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Nobody can possibly be superior to God. Whatever is done, is done by Him, alone. No one else has the power to do anything; you must bear this in mind. Depend upon Him. So long as you feel that someone may do something that would harm you, practise a little more often than you would do otherwise the repetition of the Name of your Beloved (*Iṣṭā*). To place your reliance on your *Iṣṭā* is the one thing to be done under all circumstances.

Everyone runs after happiness and enjoyment. Yet, supreme happiness and bliss are ever *There* and nowhere else. That which is eternal must be revealed, and then the question of going in search of anything does not arise.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

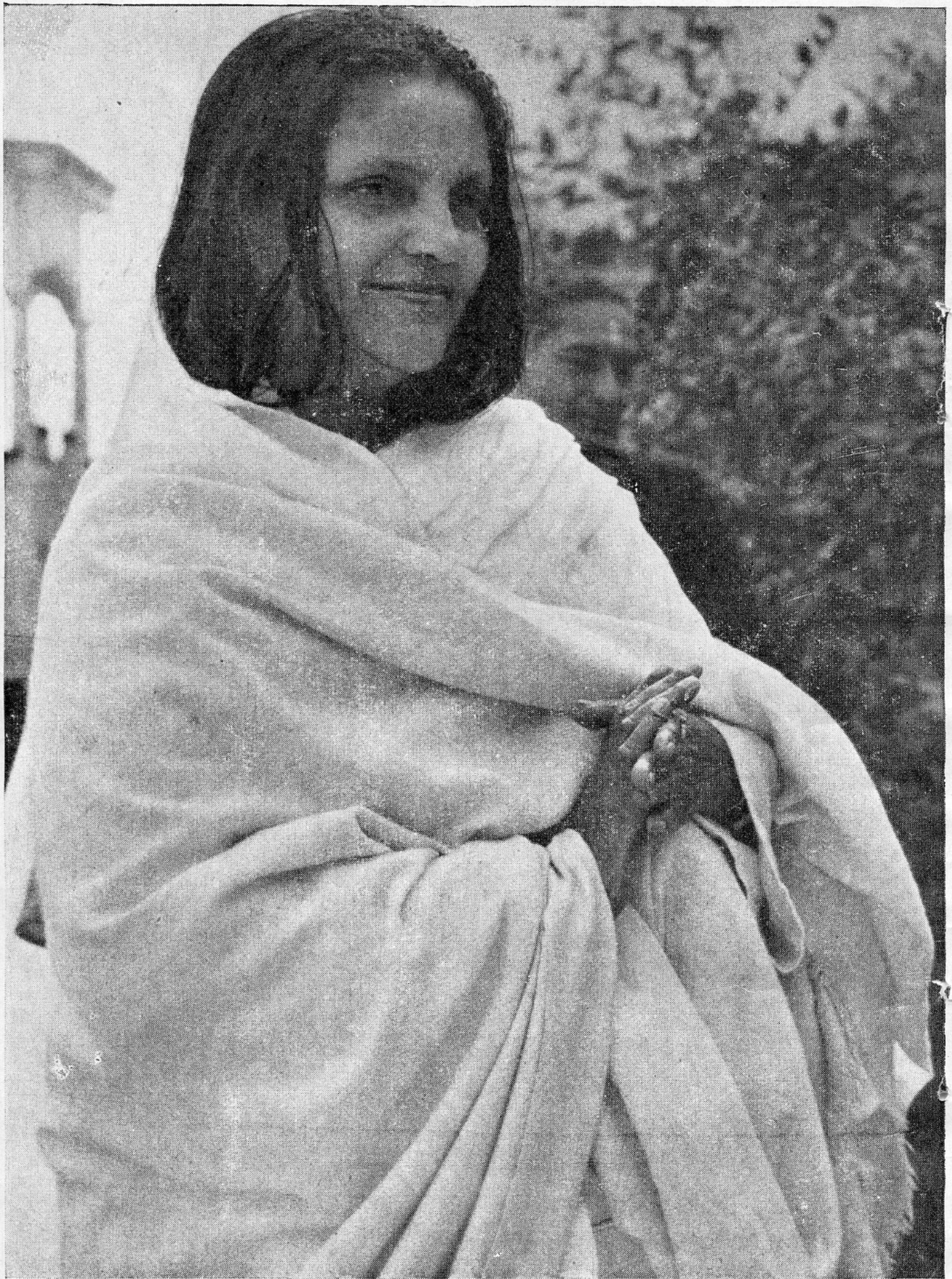
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# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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Try your utmost never to succumb to anyone's influence. In order to become firm, calm, deeply serious, full of courage with one's personality wholly intact, pure and holy out of one's own strength one has to be centred in God.

Be anchored in fearlessness. What is worldly life but fear! When you live in the grip of fear, must you not be afraid? It is futile to expect fearlessness there. That you may be delivered from all sorrow you should endeavour to let God be your one and only support.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

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

( Translated from Bengali )

*Ma*: Look, everything is within you ; very much can be said about this. You long for peace and happiness, so when happiness is short-lived, you are dissatisfied. Today perhaps you perceive something new which gives you intense joy, but the next moment you cannot relish it any more. So the mind of a *sādhaka* craves for permanent happiness. And look, it is because you know the taste of uninterrupted happiness that you desire it. This is why I say, "everything is within you." Since for you there is "within" and "without," one has to say "it is within you."

Further, it is said that one is influenced by whatever one sees. Just watch and you will find the proof of this everywhere. If for instance someone is feeding a child, that person will open her mouth every time she puts a morsel into the child's mouth. When you see someone cry, tears come into your eyes ; when you hear laughter, you start laughing yourself. When you are watching a sick person for sometime, you also begin to feel unwell. From this you can understand that whatever comes near you exercises its influence on you quite naturally. Consequently, when the aspirant continues to keep

his mind on God, he becomes attuned to Him. Therefore it is said that by endeavouring to know yourself, you will come to know everything.

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*Ma* : “*Śāstra* (scripture) means “*sva astra*” (one’s own weapon). The action performed for the sake of becoming established in one’s true Nature, with the one aim to contemplate the Self, this single-minded current of thought like an arrow becomes the weapon which will free the aspirant from his various *saṃskāras* (tendencies and predilections accumulated in the present and in former births). This is why in my crazy language I say : “*Śāstra* means *sva-āstra*.” Of course you may give to it any meaning you like.”

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*Ma* : “Look, when seeing only a stone, in a *linga* one does not awaken to the fact of its being Śiva, whereas when the idea arises that it is Śiva, one does not look upon it as a stone. Similarly, if one calls someone “Guru”, he cannot be regarded as a human being. This is so because it is man’s nature to think of one thing at a time. See, how beautiful, a reflection of the One is present in the individual !”

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A woman said to *Ma* : “My mind never becomes steady. There are so many obstacles in worldly life, I am unable to concentrate on God at all.”

*Ma* : How can you concentrate ? When you partake of the wrong food, indigestion is bound to follow. Do you know what the doctors do ? First of all they prescribe a purgative to clear the stomach. Then only they will give medicine to cure the ailment. You have to adopt similar measures. Again, as it is not right to take a large dose of medicine suddenly, so it is not advisable to practise a lot of *japa* all at once, because this will make you so tired that you will not want to do *japa* for several days after that. This is not right. Everything has to be done gradually and regularly according to the prescribed rules, then only can one be successful. To do overmuch on one day will only exhaust you and there is danger that you may discontinue your practice altogether.

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One day when a discussion about *Prakriti* and *Purusha* (matter or nature and spirit) was going on, *Ma* said : “If there is no *Purusha* how can *Prakriti* perform her play ? However you and your nature (*prakriti*) are inseparable (just as people say “this person’s *prakriti* is such and such”). If there is no *Purusha* there is no *Prakriti* and if there is no *Prakriti* there is no *Purusha*. *Prakriti* is always in action and *Purusha* is ever immutable.

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One night at about 1 a.m., *Ma* said about the beings who visit Her in their subtle bodies : “How

many of them come at this time ! Of course, they come and go at all times without fail.”

*Question* : Well, Ma, even when you are surrounded by a large number of people, do they come even then ?

*Ma* : They come whether I am surrounded by a crowd or whether I am alone ; conversation is also held with them. You see a crowd ; do you know how it appears to those beings ? Just as you have to use a microscope to see small things which cannot be perceived with the naked eye, so you seem to them. Therefore, why should the crowd round me obstruct them ? Although there are some for whom the crowd is in fact an impediment. There are all kinds of possibilities.

Further, some people may feel very sad when remembering their loved ones who have passed away, which causes suffering to the departed and they are unable to come. This is why it is said, one should not mourn for the deceased.

*Question* : When the departed have taken birth again, does the mourning of their relatives of their former life affect them ?

*Ma* : It does indeed, but they are unable to understand why they feel miserable. The attraction of former lives also acts in a similar way. However, all this is beside the point. Just as it is natural for me to meet you, it is exactly like this also with those in subtle bodies. You wanted to know this so it has been disclosed.

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# In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Amulya Datta Gupta

( Translated from Bengali )

*(Continued from the last issue)*

*Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun  
Friday, 23rd May, 1941.*

## **The Way to Peace**

In the afternoon, some ladies of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's family arrived to meet Ma. They raised the subject of general unrest in the world.

Ma said : "There is bound to be unrest as long as duality reigns. It lies in the nature of worldly things to produce unrest. Hence it is essential to be ever engaged in activities prompted by one's true nature, that is to say, to do God's work. To perform service to mankind is also very good. By such work the mind is purified. But to do service by fits and starts will not lead to peace. Where two are, strife and unrest are unavoidable. If you engage yourself in ceaseless, uninterrupted service directed to Him, then only by His mercy the waters of the Ganga of Knowledge will wash away all your desires and doubts, and only then will you be at peace."

One of the ladies asked Ma for a cure for insanity.

*Ma* replied : “I have only one kind of medicine with me. I have just spoken to you about it. This body does not prescribe any specific remedy for anybody. There is general suffering in the world due to previous misdeeds. But this suffering is for the ultimate good. Just as the mother punishes an unruly child to teach him, so this worldly suffering produces a similar effect. That is why I always stress that constant remembrance or contemplation of God is the only way to supreme peace for mankind.”

### Truth and Untruth

Late that same evening Nepaldada (the late Narayan Swami of our Ashram) was reading from the Mahābhārata, and translating it immediately into Hindi. This continued upto 10 p.m., and thereafter various topics came up for discussion.

*Ma* said : “I arrived at the station and saw Bhupati Babu boarding the train. I went for a drive to the station.”

*Myself* : I had already presumed this.

*Ma* : How did you do so ?

*Myself* : You came down to enquire whether Bhupati Babu had left for the station or not, and later I learnt that you had proceeded to Dehradun by car, so I surmised that you had a *kheyāla* concerning Bhupati Babu, and that you had gone to the station to meet him.

*Ma* : When I came down from upstairs, I had the *kheyāla* that as Lakshmi Tankha usually comes to see me at about this time, so if she happened to

bring her car, it would be possible for me to go to the station. In actual fact, there and then I had already seen Bhupati.

*Myself* : Then why did you enquire if his tonga had left the Ashram when you came down ?

*Ma* : What else could I say ? I have to say something. I knew full well that Bhupati had said good-bye to me and that I had come downstairs much later, so Bhupati could not be here anymore. Nevertheless I asked the question. Do you know what this means ? A semblance of ignorance in the presence of knowledge. Did I not tell you the other day that I am now exactly as I was in my childhood ? Yet when all the various *līlās* of *sādhanā* were being enacted by this body, there was this outward semblance of ignorance. This now is something similar.

After remaining silent for some time, *Ma* continued : What you call telling a lie, is not what I am talking about now. If you know something and you falsify it deliberately, then this is called telling a lie. But if, in different states of being you speak of the same thing quite differently, then this is not telling an untruth. Because if you talk according to the state you are in, it is true at that stage.

**Is it necessary to practise Samyam in solitude ?**

*Saturday, 24th May, 1941*

In the morning Nepaldada was reading from the Mahābhārata as usual in the front veranda of the Ashram. Sri Sri Ma was seated on an *āsana*

near the staircase. At this juncture a few local ladies arrived with a basket of fruit to see Ma. They performed their *pranāma* to Ma and placed the basket before Her. Ma smiled gently, and pointing to Nepalada, She said : “Place the basket near the reader. Let us see which way his mind veers !”

Hearing Ma’s words all started laughing. Nepalada smiled and asked Ma, “Does the mother test her son making him aware of his greediness ? Suppose he fails to control his craving in the presence of the coveted articles ?”

*Ma* : “It has been done because it is certain that he will remain indifferent.

*Nepalada* : Is it not wise to keep away from temptation ?

*Ma* : During the first stages of *samyam*, it is wise to keep away from temptation, because otherwise paralysis may set in, that is to say, one may be unable to control the senses. Later, when one has become somewhat firm, it is better to try and practise self-control by having desirable objects near at hand. Why should the need ever arise to run away at the sight of desirable objects ? And even when fleeing to the jungle, is there any deliverance ? There also longed for objects may make their appearance. So it is necessary to remain concentrated on one’s Goal under all circumstances. It is He who appears before us in all forms ; if one cultivates this attitude and arrives at this actual knowledge, then only can one be at complete rest and ease.

*Nepaldada* : How will I realise that I have become sufficiently strong ?

*Ma* : When the fruit ripens, this need not be announced. Its colour and smell proclaim its condition.

The reading from the text was taken up again. After a while Ma indicated that the fruits should be cut into pieces, saying, "The child is hungry, and cannot wait any longer". She distributed the work between two or three persons. When all the fruit was cut up, Ma ate only a tiny bit Herself, and asked that the *prasāda* should be distributed among all present. This task fell to the lot of Sadhan Brahmachari. He was not very keen on this type of work, but because it was Sri Ma's request, he was compelled to do it. Ma laughed and said, "I often give tasks to people which they do not relish."

### **Sevaji's state**

In the afternoon Sevaji and some other ladies came to meet Ma. They all went upstairs to Ma's room, while we sat downstairs in the hall, conversing. A little later Nepaldada came and told us, "Come into Ma's room, and watch the fun."

So we went along to Ma's room, where we found Her sitting on Her bed and laughing. Sevaji and the other ladies were seated in front of Ma. On seeing me, Ma said, "I have created this situation in order to have some fun with Seva. I said to her, 'today we are going to Meerut, so check my pulse to see if I am fit to travel such a distance

by bus'. As soon as she touched me, this has become her condition. The hand with which she touched me had remained so long suspended in midair, only now it has dropped down, but she cannot open her eyes nor move her body."

I then perceived that Sevaji was sitting like a piece of stone. There was no movement in her body. Her eyes were closed as if in meditation. On noticing her condition I asked Ma, "Is she now unconscious?"

*Ma*: No, she is quite conscious. She can hear what I say, but cannot open her eyes.

Saying this Ma smilingly asked Sevaji: "Are you now going to sit like this indefinitely?" Sevaji smiled gently but could not open her eyes.

Ma told me, "So you see, she can hear my words, but cannot reply or open her eyes. There is not the slightest artificiality in her condition. Had she not heard my words, her facial expression would not have changed at all. If she were able to speak, she would have replied on hearing my question. She will not do anything deceitfully."

*A gentleman*: Is this a kind of inert *Samādhi*? (*jada samādhi*).

*Ma*: Not quite, but something in this line.

*Nepaldada*: Why does this happen?

*Ma*: She has something in her which induces such a condition. But Seva herself is not aware of this trait of hers. She is as simple as a child. It is not at all difficult to make her laugh or cry.

They are two sisters. They used to cook their own food and perform their own household chores.

But from her early years Seva had a strong inclination to study, so her father educated her and her younger sister also. Having earned a little, Seva bought a piece of land and built a house on it. Ultimately she got her younger sister married, and the house she built at a cost of some Rs. 16,000/- or Rs. 17,000/- she donated to her sister. Seva says, "What will I do with a house or property? If the necessity arises I can always beg for my food." Her brother-in-law's people wanted her also to donate the piece of land she possessed at the time of the wedding, and it was not as if Seva was unwilling. But her other relatives dissuaded her from doing so. You should know that God looks after the welfare of those who are indifferent to possessions."

Seva's trust is so childlike that she invariably believes without doubting anything that people tell her. Seva became very friendly with a woman who used to associate frequently with her. On observing this I warned Seva that she should not associate so closely with householders. On hearing this she exclaimed, "Ma, what is this you are saying? This woman calls me 'sister' and loves me so dearly. Furthermore she is so deeply religious. She is always talking about God and often becomes absorbed in meditation. What harm is there in my going to her house?"

"On hearing these words, I did not say anything more to her. Had I then forbidden her to associate with the woman, Seva would have in her simplicity informed her friend that I had instructed Seva not to visit her. This would not have been

beneficial, as the woman might have felt hurt. Seva used to stay in this woman's house whenever she visited Hardwar. I could see that the woman's character was not what Seva imagined and so I persuaded Seva to stay in Baghat House instead, and she finally obeyed.

Seva has passed her Doctor's degree, so one cannot say she is devoid of knowledge. But she has not much worldly shrewdness.

“After listening to all this, Gopi Baba (Mahāmahopadhāya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj) once asked me whether or not this worldly cleverness could be acquired at a later date. I replied, “Yes, this could be so, but if, in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, true knowledge is once attained, then there is no danger of deception anymore. That is why so much emphasis is laid on regular spiritual practice.

“It is not as if Seva was very religious minded as a child. She then never pondered on whether God existed or not, or whether one should try to realise Him or not. But she had a strong urge to be truthful and she led a flawless life. For all these reasons her character was very pure. That is why certain things have such an effect on her bodily functions. Not only by touching me does she attain such a state, she even does so sometimes as soon as she enters my room. At times she would tell me that as soon as she enters my room, she feels a sort of electric current passing through her, and therefore her body becomes dizzy. This is why she would sit down motionless and mum. She does not behave like this at all times, but



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fairly often this sort of thing is happening. On the other hand I have noticed that when she has helped me to bath or dry my body, there has been no change perceptible in her. So when I chided her by saying that these sudden changes in her bodily condition were nothing but some type of hysteria, because she has at those times touched me so frequently without such consequences, she would laugh and say : “No, no, all this is not hysteria at all.”

“When engaged in meditating also, at times Seva was unable to move. One day an Inspector was expected to arrive to inspect their work. She had dressed specially for the occasion, and was sitting waiting for him, but as the Inspector seemed to be delayed, Seva thought she would spend the time profitably in meditation. As soon as she sat down, she entered that state of absorption ! So who was there to receive the car or approach the Inspector ? This happening however had no disagreeable consequences.

“Even now Seva sometimes enters those states. On occasions she has been ready to visit me when such a condition supervened ! If then she has the power of speech, she declares, “If you all will take hold of me, and put me in a car, I shall be alright”, because she knows she will be normal within a short time. At other times, she cannot even speak. I have often told her to resign from her job, but she declares that she wants to continue her work.

In the beginning she could not exactly understand what this condition of hers was. Later,

when she became aware that she reached such a state when sitting down to meditate, she imagined that such a state was a part of the process of meditation ! Now of course she understands that she reaches such a condition because deep meditation comes about. In this way inner knowledge is revealed in bits and pieces. Even without somebody else's explanation, this kind of knowledge goes on revealing itself, and it is not too difficult to understand the true state of one's condition. While very often the revelation of such knowledge awaits the guidance of the Guru. When the Guru arrives himself and explains to the disciple exactly his condition, it is only then that he attains unquestionable knowledge of his own Reality. That is why our scriptures maintain that without receiving Divine wisdom from the Guru, true knowledge of the Divine Being cannot be attained.

The real reason why Seva reached such a condition whenever she touched me was due to the fact that the sight and touch of this body immediately directed her outward sensory perception inwards towards the Self. The momentary paralysis of her limbs, her inability to open her eyes, all this is the result of intense meditation (*dhyāna*). It is not that others do not reach identical states, but because their doors are shut, outward manifestation of it does not take place. Seva's being is so pure and unspoilt, that this attainment of outward manifestation is easy and happens naturally."

# Sri Ma's Physical Aspect\*

Vijayananda

The physical aspect through which the inscrutable Power that we call Sri Anandamayi Ma manifested Itself, was only a tiny part of It, and probably not the most important one. Mataji frequently repeated that She is all-pervading, that She never goes nor comes anywhere, that She was never born and so on. Thus, it is evident that She was not the physical body, which seemed to be only an instrument, representing the link between us and the Divine Power : Mataji's physical frame, although looking apparently as one of us, was in essence completely different. It was an *aprakrita*, supernatural manifestation which did not come according to natural laws, and was not subject to them.

In Her early life, Mataji on many occasions showed Her independence where natural laws are concerned. All Her devotees have read or heard about the shrinking of Her body so as to look like a small heap and its becoming unnaturally large at other times. For long periods Mataji could stay without food or with a very tiny quantity of food or water without any change in Her physical aspect, pain of any kind did not seem to affect Her in the least. On many instances the laws

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\*Reprinted from "Ananda Varta," Vol. V, 4, Febr. 1958.

of gravity appeared to have lost their validity with regard to Her body. As for example the body becoming as light as a feather or revolving at an extraordinary speed like a dead leaf carried along by the wind.

All these things I did not witness but only heard or read about them. But surely, the most amazing thing was that She behaved in our natural way as an ordinary person. It is very difficult for those who are under the sway of natural laws, to reach a stage where one is able to reverse these laws and be their master to a certain extent. Much more difficult is it to ignore nature completely and identify oneself with the Eternal Witness, unruffled by earthly troubles. But extremely rare are those sages for whom there is no difference between the highest states of illumination and ordinary life ; for them the Supreme is revealed even in what we call the trivialities of daily life.

A fixed span has been allotted for the life of every human being including the *Jivan Mukta*. The duration of the body is subject to *prārabdha* karma. Not so in Mataji's case. She was free to leave the body at any moment or to keep it for a whole *kalpa* (age), if this be Her *kheyāla*. But Mataji had no desire to act in one way or another. It was the yearning of Her devotees which kept Her, through the fetters of Her own infinite love, just as an affectionate mother is bound by the cries of her baby, who although helpless is nevertheless all-powerful because of its mother's love.

Some people may ask : What was the use of such a limiting adjunct as a physical body if Mataji's Power is all pervading beyond space and time as many people experienced, helping as well when nearby as when far off, no matter at what distance? Besides was not the attachment which so many people felt for Mataji's physical presence delusive, a kind of '*moha*' ? First of all, let me answer that people who are totally free from every kind of attachment, who are *nirmoha*, are in fact realized sages. For all others, attachment to such a Being as Mataji is the highest possible attachment on earth, and will burn in due course all other kinds of *moha*. "By *moha* for this body (meaning Herself) all other kinds of *moha* will vanish," I once heard Mataji say.\*

Now a Divine Incarnation is of tremendous benefit to all embodied beings. This help manifests itself in many ways. I shall mention only a few of these of which, from my limited angle of vision I have been able to get a glimpse. I don't intend to speak here of Her main function self-evident to everybody, that is to say Her enlightening words on spiritual topics. Her guidance and precious advice to *sādhakas*, neither of Her action as a Guru, which does not depend on Her physical frame. But only of some other aspects not so apparent, although of great importance.

In the realm of the *ahamkāra*, the ego, where almost all of us are living, there is no real love.

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\*When quoting Mataji's words I give only the meaning as far as I remember and have been able to understand, and not Her exact words,

What is nearest to love known to *ahamkāra* is *moha*, attachment. Real love would presuppose the ego's dissolution, its end. The root of all its actions is the instinct of preservation. All its thoughts revolve round the protection of its body and its welfare. In order to free oneself from the clutches of the ego, one has first to resist its tendencies and for this purpose cultivate pure qualities, the *Daivi Sampat*.

We have all read in books about *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), etc and listened to much talk and good advice about these. But to actually see these qualities in a living being expressed in the details of his daily life, is surely quite another thing. Through Mataji's physical frame, all these qualities radiated to their utmost perfection. If it had not been so, would so many people have been attracted to Her ?

How rare it is to come across somebody completely free from any kind of fear. *Abhayam* (fearlessness) is indeed only possible when one does not anymore perceive anything different from one's own self. Even the Gods are subject to fear ! Through fear Agni burns, etc says the Upanishad. For about seven years\* I have had the good fortune of living under Mataji's guidance. I have never been able to detect in Her features the slightest trace of fear. What a joy it is to admire such a countenance !

*Ahimsa*, non-injury to any living being is more common. Mataji showed us by Her own example

\* This was written in 1957.

how it can be practised in daily life and brought to perfection. Not to kill any living being is a self-evident duty for a spiritual aspirant. But not to cause harm to anybody, be it through words, action or abstention from action, even by one's mere presence or in thought, is certainly much more difficult.

On innumerable occasions we witnessed with what delicacy Mataji behaved in order to avoid causing the least harm or offence through Her own person or through that of a devotee. Even dogs must not be harmed. I remember once in Solan having seen Mataji change the usual path of Her evening stroll in order that a dog lying on Her way might not be disturbed. One day an attendant who had chased away the animal was rebuked. "Why do you chase it away," said Mataji, "it enjoys the cool earth." On several occasions brahmacharis who had beaten or even intended to beat a dog were told by Mataji to do *pranāma* to the animal, in order to ask forgiveness from the Lord dwelling in the dog.

*Satyam* (truthfulness), I heard Mataji say, means not to utter any lie, be it in words, by signs or by abstention from words. She added that if one could practise such truthfulness for a period of twelve years, whatever one uttered would become true. Mataji laid great stress on the importance of speaking the truth under all circumstances. Needless to say that She Herself gave us a living example of how *satyam* can be brought to its utmost perfection. Apart from Her Almighty

Power, this alone would suffice to make all Her utterances come true.

As to *akrodha* (absence of anger)—surely there is no need to say that Mataji never got angry. Not the slightest sign of irritation or impatience could ever be detected in Her. Mataji came in contact with hundreds and thousands of people of all kinds and temperaments and social levels. It naturally happened from time to time that some people behaved in a manner lacking in courtesy or that they uttered words one would not expect to hear in the presence of such a great Being. But the cruder these peoples' conduct, the more radiantly Mataji smiled and the more She responded with kindness and love. She frequently gave to such offenders greater attention than to other people. It looked as if She behaved like a good doctor who takes better care of patients who are seriously ill than of those suffering only from slight cough and cold.

As everybody knows, Mataji did not deliver discourses or lectures, but She replied to questions on spiritual topics. Most people listen with rapt attention to the words of Divine Wisdom falling from Her lips. But sometimes people, giving way to their urge to speak, interrupted Mataji's talk by remarks of their own or by some silly question. Mataji not only did not rebuke them, but She never showed the slightest sign of impatience. She generally would cut short Her own explanation and after listening with interest to the words of the foolish interrupter, tried to clear up his doubts



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with infinite patience and love, which surely are not to be found in any human teacher.

What else should I say about the divine qualities revealed through Mataji's physical frame, this embodiment of Wisdom and Love, "pure like the sun"? If I continue there will be no end.

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"As some massive rock stands unmoved by the storm wind, so the wise stand unmoved by praise or blame."

—Buddha

# Ma, We Remember Thee So Much !

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

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

( *Continued from the last issue* )

The mist of immature and unbecoming ideas had started lifting after my very first darshan of Ma, and my life turned a new page. The tender sapling of faith, devotion and an unquestioning acceptance of the simple virtues of life which had been planted in my heart by my grandfather and other elders of my family and which had not yet struck their roots firmly and had begun to wilt under the hot winds of faithlessness and dry reasoning, now started reviving and growing. During that period—from 1951 to 1954—I was in Dehradun and whenever Ma came there, I had the good fortune to have Her darshan. In those days I was mostly engaged in development work in the villages of the district but on holidays, under promptings from my wife, I was able to get Ma's darshan now and then.

Who and what is Ma ? This question stared me in the face and I was trying to understand Her. What draws to Her so many educated and highly placed people ? What is that attraction which from near and far off places pulls to Herself people

of different creeds and religions, of diverse states and countries... ? Whosoever has Her darshan once, longs to have it again and again. What then is that force or energy which attracts them to Her as the Sun attracts the planets ? Such were the questions that assailed my mind. My wife, however, was immune to all this troublesome reasoning. She was steeped in the joy emanating from Ma from the very beginning.

Later, I was transferred to Agra and thence to Kanpur. During that period I was not able to have Ma's darshan. Official work and domestic duties absorbed all my time, but sometimes the incipient attachment and devotion to Ma would come like a flash of lightning and illumine the surrounding darkness. It was obvious that the seed thus sown had not fallen on barren soil, that even in its somnolent state, there was life in it, and that like a lighthouse showing the right path to a ship caught in the dark, stormy seas, it was directing my life on the right course.

While in this state of feeling and thought in 1958, I was transferred to Fatehpur as Collector. There I threw myself heart and soul into the service of the people and got immeasurable love from them in return. One of those days, my wife went to Allahabad where she had Ma's darshan. She found Ma moving in a circle and singing kirtan along with other ladies. It was a unique sight and she was beside herself with joy. Much later she told me that she had inwardly prayed to Ma to be blessed with a son. Soon she became pregnant

and in due course gave birth to Gopal. During this time she had several experiences and darshans of gods as are not vouchsafed even to *sādhakas*, let alone ordinary householders. Right at midnight at the time Gopal was born, she had a divine darshan. To describe all these happenings would make a long story. Suffice it to say that all this was due to Ma's blessings.

To begin with, Gopal was named Alok, but when Ma began to call him "*Dostji*" (friend) along with "Gopal" we changed his name to Gopal.

In 1959-60 I was posted at Varanasi as Deputy Development Commissioner. Right on the bank of the Ganga there is an Ashram of Ma in Bhadaini. It is a huge and extensive three storeyed building. Washed by the waves of the Ganga there was a hall which has now crumbled. The Ashram has a temple dedicated to Annapoornaji. It also houses a Girls School. Across the lane there is a beautiful temple of "Gopalji" also belonging to the Ashram.

Here in Varanasi I had again the good fortune of Ma's darshan. Although on account of the comparative impiousness of my thoughts my devotion to Ma had not reached the desired level, yet the veil of impiety and ignorance was slowly lifting, and in the same proportion the health of my body and the joy of my spirits were increasing. My duties often took me out to other districts of this region but whenever Ma came to Bhadaini I was able to have Her darshan. I was stationed there for a year only. Then I went to Allahabad, and

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from there to Dehradun in 1961 as District Magistrate.

Dehradun offered a unique opportunity to have Ma's darshan, for here Ma stayed for three or four months at a stretch every summer. Her favourite Ashram was the one at Kishenpur, though She also at times visited the Raipur Ashram and Kalyanvan. This time I had a wonderful opportunity to have uninterrupted association with Ma and to be blessed by Her darshan. My mental state began to change. The longing for Her presence became keener. Impious thoughts and feelings started melting away. The *tamoguni* tendencies changed into *rajoguni* ones, and began tending towards *sattvaguna*. My whole being, heart and soul, were thirsting more and more for Ma's darshan and communion with Her. This influenced my attitude to my daily duties also. When I performed them I had the satisfaction of serving my country, and in return I received great love from the people. Life had entered a new phase.

The scenic beauty of Dehradun is naturally charming. Perhaps no other district in India can vie with it. The lofty Himalayas, majestic as Shiva Himself, the forests and trees growing densely like His matted locks, the twin holy rivers Ganga and Jamuna flowing in the east and west in an easterly direction, the lush green fields all around, the Siwalik ranges in the South and over and above all these the divine presence of Ma make this place an almost heavenly resort.

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The glimpses of Ma I had in those days, Her *līlā*, the festivals celebrated in the Ashrams, and the close association I had with Her—all, all come back to my memory in quick succession and make me restless. Now that Ma is not with us physically it seems that it was all but a dream. But it was not—it was a reality. Doubts can arise about the existence of God Himself. Some say He is real, others say He is non-existent. But actually He pervades every atom of the Universe. The same can be said of Ma. It all depends upon the level of our understanding and attainment.

### Satsang

Ma has arrived at the Kishenpur Ashram. It is sun-down now. The visitors are sitting in the hall on the ground floor, the men and the women separately. I also take my place along with the members of my family with my back to the wall near the window. This is my favourite place. It provides support to the back and an uninterrupted view of Ma. Very few people notice me. It helps to diminish my sense of ego which is essential for obtaining Ma's grace.

Ma has not yet reached the hall. There are comparatively few visitors. Ma's seat is in front, and by its side one for Didima also. The hall is fragrant with the scent of flowers and incense, its walls are reverberating with the sweet sound of *kirtan*. Everyone is waiting impatiently for Ma. Some people are standing outside with garlands in their hands. There is a festive atmosphere in

the entire Ashram. But it is a festivity of a special kind : it is surcharged with holiness and a divine calm. The people assembled are looking at one another with an affection which it is altogether impossible to find elsewhere.

Ma is now coming. There is expectancy and curiosity all around. She is about to enter the hall from the south door, and everyone has turned his gaze in that direction. Some persons have stood up, some are prostrating themselves before Her and offering flowers and garlands. Ma is blessing them individually. Some devotees are busy clearing a passage for Her, but people do not listen. They come right in front. They are chided, but who cares ? The crowd has increased, the hall is jampacked. The empty space between men and women has also been occupied. Ma has now stepped into the hall and everyone has stood up. "Everyone, sit down" goes the directive. But nobody listens. Only the *kirtan* singers are seated. With the entry of Ma a strange light fills the hall. People have become silent and they are gazing at Ma and Her matchless beauty, and are imbibing slowly and silently the divine nectar. The *kirtan* is gaining intensity : people are transported beyond themselves, they are oblivious of themselves. Waves of joy are sweeping over the devotees and they are taking a dip in them. Some stand motionless, some are in tears ; but all are looking at Ma. She has moved onwards and taken Her seat.

Everyone has now sat down. There is perfect peace in the hall. Ma is dressed in spotless white

like Goddess Saraswati, and Her face radiates effulgence. There is a gentle smile on Her lips, and Her eyes are blue like the sky at full moon. Everyone is having his fill of this beauty, as if unexpectedly blessed with a draught of divine nectar.

Didima, Ma's mother, is sitting by the side of Ma and close by is Didi (Gurupriya Devi). She is controlling the whole situation by signs or by word of mouth. A passage has been made for newcomers from the western door. In the rest of the hall, there is no space left and some persons have sat down on the western varanda.

Now the devotees have started doing *praṇāma* to Ma. They come one by one. Ma flings a garland around the neck of the person who does obeisance to Her. They return overwhelmed and with tears in their eyes. All of them, men, women and children, young and old, receive Her blessings. She makes no distinction. So long as they have not had a chance to salute Her, they feel restless, and after having done so they feel as if they had obtained a great treasure. Sometimes it so happens that Ma begins to say something to an attendant, and at this time devotees who do *praṇāma* do not feel satisfied. They feel that Ma has not looked at them, and they do not move until they are satisfied that Ma has noticed them. At this those who are behind them in the queue become impatient. Then Ma looks at them, and they feel blessed, and then they make way for others. A brahmacharini sitting close to Ma gives *prasāda* to the devotees. Sometimes Ma



Herself distributes *prasāda*. Thus Sri Ma's *Līlā* goes on.

I have done *pranāma* and coming back to my place am watching with interest this *Matri līlā*. Every one prostrates himself on the ground to do obeisance, and inwardly I repeat my *pranāma* to Ma again and again. I experience the same joy which bathers in the Ganga feel when they take a dip again and again and do not wish to come out.

Now all the persons have done their *pranāma* and Ma has reclined against a round, longish pillow and Her hair have spread out.

*Kirtan* has started again. All present join in the singing and their eyes feast on the divine beauty of Ma. Some persons are shedding tears of joy. The entire atmosphere is surcharged with bliss. Whence has come this stream of *ānanda*, and whither is it going? Where is its source? And where is its termination? We do not know. We do not need to know. All that we know is that it is there because Ma is there, and this is sufficient for us.

The ashram girls sitting near Ma look at Her with eyes fixed. They too are drinking the divine draught. In this world of feelings and emotions, there is an altogether different world order. It is certainly not the one in which we ordinarily live. What Tulsidas has said—"a woman does not fall in love with a woman" does not apply to this world. On the contrary what he says elsewhere at Sita Swayamvar fully applies here "both men and women have been charmed to see that Beauty".

The kirtan has stopped. Ma has got up and is in a sitting posture. Didi has started a conversation with Ma and both are talking and laughing. In between a few persons butt in. They ask questions and Ma answers them within the hearing of all. Everyone enjoys the benefit of communion with Ma and is charmed. Ma's voice is very sweet, people like to hear it again and again. Ma is always beyond and above the three *gunas*, hence without any mortal blemish. She has been in that state from Her very birth. She is immanent, pervading the universe. Yet for the sake of Her bhaktas She seems to come down from that high state and talks to the ordinary man like an ordinary human being. All Her words sound sweet to the ear because they arise from a boundless ocean of affection.

Occasionally someone goes very near Ma and confides to Her his worldly woes and Ma satisfies him with highly spiritual replies. Sometimes She speaks loudly so that all present are benefitted.

It is now past eight in the evening. Some people have started to leave. They move out quietly after doing *paṇāma* to Ma. Everyone seems to be at peace. They came here troubled and battered by the hard knocks of life ; they leave refreshed and revived, fit to face again the problems of life with the help and strength received from Ma.

Now it is a quarter to nine. According to the Ashram rules, it is time for silent meditation. The bell has rung by way of information. The lights have been turned off. The devotees have steadied them-

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selves and with eyes shut, have begun to meditate. A few tell their beads and inwardly recite their mantra. There is peace all around. Ma Herself, it seems, is roaming through all the worlds—the entire creation. She also casts Her glance at every devotee, and the vibrations of Her blessings are felt by all. They are all steeped in a super mundane bliss. One or two inmates of the ashram choose to sit on the step before the Shiva temple or on the floor and are lost in meditation. The joy felt in those moments is an experience which cannot be described in words.

Right at 9 O'clock a second bell rings and the meditators open their eyes. The OM (*Pranava*) mantra starts in low tones and slow movement, then the tempo rises, and some members from the assembly also join in. Finally, it concludes with a *Shanti Mantra*. Now people prostrate themselves before Ma. She Herself with hands folded and lost in an other-worldly vision looks like the very personification of Beauty, Compassion, Simplicity and Tenderness.

Thus ends the day's *Satsang*  
How shall we have again that soul stirring *Satsang* ?  
Ma ! We remember Thee so much.

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### **Bhandara (Mass feeding) in Ma's Ashram**

Because of Ma's coming, and our faith in Ma and Her affection our stay in Dehradun has become a happy one. One day Mrs. Shanti Sabarwal

informs me that there is a *bhandara* in the Ashram. Our whole family is invited to take *prasāda* there.

We are delighted. Having disposed of the official work of the morning session, we reach the Ashram at 1-30 p.m. I am somewhat upset that I am a little late. But as soon as we enter the ashram gate, I notice that the *bhandāra* has not yet started. Food offering has been made to God, and Ma also has had Her food. The first batch of devotees is about to move into the dining hall. Leaf plates and earthen tumblers are being arranged before each guest. Ma's charming voice is heard from a distance. She is Herself supervising the arrangements and giving directions when necessary. Gurupriya Didi is assisting Ma.

Didi sees us and says, "Dikshit Bhai has come". Ma also sees us. We feel blessed. A thrill goes through the body. Didi asks us to sit down in the northern varanda near the Satsang Hall. Some persons are already there. We are overwhelmed with joy. Gradually, all the devotees begin to take their seats. In between, some people also offer *pranāma* to Ma. There is excitement all round. Some people shout 'Jai Ma'. Ma casts Her glance at all and their eyes glisten with joy. Ma goes round to every place, including the kitchen. At the moment it seems that Ma has no work other than supervising our meals. I think that no lady of the house can look after her guests so well, so devotedly. Is She not giving us a lesson in hospitality ?

Now food is being served. There are so many items, and all smell delicious. Our mouths begin to water. Before asking us to start eating Didi says, "Jai Ma !" and we repeat her words enthusiastically. A similar cry is heard from other places too. Just then Ma enters our varanda to check the arrangements. We are dining and also having Ma's darshan. Ma orders the servers to bring more of the dishes. How fortunate are all of us ! The food is satisfying to our palate as well as to our soul, one cannot come across such food elsewhere. In its preparation has gone all the care of Ma, She gives minute instructions. That being so, why shall that food not taste like divine ambrosia ? There is no end to the number and variety of dishes. How can one eat all that ? But then something says inside, "Eat as much as you can, it is coming from Ma. Eat and become immortal."

It is said that food conditions the state of the mind and the self, and these in turn become the cause of our bondage or salvation. That being so, this sacred *prasāda* of Ma shall definitely act as a potent help for our upliftment.

The dinner is about to finish. People have started rising from their places with the used leaf plate and the earthen tumbler in their hands, which are to be thrown away at the appointed place. They wash their hands and rinse their mouths at the water tap outside and mingle with one another in sheer intoxication of joy. They talk about the glory of Ma. They are all overwhelmed by affection. Although there is a difference of degree in

their joyousness owing to the difference in their stages and levels of understanding, yet viewed externally the entire multitude of devotees appears like a beautiful lake stirred by the gentle heaving and falling of waves caused by the breeze of Ma's sacred darshan and the thought of it. The devotees then go to Ma, do *pranāma* to Her and leave for their homes.

Where shall we find now this Annapoorna ?

Ma ! We remember Thee so much.

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Every second or third day we started going to the Ashram for Ma's darshan. The attraction grew every day and proportionate to this growth the heart that had its taste of bliss began to blossom forth in its fulness. We gained something or the other from every visit. It was obvious that the dust and dirt gathered over the heart was being washed away. I also started feeling that I was becoming more skilful in the discharge of my worldly duties. It was getting easier for me to take decisions and accomplish my work efficiently. As Tulsidas has said, "Sins melt away at the sight of a saint." The heart becomes free from the layers of unholy thoughts gathered over the ages, and one is enabled to see and understand things in their proper perspective. That was exactly what happened to me when I had the good luck to come so unexpectedly in contact with Ma. It was nothing short of a miracle.

Gopal at this time was nearly three. He is our youngest child and we had named him 'Alok'. Ma

used to address him as "*Dostaji*" (friend). He came very close to Ma. Ma used to do several *līlās* in his company. As she started calling him Gopal, we changed his name to Gopal. Later when he joined school, he was known under this name and now he is known as "Ma's Gopal."

Then.....Ma left Dehradun. Everyone felt desolate, but it was hoped that Ma would come back shortly. When the official duties and responsibilities weighed heavily on me, I would go to the Ashram along with the members of my family. Ma's seat was in its usual place, neat, clean and well equipped. I would offer *pranāma* there. Then I would move on to the Shiva temple, offer obeisance to Bhagwan Shiva and return to the Satsang hall. The astonishing thing was that even in Ma's absence, I felt the same peace and calm. The troubled heart found repose. I felt that Ma was present even though she was not there physically. The inmates of the ashram also felt sad at Ma's absence but their eyes sparkled at the mention of Ma. They shed tears at the separation, but a little later while relating some story or incident associated with Ma they broke into hilarious laughter. Even the trees and plants in the ashram silently seemed to await the coming of Ma like Shabari. Thus the days rolled on.

One day Shantiji Sabarwal told me that the *Samyam Saptah* of the year was fixed at Shuktal near Muzaffarnagar and she prevailed on me to go there, for Ma was also there. Shantiji's husband, R. B. Shivcharandasji had already gone there.

A whole township of tents and *pandals* had come up at Shuktal. It was my first visit to such a function. This place was the residence of His Holiness Vishnuashramji Maharaj. Perhaps, it was at his invitation that Ma had agreed to the *Saptah* being held there. Vishnuashramji Maharaj is a very holy and good-natured saint. His discourse on "Rām Nām" which I had listened to in the presence of Ma is unforgettable.

*Samyam Saptah* is a function of seven days, held in the week before *Kartik Pūrnimā* of every year. Kirtan, bhajan, religious discourses, and silent meditation are its special features. The participants come from the whole country as well as from abroad. They observe a strict fast and follow a rigid routine. Recitations from the Vedas, Durga Saptshati and the Puranas are part of the daily programme. Distinguished saints and scholars, and other men learned in sacred lore are attracted to this function by the presence of Ma.

Shuktal is the place where the great Sage Shukdeva recited Srimad Bhagwat to King Parikshit and made of him a person fully deserving of liberation. At such a sanctified place, I also had the good fortune to have the darshan of Ma. At mid-day we received *prasad* and thanking my stars I returned to Dehradun.

Such memories of Ma come back to me again and again.

Ma ! We remember Thee so much.

(To be continued)



# Sri Ma and the Mother

Shiv Das

Some interesting anecdotes relating to Sri Ma's meeting at Pondicherry with the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram have been narrated by Shri Shailen Roy in his article 'The Two Mothers Met,' which was published in the July 1985 issue of 'Ānanda Vārtā.' On reading them I could not resist the temptation of adding one more significant event of that memorable meeting.

Ma took a garland of flowers when She went to see the Mother and placed the garland round the Mother's neck. The Mother took it off and placed it round Ma's neck, who again placed it round the Mother's. In this manner that garland was passed on several times from the Mother's neck to Ma's and vice versa. Finally the Mother placed it round Ma's neck and said to Her rather emphatically: "Now let it remain there." This pleasantry signifies that each of the two mothers was conscious of the same Divinity being manifested in the other.

Those sādhakas of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, who are aware of the core of Ma's multifarious divine personality also know that Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and Ma are respectively the embodiments of the 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' and 'Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram' Trinity. They are living

symbols of the three syllables of AUM (Pranav). I said "living" because even after having shed their mortal coils they exist eternally in their 'subtle-physical' bodies (in the terminology of Sri Aurobindo) for the purpose of fulfilment of their divine mission—the establishment of 'Satyuga' or the 'kingdom of God' through the advent of the next higher species to man, the 'Supra-mental beings.' One can contact them and also communicate with them in the subtle physical realm.

There are three aspects of the wisdom of the Vedas, viz. *jñāna* (knowledge), *karma* (action) and *upāsana* (devotion), on each of which a vast literature exists—ancient, medieval and modern. In Yoga these three aspects are represented as Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and Ma—although the spiritual personality of each of them was integral—laid emphasis on *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti* respectively. However, if one delves deep into their life and teachings one will find at the core the blissful nectar of their identification with the ONE, whom the Vedic scriptures have denoted as Brahma, and whom Sri Aurobindo has called simply "God", the Mother spoke of as 'the Divine' and Ma as 'THAT.' Sri Aurobindo was Truth (Ṛtam)-incarnate, the Mother was Consciousness-incarnate, and Ma was Bliss-incarnate.

In this context the undermentioned quotes exemplify their teachings :

**Sri Aurobindo :**

“This world is God fulfilled in outwardness”.

(SAVITRI—Book Ten, Canto Three)

“It was joy of being on the peaks of God.”

(SAVITRI—Book Seven, Canto Seven)

**The Mother :**

“It is the Divine Presence that gives values to life. This Presence is the source of all peace, all joy, all security.”

“The Divine manifests in the psychic as love, in the mind as knowledge, in the vital as power and in the physical as beauty.”

“A life consecrated to union with the Divine is the only life worth living.”

**Ma :**

“Be quiescent in body, speech and mind and know that thou art THAT.”

“Enquire : ‘Who am I’? and you will find the answer.” (I am THAT).

(‘Anandamayi Ma’ by Anil Ganguli—page 141)

Like the other two divine stalwarts Ma had completely identified Herself with the Supreme. Her assertion echoed in the inmost heart of Paramhansa Yogananda, when he met Her, (vide page 453 of his ‘Autobiography of a Yogi’) : “Behold, now and always one with the Eternal, I am ever the same.” Bhaiji has reproduced a more emphatic affirmation from Her. “I alone am and all is contained in me.” (Vide page 219 of his book ‘Mother as Revealed to Me’). Anil Ganguli has

narrated Her inner attitude (vide his book 'Anandamayī Ma : The Mother, Bliss-Incarnate') thus : "Ma sees the world as God and this is the secret of Her marvellous love and compassion."

So this is the real personality of Ma, which has aptly been depicted in eight ṛchas (mantras) of Rig Veda (Mandala Ten, Sukta 125) in the words of Vāk, the holy daughter of Maharshi Ambhran, who had established complete identification with the Divine Mother. One day Sri Aurobindo, on realisation of such divine personality of the Mother (of Sri Aurobindo Ashram) had also declared to Her : "You are SHE." And it is not a mere coincidence that he formulated his supreme mantra : '*Om Anandamayī, Chaitanyamayī Satyamayī Parame.*'

In such divine personality of Her inner being Ma is present eternally. Her presence can still be experienced and realised as concretely as while She was playing Her '*līlā*' in Her recent incarnation which was only Her 'outer manifestation.'

"Keep God in remembrance till self is forgotton."

—Shamsi Tabriz

# The Contemporaries of Sri Krishna Chaitanya and Their Successors

R. K. Banerjee

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

## **The Goswamis of Kalna Temple II.**

One day, after immersing himself deeply in his own *sādhana*, letting Hridayananda worship in the temple, Sri Gauridas conceived a desire to test the progress of his disciple. So he informed him that the Lord's annual festival was imminent, and that he was departing to the homes of his disciples to secure sufficient funds and goods, hence in his absence Hridayananda should be extremely careful about his daily tasks. Thus Gauridas departed and continued to spend his time in peace, in constant worship of his Lord and Master with great joy and satisfaction in the company of other devotees, forgetting all his other cares. In the meantime the day of the festival drew near and now there were only two days left. It was then that Hridayananda became worried. His Guru had not yet returned, and it was high time to send out invitations. Gurudeva might return just before the event, but by then it would be too late to send out letters, yet invitations just had to be formally extended. Consequently Hridayananda at last sent out all the invitations in the name of his Gurudeva.

Sri Gauridas returned the day before the festival, and when he learnt that Hridayananda had sent out invitations in his name, he pretended to be very angry. Why, what was all this? During his very lifetime, how dare Hridayananda behave so independently? He at once banished Hridayananda from his house. What else could Hridayananda do but perform his *pranāmas* to his Guru's feet and leave? He decided to go to the bank of the Ganga and spend the night there.

Next morning, he sat on the river bank, despondently thinking that this was the day of the *Utsava*, yet he could not join in its celebration! He kept on remembering his Guru, shedding tears of remorse and grief. Just then a boat load of materials for the festival arrived at the river *ghat* together with a disciple. Hridayananda sent word of the arrival of the goods to his Guru, who pretended to get angry and sent back a message to Hridayananda to the effect that as the goods had first been sighted by him, he—Gauridas, would not touch them, but Hridayananda, if he was capable, was free to utilise the materials for whatever festival he thought he could perform. At this news unbounded joy filled the heart of Hridayananda. His Gurudev had thus instructed him to proceed with the festival himself! This was great news indeed! On hearing of Thakur Hridayananda's festival on the Ganga bank, lots of Vaishnavas with *Sri khol*s (drums) gathered within a short time. The great kirtan commenced.

The sound of the mighty kirtan arose from the bank of the river and spread over the whole of Ambika-Kalna. It was widely believed that without Sri Krishna Chaitanya's personal presence such a heart-warming kirtan could not take place. Sri Gauridas himself was overtaken simultaneously with great joy and sorrow at hearing the melodious sound of the kirtan. He at once realised that without the personal participation of Sri Chaitanya such a wonderful kirtan could never be achieved. In great fear he quickly went inside his temple, and sure enough, the pedestals were intact but both the Deities were absent! Sri Gauridas at once understood that his Lords were nowhere else but at the festival of Hridayananda, where they must be dancing to the rhythm of the kirtan!

Gauridas lost his temper, took hold of a big stick, and ran to the scene of the kirtan. From a distance the Pandit saw that his fears were indeed justified. The two brothers Nitai and Gour were dancing with Hridayananda in the middle of the ring of Kirtan singers. All the participants were completely entranced by the inspired singing.

The two brothers, seeing the Pandit advancing towards them with a big stick, at once re-entered Gauridas's temple like chastised boys—but what did Gauridas perceive? He beheld the two brothers disappearing into the heart of Hridayananda! On witnessing this wonderful sight, the stick dropped from his nerveless hands. In divine ecstasy, with profuse tears streaming down his cheeks, he ran to Hridayananda, clasped him to his bosom, and

exclaimed, "oh my Hriday ! From today you will be known as Hridaya Chaitanya ! You are the beloved of my Lord Sri Chaitanya. Please come back home."

Sri Hridayananda fell at his Guru's feet, and the two returned to the temple side by side. Now there was no limit to their unbounded joy ! From that day onwards, Sri Gauridas officially proclaimed Sri Hridaya Chaitanya as the Sevait of Kalna temple.

In this way, having handed over the trusteeship of the service of his Lords Nitai and Gour to Sri Hridaya Chaitanya, Sri Gauridas Pandit departed for Vrindaban, and there worshipped his beloved *Iṣṭas* for some more years until the year 1481. On Shukla Trayodashi of the month of Shraban, during Sri Krishna's *Jhulan* Festival, he entered into the Supreme Sublime, repeating the name of his beloved Sri Krishna in *japa*. His body was buried in *Samādhi* in his own "Dhir Samir Kunja" at Sri Vrindaban Dhām. Sometime later, when Sri Jahnvi Mata, the spiritual consort of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, arrived there on pilgrimage at Dhir Samir Kunja, she cried bitterly at the sight of the *Samādhi*. She was the daughter of Suryadas Pandit, Gauridas's elder brother. At that time, Baru Gangadas (the elder Gangadas), a disciple of Sri Gangadas Pandit, was the Sevait in charge of the Pandit's Sri Shyam Ranga Vighraha and his *Samādhi*. Baru Gangadas was the son of the sister of Pt. Suryadas's wife, and a devoted disciple of Pandit Gauridas. It is recorded in the "Bhakti-



Ratnakar," a masterly treatise on the second and third generation of Vaishnava Saints following Shri Chaitanya, that Baru Gangadas had been instructed by his Guru Pandit Gauridas in a dream to go to Vrindaban to take charge of the *Samādhi* and the temple at the Pandit's Kunja after his death. Even at present the Sevaits of Dhir Samir Kunja at Vrindaban are affiliated to the Sevaits of the Kalna Mahaprabhu temple. We hope to discuss in due course the wonderful life and Lilās of Sri Jahnavi Devi, who was the inspiration of the Gaudia Vaishnava leaders after Sri Nityananda's demise—more or less as Sri Sri Sarada Ma was destined to be for the monastic followers of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa after his departure from earth.

No better epitaph can be written on Gauridas Pandit than to quote from Thakur Sri Narottam Das's immortal verse in the *Padavali Kirtan* which is invariably sung at the conclusion of every ceremonial *Akhaṇḍa Nāma Yajña*, including those of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha :

“Gauridas Panditer karete dhaira,  
Kohichen Mahaprabhu kandia kandia.  
Goloker Sampad Harinam Sankirtan,  
Kemone vidai debo Mohantera jānā.”

Holding on to Gauridas Pandit's hand, and shedding profuse tears, Mahaprabhu exclaims, “Harinam Sankirtan is the legacy of the immortal Gods. How can I ever bid farewell to the participating Mahants ?”

## III

While Sri Hridayananda was engaged with his whole heart and soul in worshipping the Lords at Kalna temple, there arrived a young Vaishnava devotee from Orissa, called Dukhi (meaning the sorrowful one). He was born on the full moon of the month of Chaitra, and his devout parents named him Dukhi, so that Sri Krishna, in his infinite mercy, might look after the welfare of the "sorrowful one."

Dukhi proved to be very intelligent and a great devotee of Sri Krishna from childhood. At an early age he mastered the Sanskrit grammar and text books, and drank deep of the descriptions of the *līlās* of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha. When he became old enough, he informed his parents of his heart's desire, obtained their permission, and departed to Ambika-Kalna to seek initiation from Sri Hridaya Chaitanya, the chief disciple of Pandit Gauridas, whose fame had spread to Orissa.

Dukhi arrived at Kalna in the month of Phalgun, and Sri Hridaya Chaitanya took pity on him. He obtained all the facts of his life from the young disciple, and was delighted to observe such a deep love for Krishna in one so young. He bestowed initiation on Dukhi on the full moon of Phalgun, and named him Dukhi Krishnadas, at the same time indicating that later, at Vrindaban his name would be changed to Shyamananda.

The three second generation Vaishnava leaders Thakur Narottamdas, Acharya Srinivas, and Shyamananda were destined to play a very impor-

tant role in later years in bringing back to Greater Bengal the sacred Vaishnavā religious volumes that had been compiled in the sublime seclusion of Vrindaban Dham by the original Goswami contemporaries of Mahaprabhu. Meanwhile, after some days, Dukhi Krishnadas's Guru instructed his disciple to proceed to Vrindaban on pilgrimage, much to the latter's reluctance to forsake his Guru at this stage; but what could he do except obey his Guru's command ?

The inhabitants of Vrindaban were struck by the deep devotion to Sri Krishna shown by Dukhi Krishnadas. Sri Hridaya Chaitanya had written from Kalna to Sri Jiva Goswami at Vrindaban (one of the original six), to the effect that he was unreservedly placing his favourite disciple Dukhi Krishnadas in the care of Sri Jiva, so that Sri Jiva might take pity on him and fulfil his ambition. Furthermore, he wrote to his disciple Dukhi Krishnadas that he was to look upon Sri Jiva in the same light as his own Guru.

On his arrival at Vrindaban Dukhi Krishnadas had first of all visited Radhakund. Beholding the celestial beauty of Radhakund and Shyamakund, tears of joy poured forth from his eyes. On noticing his love and devotion, the Brajavāsis took him to Sri Raghunath Das Goswami, who used to live on the banks of Radhakund. After hearing his story, Sri Das Goswami sent him on to Sri Jiva Goswami in the company of his own followers.

On being made aware of his full particulars, Sri Jiva Goswami took instant pity on him, and

offered to teach him the Vaishnava Shastras. Very diffidently Dukhi Krishnadas enquired, "How should I start to learn the Vaishnava Granthas?" Sri Jiva replied that he could study the texts in the company of Sri Srinivas and Thakur Narottam Das, who were doing the same. At that very moment Srinivas and Narottam Das arrived and Sri Jiva Goswami introduced Dukhi Krishnadas to them. Thus Sri Srinivas, Thakur Narottam Das, and Dukhi Krishnadas spent quite some time in imbibing the deep wisdom contained in the Vaishnava religious text books on bhakti in the presence of Sri Jiva Goswami.

Soon realising that Sri Radha-Shyamsundarji had showered their full blessings on Dukhi Krishnadas, Sri Jiva Goswami changed his name to Shyamananda, and initiated him into the art of carrying out mental devotional puja. From then onwards Dukhi Krishnadas became known as Shyamananda. On completing his study of the devotional text books, Sri Shyamananda subsequently returned to Ambika-Kalna.

There is an authentic account of a wonderful *līlā* connected with Sri Shyamananda's stay at Vrindaban Dham, during which he was decorated with his famous tilak (holy mark) on his forehead. One day Sri Shyamananda discovered a golden anklet in Sri Nikunja Van. The Sevait and staff of the temple were then searching for the same, when Shyamananda informed them that he had found a single golden anklet. When Shyamananda came to know that it belonged to Sri Radharani's

feet, out of sheer devotion he at once placed it on his forehead. Immediately the imprint of the anklet was engraved permanently and quite clearly on the skin. Everybody became amazed, because from the top tip of the nose to the top of his forehead, the sign of the anklet was permanently engraved. Thereafter Shyamananda merely filled in the mark with chandan (sandalwood) when he used to decorate himself with the tilak. In the meantime Guru Sri Hridaya Chaitanya had come to know that Shyamananda had changed his previous tilak, so in spite of realizing the truth quite clearly in his own mind, he professed to be very angry, and visited Sri Shyamananda in Vrindaban. In a fit of outward anger he asked, "who has bestowed on you the changed tilak?" The disciple fell at his Guru's feet and replied, "Gurudev, you have yourself bestowed this tilak on me. You are my Guru. Had you not shown mercy on me, who else would have had the power to do this to me? It is you yourself who have done this." As often as Hridaya Chaitanya asked him, Sri Shyamananda obediently replied, "Prabhu, you have yourself bestowed this tilak on me."

Then, in order to prove to the general public the sterling character and powers acquired by his disciple, in front of all the Brajavāsis present, Sri Hridaya Chaitanya tried to erase the marks of the tilak on Sri Shyamananda's forehead for twelve successive days with a sharp knife, but due to Radharanis's wonderful mercy, not a spot of blood nor a trace of disfigurement appeared on Sri Shyamananda's forehead !

On observing this, all the Brajavāsis present exclaimed "Glory be" in their wondrous joy. And clasping his favourite disciple to his heart, Sri Hridaya Chaitanya exclaimed, "Oh my son Dukhi Krishnadas, oh my Shyamananda, from today onwards I bestow on you this *tilak* alone." Shyamananda then fell at his Gurudev's feet in veneration. Oh, Jai Jai to Gauridas, just as Hridaya Chaitanya was your deserving pupil, so has he obtained a fit disciple in Shyamananda !

From that time, at the Sri Shyamsundar's temple at Vrindaban established by Sri Shyamananda, his annual pūjā festival is celebrated by observing this "*Danda Mahotsava*", or "festival of punishment" for 12 days in advance. The same practice is observed at Gopiballavpur in Midnapur. One more deed attributed to Shyamananda can be related here. During the activities of the post-Mahaprabhu generation in Greater Bengal, the three recognised leaders, Thakur Narottam Das, Sri Srinivas Acharya, and Sri Shyamananda carried on the true Vaishnava tradition with the full grace of the Lord. So their influence in Bengali orthodox kirtan still persists.

Thakur Narottam Das established a style of kirtan called Garanhati, named after the divisional district in which his home town Kheturi was situated. This was called Garenhat, which was colloquially called Garentat, on the bank of the river Padma across the East Bengal border. It was at Kheturi that Thakur Narottam Das performed the first fully ritualistic *Nāma Yajña Mahotsava*

(Superfestival), as we see it today in truly orthodox Vaishnava circles. At this *Nāma Yajña* many devotees are credited to have actually beheld Sri Chaitanya and Sri Nityananda taking an active part.

Sri Srinivas Acharya called his style of kirtan Manohar shahi after the sub-division where his home town of Jajigram was situated. Sri Shyamananda, who had left his home in his childhood, and who had no home as such, called his style of kirtan Ranihati—or Renati, after the name of Ranaghat or Ranahat sub-division, in which the temple of Ambika-Kalna was founded.

After a while, Shyamananda obtained his Guru's permission to proceed towards his paternal village in Orissa, passing through the district of Rayani in the course of his journey. Among the Raja of Rayani's children there was a son called Rasikananda. He was also known as Rasik Murari. Rasik Murari was one day sitting on the bank of the river Subarnarekha at Ghatshila when he heard a celestial voice saying, "Proceed to Sri Shyamananda for your initiation." His mind was filled with vague doubts and hopes. That night Sri Shyamananda appeared to him in a dream, and told him, "You will have my darshan to-morrow morning." In due course Rasik Murari beheld the radiant image of Sri Shyamananda approaching him from a distance, surrounded by his followers. Rasik Murari bowed in veneration at his feet and Sri Shyamananda, in his infinite mercy, initiated him with Krishna mantra. Guru and disciple proceeded to Rayani for a *Mahotsava*,

Later Sri Shyamananda initiated another reputed Yogi disciple then called Sri Damodar, who was destined to become famous later as Nitai Chaitanya. About this time Sri Shyamananda composed a number of incomparable *Padavali Kirtans*, and initiated a large number of people in Balarampur, Dharanda, Nrisinhapur and Sripat Gopitallapur in Midnapur district, where he installed Sri Rasikananda as the Sevait.

Meanwhile at Kalna, Sri Hridaya Chaitanya continued to serve the Lords Nitai and Chaitanya to his heart's content and the number of devotees visiting the holy shrine kept on multiplying.

Here came Sri Jahnvi Mata, after returning from her visit to Vrindaban on her way to Khandeha. She had been instructed by Nityananda Prabhu to visit Kalna temple as part of her pilgrimage.

Slowly Sri Hridaya Chaitanya advanced in age, and in due course installed his disciple Sri Gopiraman Thakur as the Sevait in Gauridas's temple, before retiring into deep *sāadhanā*, during which he attained to *Mahāsamādhi* at the feet of his beloved Lords.

( *To be continued* )

God is ever near us, because He is within us.  
If you are a true seeker, then seek Him within you first and then behold Him everywhere around you.

—Swami Ramdas



# Five Hundredth Advent of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Saroma Mookerjee

Five hundred years ago  
The condition of this land was low.

The rich and Brahmins were callous and cold ;  
The poor and the low caste were not so bold.

The tyranny and oppression of the upper class  
Put to utter misery the entire mass.

This made the sane and devotees sad and sorry ;  
What to do ? They began to worry.

From morn till midnight they started prayer ;  
It was unique and it was rare.

Our Lord and Saviour, please do hear ;  
Insult and agony we cannot bear.

Only love and care will solve the problem ;  
So our Lord came down without emblem.

Singing devotional songs he knocked at every door ;  
The huts of the low castes and the poor.

He begged them to come along and sing solemn song ;  
That would make them delighted, happy and strong.

The amazed public chanting hymns joined Him  
at once ;  
His melodious and sweet tune allured them to  
sing and dance.

The uproar reached the horizon and the Heads,  
Who were afraid and restless in their beds.

Running they came with rods to stop it ;  
Lo ! they were numb and fell at his feet.

They entreated, "We are wretched sinners, kindly  
forgive ;  
Have pity, have mercy or we cannot live".

God says, "Keep in mind, right implies duty ;  
Treat people well and with some dignity".

"All are His children, all are equal ;  
Love, affection, human virtue that is the ritual".

They were moved and shouted with joy,  
"Oh, Gracious Father ! we are only Thy toy.

Standing around with tearful eyes they sang sweet  
verse ;  
God smiled and there was celestial lustre in the  
universe.

Long ago our beloved and revered "NIMAI"  
came thus ;  
He is our heart and soul and is still with us.

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## Announcement

1. This year **Shree Shree Durga Puja** will be celebrated by Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha at its Kankhal Ashram from **Oct. 19 to Oct. 23** and **Shree Shree Lakshmi Puja** on **Oct. 28** in the evening.

2. The **36th Samyam Saptaha Mahabrata** will be celebrated, too at the same place from **Nov. 20 to Nov. 27** in the vicinity of the **Maha-Samadhi** of our Pujya Shree Shree MA.

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# The Meaning of the Word 'God'

M. P. Jain

The word 'GOD' is often very vaguely or loosely used, many a time quite unconsciously, as in the phrases, by God, God forbid, for God's sake etc. How this word was coined etymologically and came to be in use cannot be said definitely, but this is definite that this word denotes something that it is generally insufficiently supposed to mean. A dictionary gives its meaning as (1) superhuman being worshipped as supernatural power and (2) object of worship. The first meaning can straight-away be dismissed by citing the example of those yogis who have been living in the same body for centuries and who wield immense supernatural powers, e.g., of materialising and dematerialising their body any time they like, etc. Obviously, they may be called godlike or godmen, but not God Himself. The second meaning also does not hold any ground in view of the fact that anything including human beings can also be object of worship and as such cannot be called God. Another dictionary states the meaning of God as the Creator and Preserver of this world. But this meaning too is inappropriate in so far as there are mystics who not only believe in God, but seek Him, establish communion with Him—and this communion ever goes on widening, deepening and

strengthening—and they know it for certain that there is no creator or preserver. Anyway, before the matter is processed further, let it be added that the word God, if it is with small 'g' means a deity, a celestial being and is different from that word an attempt for discussing the meaning of which is being made here.

From what has been stated above it is now fairly clear that the word God itself is very elusive. In fact it has *different connotations to different persons in different moods* and it has a different meaning even to the same person at different stages of his evolution. To one lover this word may mean his beloved as is often found in the Urdu and Persian poems composed by Sufis and to another it may mean his Divine Mother whom he finds all-pervading and all-pervasive, controlling and carrying out the work of nature in multifarious forms and modes in all its attributes, yet Herself being controlled to the lower levels, or he may see Her in some form, human or otherwise, and Her *sāadhanā* being progressed in many a human form and other objects irrespective of the fact as to whether those persons or objects through whom Her *sāadhanā* is going on are conscious of it or not ; to a devotee this word may mean and often does mean an Avatār who takes birth at different periods for a certain purpose, say for establishing dharma and rooting out evil ; and to a yogi this word signifies the Supreme Being, the Omnipotent Lord, Who confronts him at every step and Whose instrument he aspires to become. A mystic may

say that by this word he means something very real, nay, the only Reality that permeates and penetrates every atom and molecule or broadly speaking all the things that are visible to the naked eye and that Reality throbs within every life and vibrates through each pore and drop of blood and yet is transcendent and all-pervasive. But if a *jñāni* is contacted, he will like to remain reticent and will seldom make use of this word but as and when he speaks—and if he speaks at all—he will speak of the Self only which is absolute, immutable, infinite, indivisible and eternal. In it nothing is ever merged—as some yogis believe in the merger of the individual spirit with the cosmic spirit—nor is anything ever separated from it. The phenomena of change in names and forms are confined to nature only and have nothing to do with the Self. There the law of causation, or for that matter any other law, ceases to function and has no reach. To such a *jñāni* this word 'God' obviously seems meaningless or rather too insignificant. The state of a *jñāni* can perhaps best be illustrated by the recently living example of Sri Ramana Maharshi. It is said of him that whosoever came into his presence, even though he had a hundred questions or doubts in his mind, became calm the moment he came before him and that calmness made him forget all his doubts. Sri Ramana Maharshi's silence had its effect and that 'Ramana Effect' worked in the aspirants ever after and still works. Obviously, this silence was more eloquent and communicative than any speech could

be, nay, it is there even now at work not only in the aspirants who had had the good fortune of seeing him and coming in contact with him but in others also, though in a more subtle way. Sri Ramana Maharshi seldom used this word God and whenever he spoke, he spoke of the Self only.

The inference thus reached is that though the word is one, it has many connotations. If to one it means truth, to the other it may mean light and yet to another the 'WORD' which is audible to the aspirants who reach a particular state of mind, and this word vibrates eternally throughout the cosmos, is itself the cause of all creation, being itself beyond any causation. The word God means to the theists according to their own light and wisdom and the fact of the matter is that there is no atheist, for the so-called atheist also tries to deny something which, he impliedly means, already exists. Though that is beside the point, a historical anecdote may here be quoted. It is said that Charvaka of Sri Shankaracharya's times was a staunch atheist and both he and Sri Shankaracharya were well-known for their deep erudition. Once they were involved in discussion and to facilitate the matter and also to avoid any controversy amongst the mass of people who were very eager to hear them it was decided that they should go up the hill. There they continued putting forth their arguments and counter arguments for a week. Though the arguments were very logical, yet neither of the two could convince the other of the existence or otherwise of God. Ultimately, Char-

vaka told Sri Shankaracharya that it would be no good if they went down the hill that way, leaving the people in suspense. It was better for the general folk to believe in God. The other way would be too complicated and fraught with dangers and pitfalls ; saying that he rolled himself down. Obviously, Charvaka who had immense love for mankind and who martyred himself for the great cause cannot be called an atheist.

Now to come to our point and conclude, let it be said that we are living in a world of relativity. This universe is His manifestation and all phenomena of change in forms, space and time at various planes are nothing but the cosmic play. There is nothing beyond Him or without Him. Whatever meaning, therefore, is assigned to the word 'God' with sincerity is relatively correct and carries weight.

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Ye that are slaves of the 'I', that toil in the service of self from morn to night, that live in constant fear of birth, old age, sickness and death, receive the good tidings that your cruel master exists not.

—Lord Buddha

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To perform one's worldly duties is a good thing. At the same time one has to be mindful of man's real Duty.

No matter what work has to be done at any time, try to give your full attention to it and do it thoroughly. Under all circumstances rely upon God.

Verily, He is all-pervading and therefore can be found everywhere. With your whole being invoke the Lord of Life.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# Meditation : The Science of Synthesis

Dr. K. M. P. Mohamed Cassim, Ph. D.

The complex problems of modern life can be solved easily if people know the science of meditation. It is only when the mind is tranquil that it can really observe the immense activity of the brain without creating psychological complications. Needless to say, that greatest importance should be given to the correct understanding of the working of the mind, because it is the only instrument we have, and as long as we are ignorant of the ways of the mind, there is every possibility for taking its fancies, vagaries and distortions for Reality. But when we discover its many methods of creating illusions and aberrations we see them as unreal and they no longer bind us. Meditation is really a technique for the attainment of spiritual tranquility since the practice of meditation brings about transformation of the body and mind by progressive reduction and elimination of the noxious stimuli which ordinarily excite and disturb. Regular meditation creates a new type of disposition in the mind which gradually eliminates the impressions gathered both in the subconscious and unconscious mind. Thus the mind is purged or emptied of all the factors likely to disturb its inner composure. Then meditation ripens into a higher state in which the

aspirant rises above the usual duality of subject and object and perceives the Infinite.

Meditation implies a constant awareness at every moment and we need the capacity to detach ourselves from everything. In meditation the marks of all impressions that are stored in the mind are wiped away and thereby we experience the fullness of life and benediction. We all know that a conditioned mind which is crippled by the psychological memory always breeds fear and insecurity. Suffering is the dominant characteristic of the human condition. Physical ailments rack the body; old age brings a variety of disabilities. The main cause of pain is traceable to craving and attachment as the individual is the prisoner of his misconception mistaking the unreal for the real. When he disciplines the mind, destroys the shackles of desire and achieves inner peace, then only he is free from mental anguish, frustration, disappointment, despair, anxiety and dejection. Meditation is an effortless state that leads us beyond the psychological confusion into a state where the mind is at perfect peace. Meditation is a delicate discipline to observe our thought processes as they are, without the burden of our past memory and preconceived ideas. It provides practical methods of holistic living that foster inner balance and outer harmony. Inner freedom is a state of being alone in meditation which means not dependence on others. Perhaps there comes a moment for all of us when we meditate quietly the inescapable state of solitariness or aloneness and in that meditative awareness, fear and

sorrow drop away and the real surrender of age takes place spontaneously. The only way to solve the conflict of dissatisfaction is by losing our ego which is the veil that hides the vision of Truth. Hence, the giving up of false self is the first step towards the realization of Reality which is the culmination of meditation.

Meditation cannot be superimposed from outside and it wells up from inside when our mind is not the battle ground of contradictory and conflicting desires. It is a state of awareness into which we take a plunge which leads to the realization of the Supreme. Actually meditation implies unconditional total change and radical transformation of the human mind. We reach this creative silence when the entire energy is gathered, when we are alert and do not allow mental faculty to be dissipated. The enquiry of Truth becomes an all consuming flame within when we start living every moment with choiceless awareness.

It is futile to embark upon spiritual journey with a selfish mind and an impure heart. All the teachings of great saints can be summarized to this, that our primary need is to attain a silent mind and this emptiness of mind is indispensable for the realization of Truth. Generally our mind is like a mirror, it gathers dust while it reflects, the dust must be blown off again and again and this constitutes the process of the dissociation from our ego because it maintains a screen between ourselves and Reality. We must get rid of all our disturbances both outer and inner in order to perceive the Reality as the

right perception is possible only with the help of a silent mind and without right perception there cannot be right action. It is very necessary to develop the divine qualities of mental alertness and purity of heart. There is no short-cut to enlightenment. What is required is a transformation of consciousness, a reshaping of every aspect of thinking. The content of human consciousness is the whole movement of thought and the desire for power, position and the pursuit of pleasure in which there is fear. Without understanding the subtle activities of our mind we cannot progress in spiritual life. Meditation means choiceless awareness which implies the ability to drop a thought when it is complete and not to entangle it with succeeding thoughts. If we can sustain this state of non-reactional observation naturally, the momentum of the past psychological confusion goes into abeyance ; then there is nothing more to observe, consequently the division between the observer and the observed withers away by itself. In this divine synthesis we experience the bliss of Infinite in which state the last activity of ego goes voluntarily, effortlessly. This is the beginning of inner freedom and the sweetness of silence.

In meditation all the complications that the ego weaves around, the network of complexities as well as all the inhibitions drop away. At present the mental energy in its totality has no opportunity to function properly since, the ego is dividing and pulling it in so many directions. In meditation the mind is completely silent as it is not moving in any

direction because the ego is in abeyance. The usefulness in meditation is although the mind has all the talents and capacities intact, yet there is a total cessation of mental activity which means energy which divides into contradictory desires, conflicting intentions and scattered into various directions comes back to its original source. This is something which we can really experiment with when we practise meditation. Every thought or feeling disturbs or gives a jerk to the whole chemistry of the body, but when we are in meditation there is perfect rhythm which means the digestive process, the glandular, the nervous system all are in a harmonious state. Thereby the biological and psychological processes are beautifully synthesized.

We live in a world full of stressful situations and to run away from stress is to run away from life. By changing our mental responses we can easily learn to manage mental confusion because virtually all psychological stress comes from the rush and hurry of a frantic mind, which jumps recklessly to unwarranted conclusions, rushes to judgements. Such a mind subjects the body to continual stress because it is always on the moving, desiring, worrying and fearing. Simply by slowing down the mind—the first purpose of meditation much of this kind of stress can be removed from life. As long as there is a division in consciousness between like and dislike, that division itself will be a breeding ground for frustration, insecurity and anxiety. As a matter of fact, psychosomatic studies have shown how

often they cause most damaging physical diseases and unhappiness. It is not so much an event or circumstances that brings on an attack of anxiety; it is the significance we ascribe to that event, the way we react to it in our own mind that triggers anxiety or tension. We can attain real freedom by transcending our mind which is limited and conditioned by various factors. Meditation is the correct method to contact the Cosmic Consciousness. Without understanding the very structure of the mind it is impossible to go beyond the mind, because the movement of the mind which functions within the limitation of psychological time brings fear and deception. The meditative awareness increases the capacity to understand the totality of the mind; then there is freedom and divine bliss. Philosophically speaking, there is only eternal present and there is neither past nor future. So long as the ego is there it creates fear or frustration. The element of fear is introduced by the ego when it thinks about the future or when the mind dwells in the past. The best way to overcome the fear or insecurity is to observe the movement of the mind through meditative awareness. Then the agitation of the mind stops as the ending of the activity of the mind is the beginning of the sweet state of silence and serenity. Till we reach the state of internal silence we cannot liberate from the influence of fear which always brings sorrow and misery.

Nowadays man has lost the charm and beauty of living totally every moment as in life he passes

through half-lived experiences. Therefore the challenges of life are half-met and half-resolved. Obviously the challenges unmet and the tension unresolved go down to his subconscious mind and torture him as every experience which is not lived totally brings various psychological complications. Fragmentation of attention is the main cause for all misery and sorrow in life. Hence, the aim of meditation is the complete integration of the human being. When the psycho-physical energy of man is directed by enlightened intelligence something wonderful happens and he experiences bliss and harmony in his relationship. Meditation does not mean a state of oblivion nor is it a condition of stupor. Meditation is possible when there is no thought interference, which means psychologically the mind becomes a witness to thought activity. In meditation there is cessation of the variations of the mind, then mind becomes calm and serene and in that silence there is no agitation of any kind, no stir mars the perfect stillness. In meditation the feeling of separation vanishes, the ego barrier is dissolved and transcended. True spirituality is harmonious and holistic living, free from greed, ambition and competition. To live a life of freedom is the aim of meditation, because man is born to live a perfect life.

The major obstacles to man's liberation and total transformation are memory habit and attachment to fixed ideas—images. In order to understand the nature of ourselves, it is necessary to focus our attention on the working of our mind.

With a view to have this self-knowledge the mind must be aware of itself from moment to moment, its own movements, urges, motives and operation of psychological memory. If the mind can be aware of all that within itself then there is a possibility of being free from all conditioning and misery. When one realizes that it is one's thoughts that cause the unhappiness then there is the right foundation, the correct starting point for investigation which means that for the first time one becomes wholly responsible for one's own sorrow and not on something external. At this stage what is immediately meaningful and relevant is one should unceasingly enquire into various activities and psychological reactions of the mind with ever-increasing attention. This method of carefully watching the origin and the end of each thought will give the capacity to probe into both conscious and unconscious mind and thereby not to get entangled in thoughts.

There is in every man an inherent urge to grow, develop and expand because each soul is potentially divine. The importance of spiritual discipline cannot be neglected, because the development of life truly means the cultivation of calmness of mind. Man's achievements in various fields are but the manifestations of his inner attainment. He who is master of his mind is capable of entering into the ocean of Infinite. Although the real freedom is within us it has to be rediscovered by persistent effort in the right direction despite repeated failures. The secret of every great achievement lies in devo-



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ting one's life in the art of meditation in an atmosphere of freedom, fearlessness and solitude. The Key to self-mastery consists in discriminating the real from the unreal. The more a person is aware of his divine nature the greater his capacity to observe all his mental happenings in a detached way as a witness and thereby he is in tune with the Infinite. Better life, happier life, peaceful life, all these are by-products of the personal discovery of Truth. Life is new at each moment and therefore, one must live in the living present by dropping the dead past so that we can enjoy the beauty of meditation and for which one should be totally open, spotlessly pure, absolutely frank and fully receptive. A delicate sensitive and silent mind when combined with a tender heart has a divine quality to comprehend the contents of consciousness and the immediate condition of the psyche.

Human mind is constantly exposed to a variety of stimuli both internal and external and these stimuli acting through various sense organs cause an incessant series of changes in the subconscious mind. Some of the fluctuations appear to be pleasing while others are painful and these sensations invariably create a mental tension which disturbs the equilibrium of the mind. It is apparent that our attachment to pleasure and aversion to the pain are the real cause of the psychological conflict. Although science and technology have piled comfort upon comfort yet we can see in the present day greater and greater incidence of neurosis and psycho-somatic illnesses and a large

number of problems arising from psychological maladjustments. One of the most acute problems of our society is indeed the problem of strained human relationships, because man seems to have lost the art of living together peacefully. Man has continuously been engaged and primarily concerned with the search for happiness. Yet the happiness that most of us are searching for cannot be had in sensual pleasures because, one's miseries and moods of depression simply stem from the persistent pursuit of wrong and unreal excitements. What the scientists have been trying to prove nowadays on an experimental basis, has been intuitively perceived by sages and they went further and declared from their own intuitive experience that what we call the individual soul is a part of the Cosmic Being or Absolute Reality. In other words each soul is like a wave and is only a part of the ocean of Infinity. The beauty and the bliss of oneness of microcosm and macrocosm can be experienced in deep silent meditation. Unless a man rises above the allurements of his senses he cannot expect substantial progress and development on the spiritual path. The lifting up of the mind to the realm of divinity is the aim of meditation.

Meditation is really the blissful state one experiences when the mind is absolutely calm and quiet without any mental agitations and in that state of divine ecstasy one is free from the conditioning factors of time, space and causation. Meditation is really a divine art of enjoying bliss in the Infinite. The seeker who knows that all life

is one in essence, treats all living things with reverence and respect. For him service is love in action, as he derives greatest satisfaction in sharing his knowledge, understanding and spiritual energy with others. To lead a spiritual life one must have the divine quality of fearlessness, so that one can face all the difficulties and problems boldly. To establish inner harmony through self-discipline is very important as otherwise there is the possibility of deviating from the central aim of meditative awareness. Enlightenment is indeed a culminating point in the process of realizing the Truth and for which one must have the capacity to observe and understand various layers of the mind through deep and silent meditation. It is very essential for an aspirant to dedicate his life not only in the service of humanity, but also in liberating himself from the limitation of his mind so that he is quite capable of experiencing the sweetness of meditation. Love is purely a divine attribute and the perfume of love can be enjoyed only when a seeker transcends his mental realm to the state of Cosmic Consciousness. To live in that state of the Infinite one must discard all the petty desires and purify his heart so that spiritual energy can be generated for the spiritual elevation of humanity.

Our civilization seems to be sinking under the burden of conflicts and controversies. Modern industrialization and scientific progress have of course brought about material prosperity, but man has moved away from real peace and happiness.

He seems to have lost his spiritual roots and the world seems to be moving on a wrong track. Great Saints have appeared from time to time in all countries, who have tried to awaken and enrich the spiritual and divine heritage of humanity; Their teachings are of great practical value and relevance in solving the problems of modern man because they realized Truth themselves first before preaching it to others. These great Teachers found their identity with the essence of Reality, which is the substratum of all existing things. Realization of absolute Reality is direct and immediate experience as that Truth reveals to us in our inmost being when we transcend our mind. But we get the knowledge of the objects of the world indirectly through the senses and the mind. A real seeker is he who is not a slave to his senses and mind, but on the contrary has made them his instruments and thereby he has the capacity to lift the mind up from sensual concerns towards Divinity. When the mind rests in the Infinite, one enjoys bliss and liberation.

Although our physical bodies and minds are limited and conditioned, the soul is capable of Infinite expansion and can become one with the Cosmic Consciousness through the practice of meditation. Each soul is like a wave and is only a part of the ocean of Infinity. There is a direct and intimate relationship between the individual part and the Cosmic Whole and it is the awareness of that relationship that is the foundation of a spiritual life. The soul is the core of the persona-



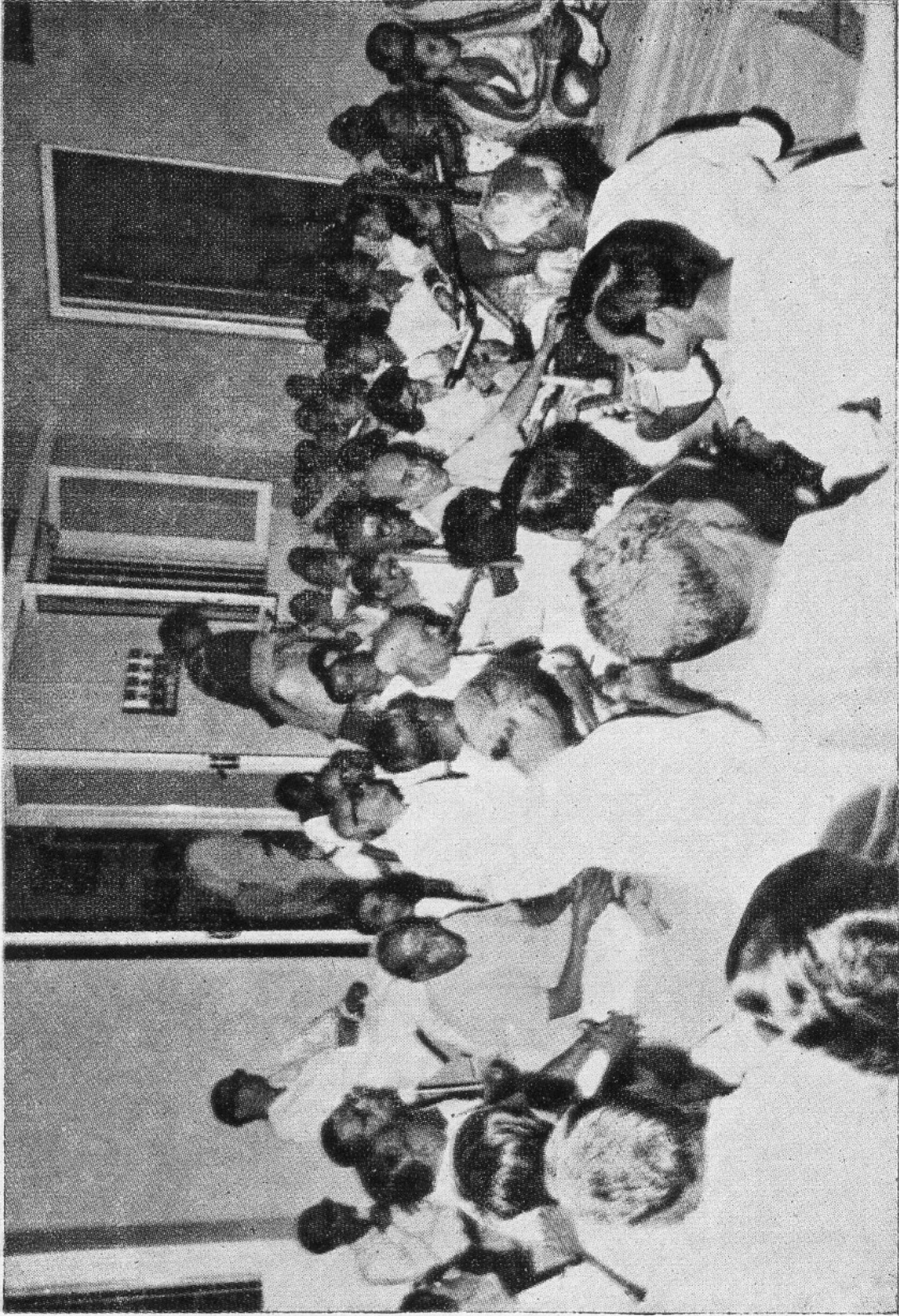
A view of the "Shrine" after puja in MATRI-MANDIR on 4. 8. 85

Photo by Courtesy: Sri S. K. Lahiri



Nam-Sankirtan on 4. 8. 85 in MATRI-MANDIR

Photo by Courtesy : S. K. Lahiri



Nam-Sankirtan on 4. 8. 85 in MATRI-MANDIR

Photo by Courtesy : S. K. Lahiri



Nam-Sankirtan on 4. 8. 85 in MATRI-MANDIR

Photo by Courtesy : S. K. Lahiri



lity and it is the centre around which the whole personality is to be integrated. If we wish to make spiritual life natural and continuous we should attain harmonious integration of personality, because in many people their emotions go one way, intellect goes in another direction and action follows a third course. As a matter of fact, spirituality is neither an emotion nor reasoning nor action. It is something directly connected with Divinity, in which state the mind is free from all superficial impositions, conditioning and ego distortions. Real meditation consists in the passive and choiceless observation of one's thoughts and feelings from moment to moment. In this state of watching the thought process one makes no attempt whatsoever to interfere with the psychological reactions towards people, events, situations, ideas and so forth. Actually, it is an unprejudiced observation of the mind in the sense that there is no repression or condemnation. Then there is the possibility of allowing the contents of the subconscious and unconscious desires getting exposed and transcended. When the noise of the petty mind has been silenced, when the death of the ego and the psychological past has taken place, when the clamour of the senses has ceased then only there occurs the full flowering of divine love, compassion and freedom.

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# Inaugural Festival at Calcutta Zonal Publication Office

R. K. Banerjee

Although “*Publications*” had shifted to our new premises at Ballygunge already in October 1984, it took several months to thoroughly repair and renovate the commodious old house, its outhouses and the beautiful spacious lawn and garden. So at last the weekend on August 3rd and 4th was chosen for an elaborate inaugural function, through a day-long *Namsankirtan*.

A *Nāma Yajña* was celebrated on Sunday, Aug. 4th, with inaugural kirtan, starting on the 3rd evening including *avāhan* (invocation) of Gour-Nitai in the orthodox manner, followed by kirtan from sunrise to sunset on the 4th.

The whole property had been beautifully painted and decorated. Full-size, life-like oil-paintings of Sri Sri Ma, Swami Muktananda Giri, Baba Bholanath, Thakur Sitaramdas Omkarnath, Sri Venkateshwar of Tirupathi and Bhaiji were hung on the walls of the Central hall where the kirtan was sung. The whole northern side of the hall was adorned with a majestic painting of Sri Sri Ma, flanked on both sides by pictures of saints and images of Rādhā-Govinda and Nitai-Gour beautifully embellished with garlands, flowers and tulsi.

In the pūjā-room, where a Narayan Śila and pictures of Ma and Thakur Sitaramdas were kept, daily *Veda patha* was being performed from Aug. 1st by a brahmachari from a local "Ved-Bhawan" of Shankaracharya Ashram.

Well before 6 p.m. on August 3rd, the main Ashram kirtan singers and a band of ladies had arrived to spend the night and start preparations for *bhoga* and *pūjā* early next morning. The cooks and assistants, usually engaged by the Agarpara Ashram for festivities, prepared, under the able guidance of Sri Kamalendu Ghosh, the main meal and other necessities to the entire satisfaction of all devotees and guests.

At 6-30 p.m. *āratī* was performed in front of Ma's dais in the kirtan hall, followed by evening kirtan led by Sri Santi Mitra and a devoted band of singers, thereafter the invocation of Gour-Nitai, concluded by *Mahānāma Kirtana* till 8-30 p.m.

On the 4th punctually at 4-30 a. m. Br. Sadananda performed *mangal āratī* amidst songs and the following of conch shells and at 5 a.m. *Nāma Kirtan* was started. There was a heavy downpour at 7-30 a.m. but by 10-30 the sky cleared up by Ma's grace and within an hour the whole premises and compound were thronged by devotees. A loudspeaker and chairs in the compound enabled everyone present to listen to the kirtan.

At 11-30 a.m. *malsa bhoga* was ready and at 12-30 the main *bhoga* was offered to Mahaprabhu. About 900 people were served a sumptuous meal in

buffet style on paper plates from the outside kitchen counter. About 100 devotees were served meals in the orthodox style on the floor on banana leaves. Swami Chinmoyananda, Virajanandaji Maharaj and a sādhu from Bharat Sevashram who came were entertained.

Devotees stayed on to listen to the inspiring kirtan. Gitasri Km. Chhabi Banerjee performed in her inimitable style and later Abhoyji's disciples arrived and were asked to conclude the kirtan in front of the dais. At 6-15 p.m. the customary *nagar sankirtan* was led out along neighbouring streets and on their return Birenda in his enthusiastic way concluded the *Sankirtan* with time-honoured songs. When the kirtan ended with 'Hari bol' and *praṇāma* at 7-30 p.m. the hall was still packed.

The whole festival was marked by unqualified success through the grace of Ma, whose presence was felt by one and all and by the unstinted efforts of Dr. Gunen Roy—the General Secy. of the Charitable Society who spared no pains to provide whatever was necessary, wherever and whenever. The untiring service of the Agarpara Ashram staff contributed largely to the overall success.

Thus this opening ceremony of "Matri Mandir" at Ballygunge, Calcutta will be remembered by the devotees for a long time as a further proof of Ma's continuing grace and mercy for Her children on earth.

Jai Guru ! Jai Ma !

## Obituary

1. With deep regret we report about the demise of two ardent devotees of Sri Ma: Sm. *Shobha Sen* who passed away in Bombay recently after protracted illness. She found Mataji many years ago after one of her sons, a healthy, accomplished young man had lost his life in a tragic accident, which left his mother in a deplorable condition, almost out of her senses. Shobhadi became greatly attached to Ma, not caring for her family, and followed Ma wherever She went for years and did Ma's seva as far as she could, until a few years before Sri Ma's Mahasāmadhi. Shobhadi's failing health forced her to remain in Bombay with her son and daughter-in-law. May she find eternal peace at Sri Ma's feet.

2. Sm. *Lakshmi Dar* passed away in a New Delhi hospital, on Jhulan Purnima August 29th, a most auspicious planetary constellation. We have been deprived of a very sincere devotee of Ma, who had become an Ashramite many years ago and served not only Ma but also whoever in the Ashram required help and assistance. Ma would often send her to look after sick inmates of the Ashram. Lakshmi was ever ready to help wherever help was required, regardless of her own comforts and convenience. After Sri Ma's Mahasamādhi she mostly stayed in Kishenpur and at the end in

Kankhal. There also she was active until her health made this impossible only quite recently. It is a great loss to us to be deprived of her presence and assistance. She has left her body but she has remained with Ma.

3. We announce with deepest sorrow the death on July 16th of Major B. C. Basu at New Delhi. He sent an article and report for Ananda Varta just a few days before he departed from this world. We are shocked at the sad news. He was an ardent and very active devotee of Ma of many years' standing—who delivered talks, arranged for kirtans and of the functions and contributed articles for our journals on many occasions. We shall greatly miss his help and co-operation. He had a heart attack sometime ago from which he seemed to have recovered. We extend our sincere condolence to his bereaved family. May he rest in peace at the feet of Ma.

4. On 3rd February 1985, Sri S. R. Das Gupta ex-Chief Justice of Mysore High Court left his body. Only a couple of years before, he published a book on Ma in Bengali. From the forties onwards for nearly 3 decades, he played an important role in Ma's lila on earth and he offered his own residence at Ekdalia place, Ballygunge, on a number of occasions for holding various functions of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. It was at his initiative that Geeta Jayanti in 1947, Ma's Janmotsab and Bhagwat Saptaha in 1950 and Samyam Mahabrata in 1953 were all held at his Ballygunge residence. Ma had visited his official residence at

Mysore where he was the Chief Justice and also his garden-house near Narendrapur in Calcutta. Ma had also visited his Ekdalia place residence on several occasions. After retirement from service, Sri Das Gupta spent his last years mainly in Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram or in Puri in solitude as directed by Ma. In the midst of chanting of God's name by the local devotees, he breathed his last peacefully to take eternal rest in the lotus feet of Sri Ma.

5. It is with deep regret that we have to announce the passing away of Brahmacharini Atmananda, the Editor of the Ananda Varta (English) on Tuesday, the 24th September, the Shukla Ekadasi Teethi of the month of Bhadra, 1985, at Kalyanvan Ashram, Dehradun.

She had been responsible for the English version of Ananda Varta since its inception, and was over 80 years age, having earlier in the year celebrated 50 years of her stay in India.

She originally hailed from Austria, and was known as Sister Blanca during the early years of her life in our Ashrams. Later, Ma accorded her full Brahmacharini rights, and the wearing of saffron robes. As an esteemed and immensely respected samnyasini of the Ashram, her body was brought by road to Kankhal, bathed, anointed, clothed and placed in front of the Samādhi of Ma, before being consigned to the Eternal waters of the Ganga of Hardwar, as is the traditional custom with Sadhus and Samnyasinis.

Atmanandaji had her first darshan of Ma at Almora in 1943. Later, in 1944 and 1945 when she was teaching at Rajghat, she had more opportunities of associating with Ma, but it was not until 1945 that she became an inmate of our Ashrams.

Atmanandaji's services were invaluable as the official interpreter during the visits of foreigners of either sex as she was fluent in German, French and other Continental languages. Her knowledge of English was profound and she was an adept in translating Ma's original Sad Vanis and utterances from Bengali to English. She was in close touch with the authors of publications on Ma in Europe and America, and had been responsible for printing Ma's diary in the English Ananda Varta from its beginning.

Having been earnestly encouraged by us, she had recently published a beautiful book on her own experiences under Ma's feet, called "As the Flower sheds its Fragrance", in 1983, followed by the first of three volumes of "Matri Lila" covering the period 1952-1962 in 1985. The next volume for the period 1962-1972 has just been completed, and she was to follow up with the final volume for the period 1972-82. She was also actively engaged in editing the English translation of Sri D. P. Mukherjee's excellent Bengali book "Matri Darshan Leela."

She was a singer of repute in her own rights, and from her early days in the Ashram, became an expert at our Ashram kirtans. It was her remarkable strength of mind and stamina, that



enabled her to preserve the singing of the "Name" alone, during the lean period of the day from 1-30 p.m. to 3-30 p.m. at big festivals when under Ma's strict instructions, the Holy name was sung Akhand in the main halls of our Ashrams.

She must have suffered incredible hardships without murmur during her earlier Ashram life, but they never left any impact on the serenity and sweetness of her disposition. Her punctuality was a byword among her friends, and she applied herself regularly to all the arduous tasks of editing with meticulous zeal and sincerity. She never passed anything for publication without authenticating the facts as far as she could, and was a great help and asset to all the foreign devotees of Ma who were keen to learn about Ma's teachings, and reproduce, in their own languages, Her edicts, conversations and sayings in their own countries. She had been suffering from cataract over the past few years but heroically carried in with her never-ending duties whenever she could obtain decent light. She breathed her last after a very brief illness, let us hope that she suffered very little in the end, and is now resting in Eternal peace at the lotus feet of Ma, for whom she gave up everything on earth for the realisation of the Supreme Truth. It is up to the rest of us to complete her unfinished work, and continue with the publication of her beloved Ananda Varta and other valuable books on Ma along the prestigious lines established by her.

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# Ashram News

## U.S.A.

Only last month we received a detailed report about the celebration of Sri Ma's birthday in the home of American devotees of many years' standing.

A lifesize photo of Ma was placed on an altar set up in the living room, with a golden banner behind it and decorated with a profusion of flowers and fruits brought by devotees. Her slippers were on a small platform below the photo and also covered with flowers.

"The mood was divine, as everyone remarked on how Mother was truly seated there before us. How many times we had seen Her looking just that same way. No matter where you were in the room—Mother's eyes were looking right into yours." There was beautiful kirtan, silent meditation and *ārati* performed by all present. *Khier* and yellow handkerchiefs were distributed as prasāda.

Photos of Ma's very lifelike picture were also enclosed in the report.

Ma seems to be extremely active all over the world. For instance another devotee in the U.S.A. recently had two very impressive dreams of Ma which changed the trend of his life.

## Bangalore

At Shree Shree Anandamayee Bhagavat Bhavan at Jayanagar, Bangalore, Sri Ma's birthday was

celebrated by an elaborate programme from 6th to 12th May. There was Usha kirtan, recitation from the Vedas, Bhagavad Gīta, Srimad Bhagavata, Devi Bhagavata in the mornings and talks on Sri Ma and other subjects, or bhajans or a dramatic performance in the evenings. On May 7th from 12 p.m. to 3 a.m. Kanika puja was performed. On the last day the students of Bhagavata Bhavan and *Daridra Narayans* were entertained to a feast.

### Dehradun

An extremely successful Bhagavata Saptah (for the first time in Dehradun since Sri Ma's Mahāsamādhi) was celebrated in the Kishenpur Ashram from August 19th to 26th. Brahmachari Nirmalananda gave very lucid and highly interesting commentaries in Hindi, mornings and afternoons for 4½ hours daily, which were greatly enjoyed by one and all. Day after day the audience sat tightly packed all over the available space, listening spell bound. On August 27th morning the whole of the Bhagavad Gītā was recited in chorus, followed by havan, brahman *bhojan* and *prasāda* for several hundreds of people. August 27th being the 3rd anniversary of Sri Ma's *Mahā samādhi*, as well as the second day of the *jhūlan* festival, silent meditation was observed in Sri Ma's room and the hall from 7-45 to 8-15 p.m. followed by the usual celebration of *jhulan* in the hall and all-night kirtan. This day happened to be the *tirodan* of Bhaiji as well. *Jhulan Purnima* on August 29th was cele-

brated by the usual pūjā in the evening and midnight meditation.

*Janmastami* was celebrated on September 7th by kirtan and solemn puja at midnight.

### New Delhi

New Delhi Ashram is no exception to the general pattern Ashrams are shaping after the physical disappearance of the Divine Mother. People have got over the pangs of vacuum which shadowed them when they thought of the crowd, the throbbing of life and feverish activities, continuous bhajans/kirtan/satsang when Sri Ma used to visit Delhi, which She did quite frequently, before Her flight to the Unmanifest.

Visitors to the Ashram for any religious function are quite numerous. It is significant that there is a sizeable number of new faces both young and old who come to the Ashram and show interest in the various institutions that we have. It is a pity that there is a dearth of young Brahmacharis who can help Brahmachari Nirmalanandaji and can be moulded and trained by him. We pray for MA's *kheyāl* in this regard.

Saraswati Puja was celebrated with the usual enthusiasm and in the Ashram tradition. The prayerful music by lady devotees kept the atmosphere surcharged. Revered Nirmalanandaji, delivered a short discourse on the philosophical aspects of Saraswati as the "Vākdevi" and indicated the origin of the physical world from the sound 'OM'.

Didima's Saṁnyāsa anniversary was also a big draw. The students of the local Sanskrit Mahāvidyālaya recited vedic mantras while the worship and community offering of flowers and *bilva-patras* (*anjali*) by the devotees progressed. There was an assembly for a number of saffron-clad *Samnyāsīs*, not a very common sight in Delhi but very appropriate for the occasion. From among the Saṁnyāsīs, Ramananda Giriji, Abhedanandaji and Sivanandaji spoke on the excellence of *Samnyāsa* as the last of the four stages of life, quoting profusely from the Bhagavat Gita and the Mundaka Upanishad. Dr. Manmatha Nath Bhattacharjee of the Sanskrit Mahāvidyalaya conducted the proceedings. Finally, Nirmalanandaji gave a lucid explanation of Ma's *kheyāl* for Didima's *Samnyāsa*, the first woman to be admitted into the Giri Sampradāya. Didima wanted to be always near Ma—with Ma. But how can one be with Ma without complete renunciation? And hence Didima donned the saffron robe. Nirmalanandaji revealed why Didima used to offer anything by her left hand. Her right hand was all the time engaged in the act of japa which she used to do on behalf of innumerable disciples whom she gave spiritual initiation, but were not able to do the necessary practice of japa or meditation. This is how she was a real guru who protected her disciples against all lapses.

Following this event, a completely new type of a function was organised on 2nd May to commemorate the opening of a Charitable dispensary in

the Ashram by late Indira Gandhi in the presence of Ma and the release of a brochure. It was the birthday of Ma ; so the function was actually a prayer-meeting. The *Nāma Brahma Mandir* was tastefully decorated with traditional 'sola and ranta' art of Bengal. There was an elegant exhibition too of photographs of Ma with the late Prime Ministers—Indira Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in simple white cloth framed columns. The credit for all this is due to Dr. (Mrs.) Anjali Chatterjee and Sri Anil Guha. Sri R. K. Trivedi, the Election Commissioner was the Chief guest. The President of the Ashram Sri Govind Narain (ex-Governor of Karnataka) presided. Sri Trivedi dressed in pure silk-dhoti and kurta looked more like a priest than the usual Chief guest. He began with an accusation against the Secretary Nirmalanandaji for having made him a guest when he is very much a member of the family. Sri Govind Narain, of course, gave an appropriate answer, that someone of the family had to be given the trouble of releasing the brochure. But Sri Trivedi is and will always be a devoted member of 'Ma's fold'. The audience was highly impressed by the conviction and erudition of Sri Trivedi in the ideals and ideas of Ma which would never fade. Both the speakers emphasised that the Ashram is the focal point of the spiritual life of the present and would-be devotees. An added attraction of the function was *bhajan* by All India Radio artists which was followed by *Mā Nam* kirtan by local devotees led by Sm. Shakti Dutta.

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Tithi puja was organised in the Ashram as well as in the personal temple of Major B. C. Bose as usual.

*N.B.* :—The above report was written and sent to us by Major B. C. Bose a few days before he departed from this world on July 16th.

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## Important Notice

With immediate effect and until further arrangement, all correspondence in connection with publication of the English Ananda Varta, and English books (already published or to be published in future), must be sent only to :

Dr. G. N. Roy (Misra)  
Calcutta Zonal Publication Office  
at the "Matri-Mandir",  
57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road,  
Calcutta-700019  
and no longer to  
Brahmacharini Atmananda (deceased)  
at Kalyan Van,  
Dehradun.

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