage of the institute for the construction of a hall and a library in memory of his deceased mother. We extend our deepest sympathy to the members of his bereaved family and sincerely pray that his soul may rest in eternal peace at the lotus feet of MA.

## Ashram News

**Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Bhagavat Bhavan  
Bangalore.**

A detailed report has been received about the activities of the Bhavan from January 1st — March 31st, 1985.

Daily satsang was held, either lectures on the Bhagvad Gitā, Srimad Bhagavata, Rāmāyaṇa, Sri Ma, or kirtan and bhajan. Vighrahas of Lakshmi and Narayana were installed in the Bhavan. All festivals were duly celebrated such as Sivaratri, Rama Navami, Sri Rama Krishna birthday, etc.

### **Bhopal**

A Śiva Linga was installed in a small cave temple in the grounds of our Ashram at Bairagarh on January 14th, *Makar Sankranti*. Already the next morning villagers came with offerings, as there is no other Śiva Temple anywhere near.

### **Dehradun**

The first anniversary of the consecration of Sri Ma's statue in the Matri Mandir of the Kishenpur Ashram was celebrated on April 23rd, *Akshaya Tritiya*, by special pūjā, *havan* (fire sacrifice) and a feast for all present, followed by *Nāma Yajna* (kirtan) throughout the night and all next day. A French and a Dutch devotee attended the function and seemed quite impressed. The attendance was quite large.

Sri Ma's birthday was celebrated by solemn pūjā in the nights from 2nd to 3rd May & from 7th to 8th May, also by recitation of hundred chandīs and by Kumari Puja of one kumāri every morning for seven days, performed by different devotees. The day after the Tithi Puja a large crowd was entertained to a sumptuous feast. The attendance was very large.

On June 24th and 25th, the twenty-first anniversary of the consecration of Rama Mandir at Kalyanvan was observed by *Akhaṇḍa Rāmāyana*, (recitation of the whole of Tulsidas Rāmāyana) and *prasāda* on the 25th midday.

### Delhi

A special satsang was held in our Ashram at Kalkaji on May 2nd evening, with Sri R. K. Trivedi, Election Commissioner, who delivered a talk, as the chief guest. Sri Govind Narayan, the President of our New Delhi Ashram, was also present, besides about 200 devotees. The opening of a homœopathic dispensary in our Ashram by Sm. Indira Gandhi in Mataji's presence on February 26th, 1982 was commemorated. *Bhajan* was followed by Sri Ma's ārati and *prasāda* for all present.

A street measuring about 6 km has been named "Ma Anandamayi Marg" in New Delhi.

### Agarpara (Calcutta)

About 300 devotees had assembled for Sri Ma's Tithi Puja, remaining all night under frequent spells



of rain and thunderstorms. The next morning, from 9-30 to 12-30 a new singer, called Nimai Bharati, kept the audience of perhaps one thousand listeners enthralled by his wonderful recitals of kirtan.

Impressive pūjās were performed on the 2nd morning and evening in the houses of devotees at Calcutta.

### Kankhal

Sri Ma's 89th birthday was celebrated from May 2nd to May 9th with due ceremony by the usual functions, such as daily performance of *Rāsa Lila* by a professional party from Vrindaban, lectures by mahātmas every evening for several hours, *akhaṇḍa* japa, kirtan, kumārī pūjā and feeding of 108 kumaris, feasts given to sadhus, etc. etc.

All the Mahamandaleshwaras and other Mahātmas who used to come to our functions, graced this celebration also with their presence and enlightened the audience with their spirited discourses. Swami Chidananda, head of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, Mahamandaleshwaras Swami Vidyananda and Brahmananda talked almost every single day. For three days a *yajña* was performed in the permanent *Yajnasāla*, which was built according to the exact measurements given in the Sāstras and is unique in the whole world.

Since Sri Ma's birthday was also celebrated in most of our other Ashrams, the attendance was not too large during the first few days but became quite spectacular for the last 2 or 3 days. The

tithi puja, celebrated in the Ashram hall was a most impressive function. Two German devotees who attended were deeply moved, declaring that they had never experienced anything that could be compared with this function and that Sri Ma's presence was undeniable. After the *tithi pūjā* two long queues were formed and everyone was allowed to offer garlands & *pranāma* at the *Śamādhī*, after which he or she received *prasāda* and a cassette of Ashram music donated by a devotee from New York.

Since the building of "Matri Mandir" has been going on since *Makar Sankranti*, January 14th, the walls have started going up and one had to climb up and down a few steps to reach the *Samādhī*. However, everything was well arranged and proceeded without a hitch. The whole of May 9th, mahāmantra was sung in the hall with great enthusiasm, led by Gitasri Kumari Chhabi Banerjee.

Sri Ma's birthday was also celebrated in our Ashrams at Varanasi, Vrindaban, Bhimpura, Ranchi, Rajgir, Pune and at Dr. Hemanta Pathak's residence in California. But no detailed reports have reached us so far.

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