
To remember that God is in all action, with form as well as without form and to pray for His grace is man's bounden duty as a human being. In order that Truth may be revealed concentrate on the practice that brings about inner awakening.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

*A quarterly presenting the divine life and teaching of
SRI ANANDAMAYI MA and various aspects of
Universal Dharma*

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ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ welcomes contributions on the life and teachings of Ma and reflections and personal experiences of Ma's devotees and admirers. Articles on religious and philosophical subjects as well as on lives of saints and sages of all countries and all times are also invited. Articles should as far as practicable be typed with double spacing and on one side of the page.

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Single Copy Rs. 6.00 or \$ 1.00 or £ 0.75

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

Vol. XXXIII ● JANUARY, 1986 ● No. 1

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Man is born in order to experience the happiness and sorrow of this world. Those who have the good sense of wanting to go beyond happiness and pain must take their sole refuge in Him.

The remembrance of God must be with a human being day and night so that he may be cleansed from his shortcomings and errors.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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Regd. Office : 8-M, Connaught Circus,
New Delhi-110 001

Phones : 23-5801
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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 : "Now, listen. During the Kumbha fair at Hardwar, he (Bholanathji) was called at midnight and was told to do something. He promised that he would try, but in reality he did not do anything. When he was being requested, at that very moment I knew that he was not going to keep his word ; even then the request was made. For I have seen that even if one does not keep one's word, the word once given works within oneself. It *does* leave its impression. Again, you know what happens ? If there arises a *kheyāla* to say something, it *must* be said. When someone's mouth is filled with saliva he *has* to spit it out. It is just like that. After all, everything *does* produce some action, however little."

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Question : "Ma, my mind is never at rest. What shall I do ?"

Ma replied smilingly, "On the contrary, I find that your mind is never agitated. Does your mind ever get restless for *His* sake ? It

will attain tranquillity only after it has experienced unrest.”

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Ma : “Look, as to the functioning of this body (pointing to Herself), do you know how it is ? Just as when an adult teaches the alphabet to small children, he takes the primer in his hand and spells out A, B, etc. in such a manner as if he himself were a child. Does he not know how to read or write ? But he behaves according to the need of the moment. In a similar manner, in this body also, actions manifest according to the requirements of the situation. And what is more, whoever is the person concerned, whatever his sect (of course, here there is nothing such as ‘sect’), all that is needed in a way to help that particular person in his path, is automatically done by this body. This act of help is nothing but service to them. They themselves very kindly get it done”.

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Addressing a *māunī Brahmācārī**, Ma once said these words : “What have you gained by holding silence ? While observing *mauna*, if one does not repeat the *Namā* continuously in one’s mind, the tree neither blossoms nor bears fruit. We want flowers, fruit—everything. Without proper care

*. A celibate aspirant observing the vow of silence.

how can a nice tree grow out of the seed just sown in the soil? It needs a lot of care."

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A lady who was a profound devotee of Ma had come to have Ma's *darśana* for the first time after having lost both her husband and son. Her eyes brimful with tears, she was sitting quietly in spite of her grief. Ma was talking about her to the others present. "They have left her as a *yogini*", She said, "to seek union with Him. This heart is verily His consecrated seat, and He is already seated here. One has to perform *sādhana* in order to have a special realization of this Truth. He is Eternal; how can the honour of His throne be protected if perishable things which have a beginning and an end are placed in it? Those transitory things *must* have their advent and departure, hence they inevitably lead to sorrow. If you don't enthrone Him on His own seat and allow other things to occupy His place, it must result in suffering."

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An extraordinary thing about people living in the vicinity of Ma is that although it is not that they are never subject to suffering—sometimes the contrary is seen—yet they all receive from Ma the strength to bear it. When someone referred to this phenomenon, Ma replied with a smile, "Don't presume that once you are here, you'll never

experience what *you* call misfortune. Ill health is a law of nature. Whatever mishaps befall you, be it bereavement or whatever else, what is most important is your forbearance in the face of it”.

* * *

Ma : “You see, the peculiar *sam̐skāra* lodged in a person automatically expresses itself in action—there is no doubt about it. Whatever tendencies one has, lead to incidents taking place accordingly”.

* * *

Ma : “Look, how wonderful ! This gross body (pointing to Her body) you see here is inclusive of all gross objects of the world ! You know how ? All that cannot be embodied in material objects from one universal subtle body. Similarly, the casual body is what underlies all existence. Not that there are different forms to see ; rather it is felt if all forms were inseparably fused into that One. Again, that Supreme Cause of all causes is just what it is—that always remains as it is. In fact, there is nothing as gross, subtle or causal. One simply can’t say what is or what is not.”

* * *

Ma : “What is *kṛipā* (grace) ? ‘*kṛi*’ means ‘done’—whatever you have done ; ‘*pā*’ means you are receiving it. That is to say, as you do, so you

get. How does it manifest? Suppose, at present you have not done anything to deserve a particular result you have attained. In such a case, there must have been a *karma* performed by you in the past, which is not expressed in your present behaviour, and yet you get the fruit thereof. If you look at it from another angle, the One who is doing *Kṛi—pā*, (that is, it is possible to do so in a given situation), who is performing action for its result, can accomplish the task and bestow its fruit on you. All you receive is not the outcome of your doing. Suppose a labourer comes to work, but due to physical weakness is unable to work very hard. And yet he is really so needy that you take pity on him and regale him with extra payment—this is *kṛipā*. Again, you see, suppose you are travelling by taxi, and your taxi goes slightly out of order. The driver pushes the taxi from behind and you also join in pushing it with him. In this way, you help him take the taxi to its destination, and you also give him his fares”. Saying this, Ma started laughing. The She went on: “When one is blessed with sufficient grace to understand the fulness of grace, then he realizes that it is impossible for one to amass such a heap of goods, just as a mere spark is unable to start a fire. In the very same way, grace, too, manifests before him in its infinity and totality—in all its vastness. Then he realizes that whatever degree of spiritual discipline possible in this world that he may have practised, on the strength of that alone he could not have any capacity for realizing so much. His com-

passion, His grace, is all in all. On realizing this, the devotee then begins to float in the ocean of His compassion and grace. Just imagine how far one has to advance and how much virtuous *karma* one has to perform before one has this realization of grace revealed to him !” After this, Ma added in a serious tone, “Such talk takes place only where there are the concepts of receiving and giving, cause and effect. But in reality, you see, if all are but instruments in the hand of God, then, ‘*Karma* leads to *Kṛipa*’—what is the meaning of it ? There is only grace, and grace is everything. There is no element of ‘cause’ in that.”

“Abstraction, prayer, charity, penance, the different forms of fasting, sacrifice and vows—all move Ram’s compassion less than pure love.”

—Goswami Tulsidas

Divine Manifesto

Sri Dibyadarshi

It is an age when people hear much against religion. Spiritual heritage is at cross-roads "Spiritual quest has no place in Twentieth Century" says a remarkable man of the time. All these bear testimony to the revolutionary impulse of the age ; every one must say something against Divine quest, if he is to be deemed progressive ; otherwise he has every chance to be condemned as reactionary. Jean Paul Sartre the living great French Philosopher and literary man who once dreamt to complete communism and who refused the Nobel Prize, gave out in his writing in Twentieth Century that he knew every thing from earth to heaven, but he said 'I don't know who I am and what I am'. The question of soul appeared in his mind in exposition of his famous theory of Existentialism ; but alas, for that what attributes he earned for himself from the materialist thinkers of Europe and what they said about him, "He is a false prophet, misleading the generation". Such is the age we live in. Younger generations are completely misled by such an atmosphere of disbelief and distrust in Divinity and complete wrong philosophy of life based on wrong conception of the truth of existence as has been preached to them. On the other hand the sober thinkers point out to the fact that humanism has nothing to fear from spiritualism, True spiri-

tualism helps mankind to tide over all economic travails of humanity. *The quest of the soul brings in the brotherhood of mankind under the fatherhood of god.* It is the lack of spiritualism that has fostered cruelty and exploitation of mankind ; in dynamic spiritualism every individual must have his economic security. Religion is not responsible for all the economic ills of society ; the reasons for economic degeneration of mankind are to be sought elsewhere. We must not lose sight of these facts when we consider the spiritual heritage of man in modern times. The possessive instinct of man has nothing to do with the creative instinct of religion.

It is very fortunate that the eternal voices of the Twentieth Century are very much conscious of the complexity of modern life ; still they inspire us with the lofty ideal of life. Rabindranath in his inimitable way says "about the spiritual longing of man that it is a yearning for the Infinite, it is not like simple desire for earthly pleasures or material cravings. It is very difficult to explain what it is, what this ideal is". The great poet exclaims :

"It is only known to me,
 He who has heard the Eternal Voice,
 Rushes into trials and tribulations,
 For sakes everything for the great Cause.
 Torments he takes on his breast,
 Hears the rumblings of Death as music.
 Fire burns Him,
 Pierces Him the Spear ;
 Severs Him the Axe.
 Kindles he the Sacrificial Fire,

With all that is dear & beloved,
As fuel to ignite the Spark”.

Tolstoy who had burning love for mankind and who declared in the context of oppressions of the people by the Czars of Russia with approval of the Churches that he believed in the religion of CHRIST and not of the Churches and as a result he had to undergo severe trials in the hands of the Churches Fathers. And this Tolstoy who was regarded as the spiritual preceptor of Europe uttered in unqualified terms in his great book “My Confessions” : “Spiritual Causes lie at the root of man’s life and development and they are the ideals which govern him. These ideals find expressions in religion, in science and in art and in the forms of Government and rise higher from one stage to another till man at last reaches his highest good. I am myself a man and therefore called upon to assist in making the ideals of humanity known and accepted”.

How much we, the spiritual seeders of India, get enthused when the voice of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation from the field of din and bustle of modern politics, enters our ears. Gandhiji says “I feel that India’s mission is different from that of others. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world. There is no parallel in the world for the process of purification that this country has voluntarily undergone. Other nations have been votaries of brute force. India can win all by soul force”. (Nonviolent way to world peace —M. K. Gandhi).

Is it most inspiring for men in quest of god in the Twentieth century when the voice of T. S. Eliot, the great English poet and the father of modern poetry, rings in our ears :

“We build in vain unless the lord build with us,
Oh, weariness of man who turns from god”.

Again he says and what an impression it creates when we hear his tragic remarks on modern civilisation :

“There is no water, but rock,
Where there is no Temple, there is no house,
Man without god is seed upon the wind,
Driven this way and that way,
Finding no place of lodgement and germination”.

Above all, the clarion voice of Swami Vivekananda will guide men of this age in the path Divine with force and strength. It was Swamiji who said that there could be no religion until and unless everyone of this country could get a proper meal and enjoy health and shelter. It was he who dreamt of ushering in new Vedantic Socialism and Humanism and it was this Swamiji also who uttered these immortal words :

“Hear ye, children of immortal bliss. We are the children of god, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy perfect and perfect beings. Come up, oh lions, shake off the delusion that you are sheep. You are souls immortal ; spirits free, blessed and eternal. You are not matter ; you are not bodies. Matter is your servant and not you the servant of matter”.

The great Yogi and the seer Sri Aurovinda of modern times speaks in life Divine and throws a

challenge to all materialist thinkers when he tells us: "The ascent to the Divine life is the only real human journey, the work of works—acceptable sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence without which he would be only an insect on a speck of surface mud and water which has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensity of the physical world".

Can materialism stifle the voices of these sublime great thinkers dedicated to the cause of spiritual enlightenment for mankind in Twentieth Century?

All these great men are revered men of the age; they preached their message, published books of supreme importance to humanity; people clustered round them to hear the eternal voice of the seers.

But here ye, the miracle of the Twentieth Century in the spiritual firmament is the Universal Mother Divine, Sri Anandamayee, She has no books; She does not quote scriptures; but She is the embodiment of scriptures. She stands as an illustration of what scriptures say. She knows only how to dedicate all to God. She is Goddess incarnate; She is drowned in Divine illumination. She says I know nothing; But thousands of men knowing everything from earth to heaven, having vaster erudition and scholarship fall at Her feet to seek Divine Mercy. She sings like a child, people hear Her in rapture; they get inspired; She moves, She talks, people jostle and cluster to see Her. The

Divine Spark spreads everywhere. She is ambrosial bliss. She is the spiritual culmination of human evolution for centuries. No magic, no tricks, no spiritual circusmanship is there. No machinery for propaganda of false supernatural happenings are there. No vain glorious self glorification for preservation of dead creeds and customs in the name of saving religion is there. She is Illumination and light, She is open like wind and air. She is the sublime manifestation of the supreme Divinity. She has nothing but God in Her.

Come, oh, men of Twentieth Century, have a vision of Her ; get divine intoxication. You have not seen Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya ; you had not the opportunity to get sight of Bhagaban Sri Ramakrishna. Come hither ; Come hither ; See all in Her. See the molten bliss of heaven ; the absolute of the Vedanta moving on earth waiting to give us bliss.

In conclusion we pray "Oh, Universal Mother Divine accept our thousands of salutations and bless us on this auspicious moment. When we offer our oblations at your lotus feet, we cannot help singing in ecstasy :

"Oh Mother Divine the Ambrosial Bliss

The absolute Brahman of the Vedanta

You are :

Oh mother at Thine lotus feet

My heart rests from the moment

It has got vision of thine.

Oh, Illumination of light, Mother

You are for all the rich and the poor

The learned and the ignorant,
The saints and sinners.
No temple or churches confine you,
Everywhere you are when Devotees shed tears.
Bow down my head at Thy feet in Devotion
and wonder

Oh, you, miracle of the world,
Let thy blessings shower on us
In Abundant sweet flowers”.

“That one supreme Ruler, the soul of all beings, who makes His one form manifold—those wise men who perceive Him as existing in their own self, to them belongs eternal happiness and to none else.

—Katha Upanishad

O Mind

M. P. Jain

Life is a sublime theme and a venerable way,
O mind, don't make a mockery of it by cunning
intrigues,
Cease conspiring and planning according to your
whims
And arranging events in your own way.

Life indeed, is a spontaneous flow, let it flow,
Watch and enjoy its rhythm if you can
Widen and enlarge the horizon of your ken,
And be immersed within to enjoy and become aglow.

Life is indeed a gem, don't throw it that way
By hankering after this, that, or any thing else.
Dive deep to realise the truth of the Self
And be calm and still to enjoy the sublime way.

O, don't pretend to be the lord of what you seem to do
Introspect, retrospect and analyse in a proper way
To realise your ephemeral worth, and to be a ray
Of the Sweet Effulgence, to rise above weal and woe.

O mind, be immersed within, be immersed
To the subliminal depth to reach the Self,
Leaving vain wants and pursuits for power and pelf
To give this life a meaning and its real worth.

O mind, be immersed within, be immersed
To enjoy the bliss of living and Soul's beatitude,
To rise once for all above life's vicissitude
And with your source for ever to be merged.

O mind, be immersed within, be immersed.

Three Stories

Vijayananda

We frequently heard a saying that MA is all pervading. Her action was not limited to Her physical body, and She could hear our prayers at any distance. But these things are difficult to believe until one has actually experienced them. To strengthen our faith MA sometimes provided us with this experience. Every devotee of MA could tell at least one happening to this effect. The three following stories are an humble contribution in that direction.

I

The Poem of Tagore

This happened in Ma's Ashram at Varanasi, perhaps between 1953 and 1959. I do not remember the exact date. I was staying in a room on the second floor of the Ashram, and doing hard Tapasiya. As it happens to many sadhakas on such occasions one day my mind got into a mood of despondency. Why? Perhaps lack of progress in Sadhana. Or may be some shrinking away from the difficulties and the dangers involved.

Ma was not at Banaras at that time. But anyhow to whom could I look for help if not to Ma. Her photo was on a shelf in my room (it was my Puja Photo) and I addressed my prayers through that image. While I was engaged in this prayfull

mood somebody knocked at my door. I opened. The person handed me over a magazine from France. It was a Buddhist Journal I was receiving every three months. I opened it absent-minded still engrossed in my prayfull mood. It was written in French, but a few lines in English from the editorial attracted my attention ; It was a few verses from Tagore :

“LET me not pray to be sheltered from dangers”. But to be fearless in facing them.

LET me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it.

LET me not crave in anxious fear to be saved, but hope for the patience to win my freedom”.

I was stunned ! This was just the right answer to my prayer. How mysterious are Ma’s ways ! I cut out these few lines from the Buddhist Journal and put it under the frame of my Puja Photo. It is still there.

II

“Ma Eshechen” (Ma has come)

My first DARSHAN of Sri Ma was on 2nd February 1951. The next day, through Her infinite grace, She accepted me in Her Ashram at Varanasi. After that I was constantly with Her during 19 months (except one day when She had sent me with an advance party) travelling in Her compartment, frequently in Her Car, and of course in Her room whenever it was possible ; that means many many hours. At that time the rule was that whenever the

door was open we could enter in Ma's room and sit at Her feet.

What a joy it was to sit silently near the Embodiment of the Divine Mother, and of partaking in some measure of the Bliss of which She was the embodiment. But it was not just an idle enjoyment. Her very presence was a teaching. Without telling a word She was bringing about a radical transformation of one's being ; opening the NADIS, loosening the fetters that were binding us since many lives, purifying the mind etc. etc.. Actually most of my Sadhana in the early years was done while sitting at the Holy Feet of Sri Ma.

My attachment for Ma's physical presence was so great that a simple delay or shortening of the Darshan used to fill my mind with anguish.

Of course this was too much and Ma in Her wisdom tried to wean me away. I was then asked to stay at Varanasi Ashram even during Her absence. But in that period She used to come (come back, for it was the head-quarters) to Varanasi very frequently, at least once a month.

On one occasion Sri Ma went to VINDYACHAL from Banaras, and I did not accompany Her. She was supposed to stay sometime at VINDYACHAL so as to enable Her to get some rest. No date had been fixed for Her return to Varanasi.

My room was on the 2nd floor of the main building of the Ashram. Every evening toward sunset, I used to sit outside, mostly on the upper terrace of the Ashram from where one had a

breathhtaking view of the Ghats upto Manikarnika and trying to do some meditation.....and thinking. But of what could I think if not of Ma.

On one occasion I started a mental conversation with Her. She had just left one or two days before and my yearning for Her was not so great—Nevertheless—as a kind of play with myself—I was telling Her how I would be glad to see Her again ; How much I was longing for Her Darshan. I had no intention to call Her and it didn't just occur in my mind that She might hear me. Any why should She pay attention to my idle talk ?

While this mental conversation was going on, I heard all of a sudden a soft voice telling me very clearly in Bengali “AKARSHAN BAD NA HOI” (if there is no impediment). The rest of the sentence was conveyed mentally. It meant “I will come tomorrow evening”. I took it as a play of my imagination. Even if Ma did actually hear my mental talk (and I doubted She did) why should She take the trouble to reply, let alone to come ? And the whole matter went out of my mind.

The next evening, I was sitting in my room preparing (or perhaps eating) my light evening meal. It must have been about 7-00 P.M. ; it was already dark—a short winter day. Suddenly I heard a voice coming from the Court of the Ashram, down. It was the voice of MUKTI BABA. He was shouting “MA ESHECHEN ! MA ESHECHEN” ! (Ma has COME). MUKTI BABA was a man full of humour and did not mind to play occasionally some pranks. My first reaction was to

take it as one of Mukti Baba's jokes. But then I had a second thought "Ma may actually have come! What is the harm in going down and checking if it is true or not?" And I left my meal and went down.

Ma had actually come!! Before I could make pranam She had already vanished in the Kanyapeeth building. She seemed to be in a stern mood and did not even look at me.

The next morning She returned to Vindiyachal without telling me a single word. I was very sorry and ashamed to have been the cause of such inconvenience for our beloved mother.

But the lesson was brought home. Wherever we are, whatever we may think, was known to our beloved Guru. What a wonderful thing to be under the protection of such a Great Being.

III

The Red Lotus

In the year 1980 (if I remember well) the celebration of the Durga puja festival was scheduled to be held at Bombay Vile Parle in the presence of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi. A few months before the celebration Sri Ma was at Kankhal. She had the Kheyal, that similar celebration should be held also at Kankhal Ashram in grand style although She Herself would not be there physically. A Pujari had to come specially from Calcutta with his own party. Before leaving Kankhal Sri Ma worked out all the details with Shri Ram Panjwani and others.

I do not know the reason why Sri Ma had suddenly this Kheyal, but I was convinced that as She had taken so much interest for the arrangement of this Puja at Kankhal She would be present at that time in some subtle form.

When the time of the Durga Festival was nearing a very beautiful Durga-Murti was brought to our Ashram through the kindness of Shri Ram Panjwani. The Pujari came from Calcutta with a big party. There were only a few Ashramites as most of them had gone to Bōmbay with Sri Ma.

The puja started at Kankhal. There was an excellent atmosphere, that kind of joyous festival feeling which is so familiar to those who have been present at functions with Sri Ma's physical presence. (Although it was not so intense as when Sri Ma is there in Her Physical body). Myself (as I rarely leave my room in the morning) used to come in the evening for the Arati and for the Sandhi Puja.

One evening (perhaps Ashtami or Navami) during the Arati I was looking at the Durga Murti. It was one of the most beautiful I had ever seen, and seemed full of life. Was it Ma's presence or some divine presence or simply my imagination? This was the kind of thoughts in my mind at that time. "After all", I thought "it is only an image of clay. Perhaps it is my imagination that gives it life". Then I decided to make some test. Looking at the Murti I started a conversation with Her :—

"Mother ! if you are really alive, and not simply an image of clay, do grant me a boon". And I asked for a boon. Then : "If you really hear me,

and if you will grant me the boon, please give me a sign". Which sign to ask ? It flashed in my mind : "Let Her show me a red lotus". There was no reason why I asked for this special sign and I had no idea how the lotus could or should be shown to me. (Later I came to know that red lotuses are very rare at Kankhal, and that the Pujari had brought a few from Calcutta).

As soon I had asked for this sign—perhaps in the very moment—the Pujari picked up from somewhere a red lotus (which I could not have seen as people were standing for the Arati) and started waving it before Durgaji ; then he put it high above his head and waved it quite a time and I could see it easily although I was behind many people standing. I thought : "This is really extraordinary ; the Divine Mother has answered at once". But after all : "I continued" it may be a coincidence. Then I resumed my conversation with the Murti : "If I am not deluding myself, and you are really hearing me then you should actually *give* me a red lotus".

The Arati was over and we all went to sit down for hearing the kirtan. As soon as I sat down a young man called Deepak who was an assistant to the Pujari came near me and asked me with much kindness if he could give me some Prasad. I explained him that I did not accept anything except from Sri Ma's own hands. That this was a rule I was following since many years. But he was—for me—a newcomer and I was afraid he would misunderstand me and get offended. So I added

(in Hindi) PHOOL DE SAKTE (flower you can give)—He replied ABHI DEEGA (I will give you immediately). He entered in the enclosure where the Puja was held and brought a red lotus. I was surprised but very happy that the Divine Mother had removed my doubts so rapidly.

She not only gave me the red lotus but also granted the boon I had asked for... But this is another story.

I kept preciously the red lotus on my Puja table as it had been given to me—I believed—by the Divine Mother Herself. Unfortunately it started loosing its petals one by one. And towards the summer I had to put it away.

In the month of May Sri Ma's Birthday Celebrations were held at Kankhal. The day after the Tithi Puja, Sri Ma called me and gave me with Her own pure hands large amount of fruits. She frequently used to give me fruits, but very rarely flowers or garlands. But this time after having given me the fruits She told a few words to a Brahmacharini who went inside and brought back a flower which Sri Ma gave me with Her own holy hands... It was red lotus !! I put it on my Puja table replacing the one who had lost its petals. It is still there, now after more than 4 years, almost the same. It had dried up but does not loose its petals.

I felt as if Sri Ma would have been telling to me "You see ! What the mother of clay has given you (the flower and the boon) is transient ; but what *I* give you will last for ever".

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*)

So the days rolled on and I remained involved in official duties. Then, one day the news came that Ma was in Hardwar. I became restless to have Ma's *darshan*, and we went to Hardwar.

In Hardwar there is a big and spacious building called Baghat House which is owned by the Raja of Solan. Ma was in one of the rooms in the upper storey of this house. There we had Ma's *darshan* and I felt as if I had got back a lost treasure. I was filled with joy and bliss. Where one is overwhelmed by sentiments and feelings one becomes speechless. Words do not come out of the mouth. You may go with the intention of asking several things of Ma, but all questionings are laid at rest, all your inner restlessness is calmed down. After doing *pranam* to Ma, we sat down on a mat on the floor. The garlands we offered to Ma were put round our own necks by Her and we sat there silent and motionless. Ma very affectionately asked, "How are you?". We were overjoyed and in ten minutes our minds and hearts which were inextricably caught in the cobweb of

worldly problems found complete peace and rest like a pool of water on a windy day when the wind dies down. The gusts of human passions like anger, greed, pride, conceit and desires were subdued and silenced for the nonce. The darkness of ignorance which is an eternal companion of man had vanished. Would these were to last for ever. But this does not happen. The moment we move away from the presence of Ma, all these passions and forces of darkness surrounded us again.

Seeing Gopal, Ma said, "How is 'Dostji'?" and smiled. That charming smile brightened the whole room. Gopal began to talk to Ma in his childish language and Ma got so absorbed in his talk that it seemed She only wanted to talk to him. Others in the room watched this scene charmed and fascinated.

We remained near Ma for some time while Gopal ate the *prasad* given by Ma and continued prattling. Later we took leave of Ma and returned to Dehradun.

That Ma was in Hardwar was a source of great support and strength to us.

After some time we went again to Hardwar. Ma was still in Baghat House. When we reached there we found Ma in Her seat and we sat down on a mat. There were but a few other persons, so we had the pleasure of having Her more or less exclusively to ourselves. To find Ma alone or with only a few other persons was getting increasingly difficult because Ma's effulgence was spread

ding over a wider area in the country and outside, and this inspite of the fact that no one carried on any propaganda. As people learnt about Her presence, they came running to see Her.

Ma was in a blissful state. Stray visitors came, saluted Ma, offered flowers and quietly sat down on the mats. There was calm and peace all around. The proximity with Ma, the sanctity of Hardwar and the sacred Ganga gave rise to a unique feeling of joy in me. Then I noticed that Gopal who had sat down after doing *pranam* to Ma had gone out. I became anxious and began to look outward. However, he returned soon and unhesitatingly sat down by the side of Ma on another seat. This seat was reserved for the visiting Mahatmas. We felt nervous and I got up to bring him down from there, but Ma forbade me saying, "This is his place".

I was made speechless and was at my wit's end. I could not ask Ma what did She mean by saying that, and I contented myself with the thought that Ma was omniscient and knew everything about various births of man. It is we who do not know these mysteries. After sometime we returned to Dehradun. While leaving Ma said, "Be careful, coming or going".

I had purchased a new car. Before that I had a secondhand car which I had disposed of. For years I had been longing to have a new car. But the wish remained unfulfilled because the loan that I could have from the government on the basis of the salary I was drawing was far short of the price

of a new car, and the balance needed could not be met from my own resources. I was in wait for the rise in the pay scale but the prices went up again and again. But this year this imbalance did not take place ; and we were very happy.

I very much wished that Ma would sit in our car. So, soon after the car came we made for Hardwar.

It was evening. Ma was in Baghat House. That She would sit in this car filled us with great joy. I cannot say why I was so confident that Ma would accede to our request and that leaving everybody else She would accompany us in this car. Before this I had never ventured to make such a request to Ma, but today I was swinging high.

Reaching Baghat House I parked the car near the gate. But soon I learnt that it was Shivaratri day and arrangements were under way for the festival. I had never before seen the arrangements made for this festival, let alone participate in it. Hence, I was a total stranger to the ceremonies connected with it.

When we arrived, the Puja for the first stage had already commenced. All the persons observing the fast were seated in the hall. Perhaps, Nirvananandji was the officiating priest. In the temple courtyard there was a big crowd, and outside on the street there were several cars.

It takes an hour for the first stage *Puja* to conclude, but the full *Puja* was to stretch over the whole night. So there was no possibility for Ma to come out. She was inside, and we could get Her *darshan* only from outside.

The *Puja* was going on in the hall. The persons participating were doing it strictly according to Shastric injunctions. The whole atmosphere had been rendered holy. And although I was disappointed at the prospect of the non-fulfilment of my desire, yet I was feeling a great joy on having witnessed the sacred function.

The first part of the *Puja* ended by 8 PM and *Arati* started to the accompaniment of sound made by the bells and the blasts from the conchshells. Inwardly I had resolved to return soon after the *Arati* and after doing *Pranam* to Ma from the outside. The *Arati* concluded, the participants resumed their seats, and I made ready to return.

Then I noticed a sudden stir and lo and behold! Ma had come out. I watched the whole thing with great joy and astonishment. Perhaps, it was Panuda who came out and shouted for a car. I did not know where Ma was to go, nor did I know the car by which She would go. But I hurried to my car and started the engine. I brought it to the gate. In the meantime Ma came outside the gate. I opened the car door. Ma's carpet was spread over the seat and Ma sat down. I felt blessed, like a man starving when he gets food or a man with a parched throat when he gets water, or a man gasping for his last breath when he is freed from the clutches of death. Tears of joy trickled down my eyes. What joy I felt at the moment was beyond description.

Thousands of other devotees of Ma have also experienced such spontaneous and unasked for

blessings from Ma. This is because She, who knows the inner desires of every man, does it to strengthen further his faith and belief. This incident is a vivid illustration of how Ma fulfils the innocent inner desires of man, and creates the proper conditions for that.

The car slowly weaved its way forward and I was directed to proceed to Kankhal. While driving, the consciousness that Ma was sitting behind had wafted my thoughts and feelings to a supra-mundane world, and immersed in that ocean of delight I drove forward. I did not know that I had reached near Mr. Basu-Mallik's house adjoining the famous temple of Daksha Prajapati. I applied the brakes and Ma got down. Perhaps, there too some arrangements had been made for the Maha Shivaratri festival.

At that time there was only this solitary house. Whoever could guess that this arrival of Ma would herald the beginning of a new creation and construction.

In course of time a Shiva temple came into existence in that bungalow, and later another temple dedicated to the statue of Didima. Across the road sprang up a three storeyed building for the residence of the devotees, and a cottage for Ma, a building for the use of the Sadhus followed. The huge courtyard where once grew a big banyan tree finally became the resting place for Ma, for Her *Samadhi*.

Where shall I be able to see again such a compassionate Ma, who had neither beginning nor end, in corporeal form ?

Ma had again moved out to distant places like Ranchi, Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad and places in the far South to gratify the wishes of Her countless devotees. Whenever I went to the Ashram, I got news about Her, and while we talked about Her I got the serene joy as I did from Her *darshan*.

Ma used to say, "I neither go anywhere, nor do I come from anywhere. I just move from one room to another in my own house or merely change from one corner to another". But we think that She is always touring. She does not stay in one Ashram for a long time. People get happy when She arrives at a particular place, but when She departs they get very sad.

"On departing She takes away
one's very life-breath."

When Ma travels from place by rail/road people gather in large numbers at the wayside stations even for one brief glimpse of Ma.

In the absence of Ma I used to get such thoughts. The rest of the time was taken up by official work. While going to roost the thought of Ma automatically came to the mind, and the mind felt restful. In the morning during Puja Her thoughts gave energy and strength to cope with the day's work. I felt as if Ma had entered into my life and it was becoming more and more sanctified.

The days passed away in this routine. Then one day the news came that Ma had come to Dehradun. It spread through the whole town, and people began to frequent the ashram. *Satsang*

started again, and so also Her Leela (activities). The town became blessed.

One evening when we went for Her *darshan* we were told that Ma was at Kalyan Van. This ashram is about a kilometer away from Kishenpur Ashram towards Rajpur, as you enter the gate you pass through a lichi orchard. Then, past a two storeyed house you find a small attractive temple of Sri Ram. Inside, there are beautiful idols of Sri Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Sri Hanuman and at the opposite end of the verandah there is an idol of Shivaji.

It is said that one day while in a state of trance Ma had a vision of Ramas and Lakshmans on house-back, and since then this place was known as Kalyan Van.

Gopal was now about to turn three. It was my intense desire that Ma should grace my residence with Her presence on his birthday. The Collector's residence even at that time was on the Rajpur Road in a rented house.

When we reached Kalyan Van we saw Ma sitting in the open space facing the temple. Hanuman *chalisa* was being recited by Hari Baba and his disciples. Hari Baba was a great saint of Hoshiarpur. He held Ma in great affection. His Ashram is situated near an embankment of the Ganga at a little distance from Moradabad. He was a fair complexioned elderly saint. His simple personality was highly attractive. Ma held him in great respect and everyone else in Her ashram also respected him. She was sitting with hands folded and in an

ecstatic mood. All in all the whole atmosphere was filled with a sort of heavenly bliss. Whenever any function was held in Ma's presence it assumed a heavenly character. This sort of atmosphere was found on this occasion also. Over and above all this, Hari Baba's presence heightened the effect. It was his daily routine. We offered *Pranam* and sat down, and took a dip in that lake of bliss.

The *Kirtan* ended after sometime. Hari Baba sat down by the side of Ma, and presently there started a holy discourse. The fortunate people who were present at the time were overjoyed to listen to this discourse. Viewed superficially this conversation between Ma and Hari Baba was just ordinary and merely entertaining, but it had extraordinary spiritual significance. It all depends on how one feels.

How was I to broach the subject of inviting Ma to Gopal's birthday? Shall I get the opportunity for it? I wanted only to make the request, leaving the decision to Ma's *Kheyal*. Ma is free from all ties. Sometimes She goes to a devotee's house even without an invitation, and sometimes She turns a deaf ear to all entreaties and persuasions. No one has been able to understand Ma.

Mrs. Shanti Sabharwal, who is a very dedicated devotee of Ma and who is respected by me as my own mother, was entrusted with this task. She is very wise and knows how and when to talk. She herself took the initiative and made the request on my behalf. Ma at once said, "Ask Baba".

It was a queer reply. It neither meant 'Yes' nor 'No'. The request was repeated before Hari

Baba who was sitting before Ma. I was afraid that Baba may turn down the request of going to a Collector's residence. But Hari Baba replied in the same style as Ma had said "If Ma agrees to go, I shall go too." Again the same suspense, and all eyes turned towards Ma. I was sitting on my knees with hands folded between Ma and Hari Baba. Ma smiled and said, "Baba ! Baba, if Baba goes I will go too". I bowed before the Baba, He smiled and said, "If Ma goes I will go".

This went on for sometime, and I was in a state of utter suspense. At length I got the consent of both Ma and Hari Baba. I got overjoyed.

Ma came to the Collector's residence on the appointed day. Revered Hari Baba was also with Her. Ma does not go inside the house of a householder ; hence all arrangements were made in the backside verandah of the house and Her seat was placed in the furthest corner. Nearly all the people of the ashram were with Her. Our joy knew no bounds. It seemed as if all the gods of heaven had descended on the earth. Whenever Ma goes anywhere all the people who get the news make for that place.

Ma took Her seat, others sat on the floor. The verandah was packed. Those who could not find a room there, watched from outside. Pushpaji began to sing *bhajans* and *Kirtan* started. I do not think that ever before had any divine personality of the stature of Ma visited the Collector's residence !

I did Ma's *puja* with great faith and devotion and performed the *arati*. Pushpaji sang "Jai

Jagdish Hare” and “Jyoti se jyoti milao Ma”. Everyone present stood up and joined in the prayer, and Ma sat motionless with folded hands like the very picture of humanity and prayer.

The *arati* ended. Gopal did *pranam* to Ma. Other children followed. I bowed before Ma with all the members of the family. I offered a garland to Ma which She put around my neck and I felt blessed.

How fortunate I was ! Ma had come to my house. When Sri Krishna went to the cottage of Vidur great was his joy. I felt likewise on that day. I was thankful that I had been posted at Dehradun.

Can such an occasion come in my life again ?

The closer I went to Ma the more I realised the heavenly bliss despite living in the midst of this thoroughly worldly atmosphere. Official duties were performed as they should have been. When people praised me for my work, I remembered that heavenly power which helped me. Arjun had won the war of Mahabharat with the help of that power. My tasks were just negligible when compared to that.

Strange happenings were taking place in the domestic sphere too. Once, my youngest daughter, Vandana, who is older than Gopal by an year and was four years old then, fell seriously ill. She was put under treatment, but there was no noticeable improvement. One night my wife saw that Ma was standing by the bedside and stroking the patient's body. She was startled. But, she told me that she had seen Ma when she was awake. Thereafter the daughter became alright.

Such incidents should not be talked or written about. But such experiences have been the lot of thousand of other devotees. They cannot help relating them before others. It is only the spiritually advanced persons who can keep such incidents to themselves. The ordinary man is incapable of doing that.

Ma does not show miracles. The very advent of a great soul like Ma in this mortal world is in itself a miracle. I do not feel any hesitation in saying that the only difference between Ma and God is that we see Ma in physical form whereas God is invisible. This explains why a devotee when seized by some worldly calamity, invokes the help of Ma and She manifests Herself to remove his troubles. So far as I have been able to understand, such visions take place when one is in a state of half wakefulness and half sleep.

Once Gopal had an attack of diarrhoea. It was in acute form. The treatment was going on. One evening the condition became serious. I felt as if the doctors had also got nervous. My wife in this desparate state went to Ma, who was then in Kishenpur Ashram.

Ma listened sympathetically and as the very image of compassion said, "Give barley water—if the doctors permit." Ma's nature is so gentle that She honours everyone and upholds his dignity. That is why while giving the divine medicine of Her blessings, She also advised to consult the doctors.

By this time we in the family had developed such faith in Ma that come what may we would do nothing contrary to Her wishes,

The treatment suggested by Ma commenced. The night passed in great anxiety. But when morning dawned Gopal was completely cured. The doctors were surprised and equally satisfied when they examined Gopal and found that he had turned the corner.

This is a very minor illustration of Ma's love for Her children and limitless powers. There is nothing impossible for one who seeks the shelter of Ma.

Likewise, once my wife got some rashes on her face. She hesitated to go to Ma in this condition. But it is difficult to restrain oneself and stay back. She did go. When she was on the stairs she saw Ma coming down. Ma stopped midway and touching the rashes with Her hand asked, "What is this?" When the wife returned home the rashes had disappeared.

Such incidents confirm the powers possessed by saints to cure diseases. Great souls are born in this world to revive one's faith in the eternal religion and the great human values. Stories mentioned in the *Shastras* and the *Puranas* and the Bible which speak of miraculous cures effected by great saints should be read and accepted in this light.

Once Ma was in Vrindaban. Gopal fell sick in Dehradun. There was no improvement in his condition for several days. We spent several nights in great anxiety and remembered Ma.

Before Gopal was born his mother once went from Fatehpur for Ma's *darshan*. *Nam Sankirtan* was in progress at that time. Ma was also going round and singing the Name of the Lord along with

other participants. My wife joined behind Her, and inwardly prayed for the boon of a male child and long life for him. At that very moment Ma looked back and gave her a flower. This was Her blessing for Gopal, and approximately nine months after he was born.

Gopal frequently fell ill in infancy. On such occasions we used to get very anxious. It happened this time too. In great distress we called out for Ma's help, and Gopal became alright in a trice.

Sometime later it was learnt from Herself that She was at Vrindaban and She saw Gopal running away in a certain direction. Just ahead there was a ditch and it was feared that he might fall into it ; so Ma said, "This is our Gopal". She caught hold of him and thus saved him. She told of this to the inmates of the Vrindaban ashram at that time. Mrs. Sabharwal was the first person to tell this to us. Later, other girls told this to my wife, and when Ma came to Dehradun I heard this from Ma Herself.

This was the mystery behind the recovery of Gopal. The good Mother thus takes upon Herself the care of the welfare of Her devotees. Other devotees too have had similar experiences. Geographically one may be very far from Ma, it does not matter. One should be near in spirit.

Where has this compassionate Ma gone now ?

Gopal was now about to complete his fourth year. His fourth birthday was drawing near. Ma was in Dehradun. As before, I was again desirous of inviting Ma to my house. Ma gave Her consent,

and She came to the Collector's residence. The same kind of joyous festivities were observed again. Gopal's four elder sisters, Meenakshi, Kalpana, Archana and Vandana ran to and fro in sheer joy. Ma again occupied Her seat in the same place. *Puja*, *arati* and *Kirtan* were duly held, and hundreds of people had Ma's *darshan*.

I thought how lucky we were that Ma came to our house for a second time. Ma's visit to any one's house is not an ordinary event. I did not discover anything special in me ; possibly this was the fruit of a previous life's merits. Or, it was just another example of Ma's compassion which She shows without any reason.

Gopal had now completed his fourth year. In my family, there is a custom according to which when a child enters his fifth year, he has to go through a tonsure ceremony. Traditionally this ceremony is performed at a place called Buxar in Unao district of U. P. on the bank of the Ganga where there is an ancient temple of Chandrika Devi. But being in government employ, I was subject to transfer from place to place, and that time I was in Dehradun in the very presence of the goddess incarnate, i.e. Ma. So the desire possessed us to perform this ceremony in Her own presence.

The request was made. Ma very kindly gave the required permission to have the function in the Ashram. The auspicious date and the auspicious moment were determined according to Ma's wishes.

On the appointed day the members of my family along with a few relatives went to the Kishenpur

ashram. All of us were puffed up with joy. A unique wave of bliss swept through our heart. Such joyous occasions in the family had occurred before also but the happiness we felt then was no match for the heavenly bliss we felt this time.

Ma had arranged for the tonsure ceremony to be held before the Shiva temple in the paved courtyard. Ma had given special instructions to Mrs. Shanti Sabharwal about everything that was to be done, and the things which would be needed. She had issued directions about the minutest details. Ma manages everything so well that even the most intelligent householder can bear no comparison with Her. Ignorant persons can never understand how Ma who lives in an entirely different sphere—the sphere of Brahma—handles so expertly worldly affairs like a common householder. In those days, Ma Herself actively managed and organised all the small and big functions held in the ashram. We just marvel at Her skill.

One thing more. Seeing Ma take interest in such ordinary matters even sages and wise men, let alone the ignoramuses, fall into a state of doubt and uncertainty about Her real self. In such a state the *Tamasi* individual begins to think poorly of Ma and the *Rajasi* is lost in thoughts. What, after all, is so peculiar in Ma that men just become restless to have Her *darshan*. Even some *Sattwik* persons in the conceit of their penance, austerities and attainments commit the sin of regarding Ma as inferior to them. The learned ones sometimes put impertinent questions to Her which merely

betrays their pride. They also begin to expound the Shastras before Her because they know that Ma is not educated nor versed in the Shastric knowledge. Even the *Tapaswi* falls into the error of such improper behaviour.

On such occasions what Ma does and says is very strange and beyond comprehension by such persons. She is normally and naturally so simple and humble. But on these occasions She becomes even more humble and ignorant. The result of all this is that the person who behaves thus makes a laughing stock of himself.

So wonderful is my Ma !

Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai Ma.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Devotees of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee at Calcutta will arrange a function to commemorate the completion of fifth Centenary Celebrations of Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at the "Matri Mandir" premises of Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society (57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-19). Satsang will be held on 1st February evening and Nagar Sankirtan on the 2nd February, Distinguished persons will grace the occasion.

Announcement

The tragic passing away of Atmanandaji has left a void which we are trying our best to fill, particularly in relation to continuing the publication of the English Ananda Varta regularly in future.

The Editorial Board will be grateful to receive thoughtful articles in English on Ma's philosophy and allied religious subjects typed in English on one side of the page preferably with double spacing which will be carefully considered for future publication in the quarterly.

All articles should be addressed to :

Dr. G. N. Roy (Misra),
Publications Division,
Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society,
"MATRI - MANDIR"
57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road,
Calcutta-700 019.

The Passing of Atmananda

On the 24th of Sept. 1985 at about 9-15 hrs. in the morning, Swami Atmananda has left her body. The day before, one of the Ashram Brahmacharis brought her in the early afternoon by Taxi from Kalyanvan to her room in the nearby Dharamshala where she used to stay during the last few years, whenever she came to Kankhal Ashram.

For only just one week Atmananda had suffered from a bad attack of bronchitis and as she did not want to eat, had become so weak that she had to be carried up to the first floor.

I went to see her with Swami Vijayananda and Dr. Srivastava and she reluctantly conceded to our proposal to take her to Varanasi where she would be under the loving care of our Ashramites, besides medical treatment in Ma's Hospital. I at once tried to get reservation of a First class—4 berth compartment, as I wanted to send three Doctors, among them Dr. Srivastava, to escort her to Varanasi. It was Ma's grace that we could not get a reservation for the same night, as Atmananda would not have probably reached Varanasi alive.

In the evening the girls and some of the male Ashramites went to see her and at 11-30 P.M. Dr. Srivastava gave her an injection to support the heart and blood pressure. During the night which was a restless one, but without any special

disturbance, her friend Melita stayed with her. In the morning Atmananda looked even paler and weaker than the previous day. A lady doctor from Bombay, who was then with us, was asked to see her but there seemed to be nothing specially worrying. It was difficult to communicate verbally with Atmananda, because her throat was highly inflamed and this hardly allowed her to speak. But she had no special pain and, obviously never complained. Later in the morning her breathing became somewhat difficult. Melita made her sit up and supported her back. At 9-15 hrs. all of a sudden the noisy breathing stopped and the heart gave up functioning. Atmananda was rather sure that she would have to leave soon. Atmananda seemed to be fully conscious till the last few minutes before her end.

Her body was brought to Ma's Samadhi and prepared there for the immersion. It was decorated with rose garlands and arati was performed, before it was escorted by many Ashramites to the NIL DHARA. Since several years it was Atmananda's strong desire for her body to be immersed in the Mother Ganga, according to the Sannyas rules.

16 days later, on the 9th October puja at Ma's Samadhi, a small sadhu bhojan, a Daridra Narain feeding and Kumari puja were performed in her honour.

Ma allowed her to adopt the garb of a Sanyasini in 1962. About five years back Ma had sent her to Gaya for offering her pinda. When she came back, Ma made a special Kriya for Atmananda

which authorised her to be given Jal-Samadhi after her death.

The role which Atmananda had played for 32 years in our Ashram Community, can never be filled again by anyone else. Singlehanded she edited the English Version of 'Anand Varta' since 1954, and besides has edited a good number of English books on Ma.

Even in the worst weather she never missed going daily to the Kishenpur Ashram for kirtan. To all foreigners, coming to Ma, she was a teacher till they understood all the do's and dont's of our Ashram life. Her most remarkable quality was her loving and absolute surrender to Ma's wishes. We shall miss her, mainly as an inspiring example of untiring Seva to Ma.

CORRIGENDUM

On page 329 of the October '85 issue of the English Ananda Varta, it was stated by error that Atmananda had passed away at Kalyanvan—Dehradun.

In fact, she became critically ill and was brought by road on the 23rd Sept. 1985, to Kankhal, where she expired around 9 A.M. on the 24th of Sept., 1985.

This error is sincerely regretted.

ANANDA - VARTA

*A letter dated 21-11-85 from Èlise
Braun Barnett,
65-50, Saunders Street, Reco Park, N. Y. 11374
addressed to the Editor, Ananda Varta*

Dear Sir,

Sister Nirvanananda informed me of the passing on of Atmananda. It is an enormous loss for me.

Since I can remember Atmananda was my better self and introduced me to the spiritual things in life. We became friends when we were five years old, lived practically as neighbors and studied with the same teachers.

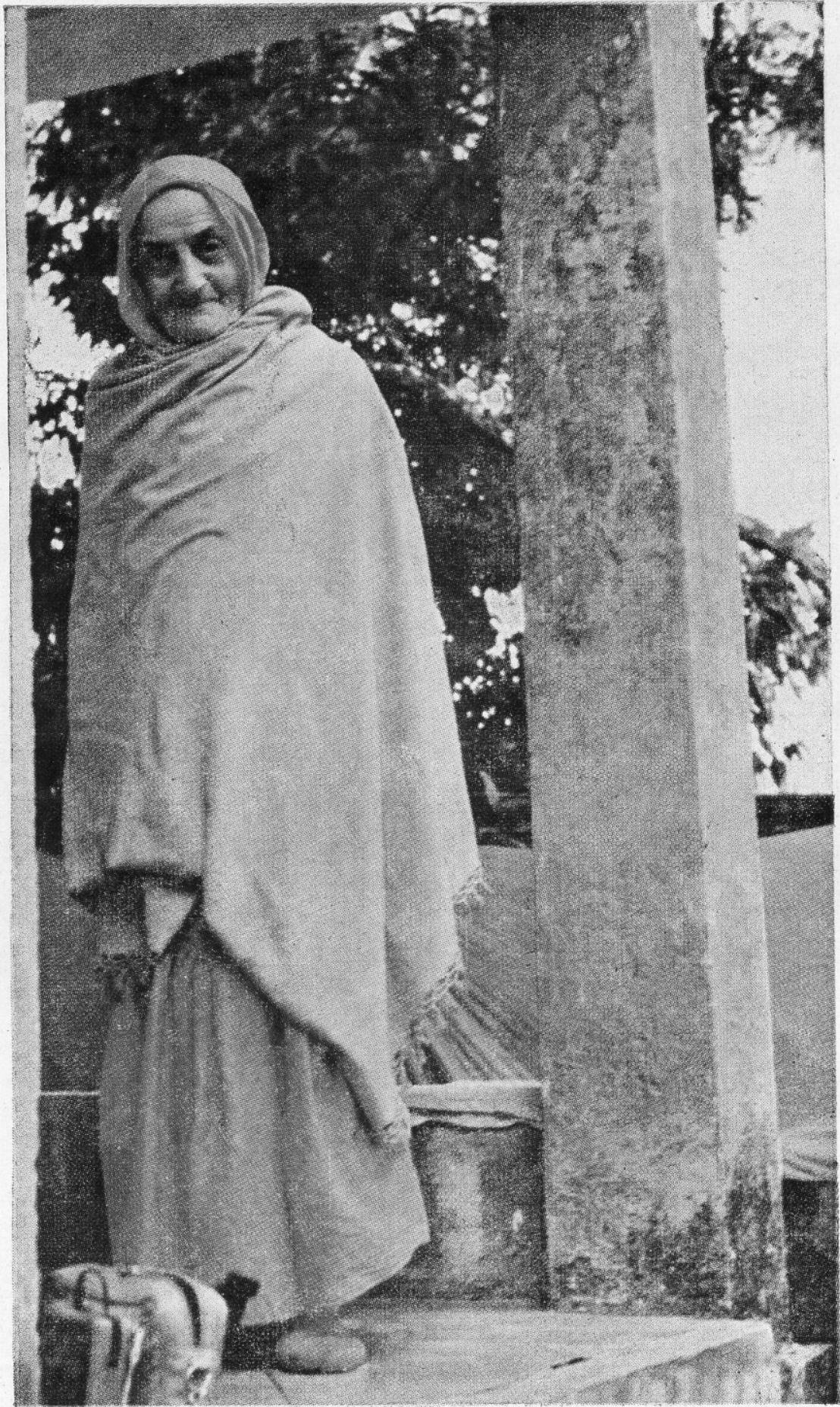
When my husband and I, with our daughter who was then two years old, came to Varanasi Rajghat School as refugees from Hitler in 1938, we lived in the same bungalow. Later Atmananda stayed with us for a short time when we lived in Agarpara ; she took me for blessings of Sri Sri Anandamayi in Calcutta and later on, with my husband, in New Delhi. I visited her in Kalyanvan and made a tape of her chanting. We corresponded regularly. Atmananda always sent the books which she edited to me.

It might be interesting for the readers of Ānanda Vārtā to know about the young years of Atmananda and I would be grateful to have contributed a little to Atmananda's memory.





Atmananda as a teacher in a Varanasi College.



Atmananda in her late years.



Miss Blanca as a rising Journalist in Europe.

Atmananda—Recollections of Her Earlier Days

Elise Barnett (New York)

Atmananda was born on June 7th, 1904 in Vienna, the capital of the Austrian Empire, which at the time included Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland.

Her mother's family came from Czechoslovakia, her father's from Poland. Atmananda's mother died when Atmananda's sister was born. Atmananda then was two years old. The mother must have been a beautiful woman ; a large picture of her hung in the bedroom.

The two children were cared for by their maternal grandmother ; their father had asked her to move into their flat when his wife had died. In this wonderful lady's life there had been many tragedies ; she had lost her husband and her seven children.

Her inherent love and kindness were now poured into the two beautiful little grandchildren. She kept house for them and their father. Graciousness radiated from her. She always wore black dresses, a sign of mourning in Europe. Atmananda said that she often found her crying. This made Atmananda very sad.

Atmananda's father gave whatever money could buy to the two girls : Beautiful clothes and many

books. Besides going to school tutors came into the house to teach them. They had music lessons at a young age and were taken to concerts and operas by a maternal uncle, a highly educated man.

When Atmananda was about eight years old she showed outstanding musical talent. The best available grand piano was bought for her and she took practicing very seriously. At an early age she also got very interested in literature and read widely. Her life was influenced by Russian writers, such as Tolstoy. She endeavoured to live by his ideals.

Though Atmananda was very serious, she enjoyed being with friends, with whom she went for walks and spent lovely holidays in the mountains.

But ill fate pursued the little family. Atmananda's sisters worked with devotion and energy for deprived young children. When she was seventeen years old, she caught diphtheria and died. Atmananda believed that since her sister had sacrificed herself for the good of others, her mission in life had been fulfilled.

Blanca (Atmananda is the name given to her much later by Mataji) was deeply involved with Theosophy. She studied philosophic books and mixed with people who she thought were spiritually advanced. Searching for inner peace, she went to India for a short time to attend a Theosophical convention.

Her piano playing had developed and was most beautiful and inspiring. But her art apparently did not give fulfilment for herself. She spent a few years in Holland as organist in a church connected

with the Theosophical Society and then returned to Vienna. These were the years of depression and her formerly wealthy father was now quite poor. It was an unhappy time for Blanca. One day a message came from Varanasi inviting her to teach at Rajghat School. Blanca felt compelled to go to India.

Her grandmother was left alone. Blanca's father rarely then stayed at home. It was very sad for the grandmother and for Blanca.

Atmananda did wonderful teaching at Rajghat School. Deep friendships were formed, but all these were only stepping stones in Atmananda's life.

Atmananda has written about the turn in her life. At last she had found what she had been searching for. She met Anandamayee—she felt she was saved.

Now Atmananda has passed away, having had the same illness which her young sister had—the one who Blanca thought had sacrificed herself with doing good things.

Atmananda's friends lost much—but should we mourn? Atmananda wrote in a letter “don't ever worry about me, whether I live or die.”

Fulfilment and peace be with her.

Kalyan mi
176, Rajpur Rd.
P.O. Rajpur
Dehradun, U.P.
June 12th, 1977.

Last Will

I was born of Jewish parents in Vienna, Austria in 1904. Since 1935 I have, without any interruption been living in India with Hindus as a Hindu; first at Rajghat School, Rashi Varanasi and since 1954 at Shree Shree Anandamayee Ashram at Varanasi and Dehradun. In 1962 I adopted the garb of a *sainyāsini* and have lived in this spirit since then. It is my express wish that my body should after my demise be taken to the Ganges and be immersed in Mother Ganga, i.e. given jal samādhi (जल समाधि) at any convenient place. It should definitely not be buried or burnt in the Christian or Jew oh way.

The things in the cottage at Kalyanwair in which I am living, such as a little vijāhā of Gopal, books, paper, photos, diaries, clothes, cooking utensils, cash, etc may please be disposed of according to the instructions of Sri Anandamayee Ma. The complete set of "Ananda Vartis" from 1953 up to date, Bengali and English may kindly be passed on to Dr. Bithika Mukerji, Ph.D., who will be the Editor of the English edition after me.

This is written in good health and full consciousness.

Ananda
(former name: Blanca Schlawm)

In association with Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee

Sri Amulya Dutta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

Raipur Ashram—Tuesday—27.5.41

The Story of Dibya

Having arrived early in the morning by bus from Kishenpur Ashram (Dehradun) and after finishing my bath, I came into the hall and got near Ma. Jiten Baba (Mukherjee—Didi's Cousin) was also there. A discussion was going on about the Ashram Mandir and Dharamshala. All this used to be the property of a brahmin called Kaushambilal. At that time his circumstances were affluent, but recently they had taken a turn for the worse. Ma said "When I set out with Jyotish and Bholanath from Dhaka, I came and spotted this place at Raipur and that is why we came to live here. You now behold these temples etc. but at that time there was nothing here. Everything was in ruins".

"The three of us came and found shelter in the ruins of the temple. Bholanath used to practice his sadhana in the Shiva temple and the two of us used to live in the built-up space at the higher level; people used to think that Bholanath was a distin-

gushed sadhu and had left his home to practise his sadhana and so his wife, that is myself—not being able to live alone had accompanied him. They used to look upon Jyotish as our servant. because, Jyotish then used to wear a short dhoti which hardly reached beyond his knees. Some days later, when officially stamped letters started arriving at Raipur post office in the name of Jyotish bearing the title I. S. O. the peoples' attitude began changing. In a small place like this, nothing can be kept a secret”.

“At that time there was a man called Dibya, who used to carry out all our manual tasks. He was Kaushambilal's servant. He came to Kaushambilal during the latter's marriage. Then he was very young. From then onwards, he has remained with them. Kaushambilal's circumstances do not really permit him now to employ a servant but Dibya does not like to desert him simply because his employer cannot afford to keep him. All the water we required, Dibya used to fetch by climbing the neighbouring hills daily. He also did the same for his employer. Due to carrying heavy pails of water there was a definite dent on his head. (Addressing me)—Have you ever seen him ?

I : No Ma.

Ma : I will point him out to you when he comes here. His nature is very simple. One day he went to the spring to fetch water. Another boy started pulling him by hand to play with him. Dibya refused to go because of the task in which he was engaged. At this the other boy became

enraged and slapped Dibya so hard on his cheek that blood began to pour out. The other boy was much younger than Dibya, who could have, had he so desired, punished him more than adequately, but instead of doing so, he started crying. Passers-by then remonstrated with him saying, "Dibya, he struck you, so why did you not hit back". The people then advised him to report the matter to the police, but he refused even to do so. Dibya had an yearning to learn, to read and write. He often used to say "During my next birth, I shall become really educated".

The Zamindar of Dunga—Sher Singh

That year the festival of Basanti puja was celebrated at Raipur. Many devotees from Meerut & Delhi gathered there for the purpose. The Zamindar of Dunga (a forest territory 16 miles away from Dehradun) Sri Sher Singh also arrived. During the Nam-Yagna that took place at the conclusion of the festival several people were deeply affected with emotion. Sri Sher Singh was similarly affected and the matter came up for discussion.

Jiten Babu : The emotional state of Sher Singh is something very interesting ? (Everybody smiled).

Ma (Laughing). He never conversed with me to any great extent. He usually stayed at some distance from us. Quite often he would glance towards me and start weeping. Formerly he was a confirmed drunkard. From childhood he had always been affected by a feeling of deep natural

faith. Due to the wrong company he kept, he became addicted to drink. As he could not resist their overtures, he drank a little wine. But no sooner had he done so, I arrived at his doorstep.* At my completely unexpected arrival he did not dare emerge out of his door. At first he thought he would lie hidden and not confront me. But because I refused to go elsewhere, he was forced to come outside. His breast was flooded with copious tears and weeping bitterly, he kept on doing pranams to me and exclaiming, "Why dost thou take so much pity on myself?" As I kept silent, he again cried out: "Why dost thou not speak?" Naturally he never dared before to address me so personally. At that time, in the stress of his emotion, he kept on addressing me familiarly as "Thou thou" and falling prostrate before me while crying bitterly. At his antics his younger wife started laughing uproariously.

When I first went to Dunga, I had enquired if there were tigers there. Sher Singh had then replied "No, there cannot be two tigers in the same forest." ("Sher" means tiger). But soon after this tigers started to make their depredations in Dunga. In addition to cows and buffalos, the tigers also killed a woman. The wife of the man who was killed became dejected. Sher Singh himself was a Shikari of repute. At the mere mention of tigers he used to run along with his rifle. Once

* (Sher Singh's house was in the centre of Dehradun city, whereas Kishenpur Ashram was about 5 miles away on Rajpur Road).

he learnt that a tiger had killed a buffalo and had lift the carcass behind. He thought that as the tiger had left the "kill" in tact, it was bound to return to it in due course. Deciding upon this, he climbed a near-by hillock and started waiting for the tiger to appear. After a considerable period, he realised it was time for him to carry out his Japa (Most of Ma's devotees set aside a definite time daily—say even 10 minutes—to carry this out). He laid his rifle aside and closed his eyes in meditation. After sitting there for a while, he heard, something making a "shushing" noise nearby and on opening his eyes, he spotted a huge tiger hardly 5 feet away from him on his right. There was no time to lift the gun and fire. Sher Singh was very fond of this Body. He realised that if this was his last moment on earth, then the best way of spending it was to think of Ma before dying. He did not remember how long he passed in this condition, but when he finally opened his eyes, he saw no further signs of the tiger. On another occasion, I found that Sher Singh was facing a terrible danger. He had at that time made up his mind to go on a pilgrimage to Mathura and Vrindaban etc. A few days before the time of his departure his wife and daughter came to visit me. I warned them then never to leave his company. They went and reported this matter to Sher Singh. Eventually they all left together on pilgrimage. On the way to Mathura and Vrindaban, they were all lying in a first class railway compartment. Sher Singh was on the top of an upper bunk and his two wives, daughter and

grandson were down below. Their servant was next door. Sher Singh's wife noticed that a man had entered the compartment and was looking for something. So she asked him what he was doing there. The man replied in a humble manner that he had got into the wrong compartment by mistake. Sher Singh woke up on hearing their conversation and came down. At once the man assumed his rightful appearance and attacked him with a dagger. Sher Singh grappled with him and caught hold of both his hands from behind with his own hands. But inspite of all this, the man started inflicting wounds with his dagger on Sher Singh, his wife and daughter. But Sher Singh had a grip on his hands in such a manner that he could not inflict any severe wounds. Sher Singh had a gun with him, but there was no way in which he could use it. His younger wife also knew how to fire a revolver, but she was afraid to shoot in case she wounded her husband with the same bullet and at the same time as the robber. The elder wife started pulling the chain to stop the train, but as her pull was not sufficient she started hanging on to the chain with her full weight. At last the train stopped. On hearing sounds of altercation in his master's compartment the servant came running. Thereafter the robber was overpowered and handed over to the police.

All of them were hurt—more or less—by the dagger of the robber but Sher Singh's wounds were the worst. This suffering was predestined for Sher Singh but it was in fact shared by his wives and daughter. It looked as if the fate destined for

somebody had been shared by five people. Sher Singh told me afterwards "Ma, how I managed to stave off the goonda for so long with a broken hand was something about which I could not but be amazed.

I : Ma, did you yourself perceive that Sher Singh had been attacked by a dacoit ?

Ma : I did not clearly see this but I did realise that a great danger was about to befall Sher Singh, whereby his very life could be jeopardised.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Purna Kumbha bathings at Hardwar in 1986 will commence on the Siva-Ratri day when the Sadhus only will take their bath in the holy ganges. The second and third bathing will be on the 9th and the 14th of April respectively.

The devotees desirous of participating in the great Kumbha ceremony can avail of hired tents to be arranged for them at a cost of Rs. 500/- per tent which will accommodate 4 persons.

Please write at least two months before the date of visit to :—

Sw. Swarupananda
General Secretary
Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha
P. O. Kankhal (Hardwar)
Dt. Saharanpur
Pin-249 408

Views of saints about Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee

Harekrishna Goswami

Famous throughout the world, Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee left Her worldly body on 27th August, 1982 at Dehradun and saints came to see Her during Her illness.

On 30th August, three days after Her worldly disappearance, Bharatiya Sadhu Samaj, the main organisation of the saints of all-India level, arranged a gathering in Swami Purnananda Ashram at Kankhal to express their boundless respect to Mother. Women saints also took part in that gathering. Saints expressed their respect to the Holy Mother, narrated Her divinity and exalted state. The gist of lectures delivered by the saints are as follows :—

“Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was the immeasurable power, Para-Shakti. (Para-Shakti is super-power or self-power of God. The self-power of God being an inseparable entity of God, She is identical with God.) She was always in a timeless state. Mother was pure Atma the birthless, deathless, spirit as described in Katha Upanishads” :—

Na jāyate mriyate vā vipaścīn nāyam
kutaścīn na babhūva kaścit,
ajo nityah śāśvato'yam purāno
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre.

“Neither born is She, nor She dies, beyond the world of cause and change. She is the eternal being and cannot be slain. When dead, dies the body not She the deathless spirit”.

“Her body was just imaginary (not true in absolute sense), made up of five basic elements. The clay pot breaks but the space inside it remains. The space was there, even when the pot was intact. Similarly, Mother is the immortal spirit even if Her body is now dead.”

“She used to respect all religious communities. She advised the circle of Indian Ministers, specially Indira Gandhi, the (then) Prime Minister, to provide various facilities to saints and so Bharatiya Sadhu Samaj (the all-India society of saints) is ever-grateful to her.”

“Mother could easily read anybody’s mind and would hint whenever necessary.”

“She has unceasingly attempted to re-establish love and kindness in humanity which this present age lacks. She taught Vedic rules and regulations in the real sense.”

“Pandits like M. M. Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj kneeled before Her. There was a grand synthesis of Jñana, Bhakti and Karma in Her. She remains ever-honoured in India as well as all over the world for Her supremacy.”

Mortal body of immortal Mother was buried at Kankhal-ashram on 29th August. The body was placed in sitting posture.

On 12th September, there was a ceremony in the ashram. Puja was performed on Her Samadhi

(tomb). Kirtan was sung from dawn to dusk with the syllables "Om Ma Shree Ma Jai Jai Ma."

Again on 13th September special puja was performed on Mother's tomb, saints delivered lectures and people were fed free. Many great saints assembled on the occasion and delivered lectures :—

"Anandamayee Ma was the Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss, knowledge incarnated. She was an emblem of Vedas and a great power."

"Mother was in a plane of Advaita. Even being engaged in many religious activities She was always in the state of Advaita. The split between insentient and sentient is only for name's sake but in reality there is only sentient. (However), the insentient body of Mother is no more but sentient Mother is always present."

"She spread spiritualism in society in order to elevate people from worldly pleasures".

"She would speak in languages of trance. Such language was of uncommon type."

"She had unitary vision with all spiritual communities. Completely egoless She was. One who is learned in Vedas and Vedanta but could not achieve God-realisation can deliver long lectures ; but Mother used small sentences, sometimes in simple words, to speak on God which would create blissful resonance in hearts of men. Mother destroyed Her ego with the help of God's name."

"Ma was Paramat-Ma, Brahman. She preached the key of happiness in life—'Whatever happens (done) should happily be accepted.' Her look was

blissful which connotes the Brahman ; such eyes see nothing while seeing everything—unattached.”

“‘What is Dharma’? was asked of Mother. She replied, ‘Which lifts the life from a lower plane to a higher one and finally causes liberation is Dharma.’ Teachings of Mother is the essence of Vedas and Upanishads.”

Swami Ramdas has spoken highly about Mother Anandamayee in his book ‘Ramdas Speaks’. Mahatma Gandhi, J. Krishnamurti, Mahesh Yogi had the pleasure of visiting Her and they talked on Truth. Sri Aurobindo was of the view that, Mother Anandamayee was in a state of Satchidananda (Brahman).

Paramahansa Yogananda, in his world famous book ‘Autobiography of a Yogi’, has delineated that he saw Mother Anandamayee in a high state of Samadhi who knew Herself as the changeless soul.

Anandamayee Ma was neither male nor female but God Himself ; God took shape in an Incarnation to save spirituality from erosion of time.

“Self is a fever, self is a transient vision, a dream, but Truth is wholesome, Truth is sublime, Truth is everlasting. There is no immortality except in Truth, for Truth alone abideth for ever.”

—Buddha

The Contemporaries of Sri Krishna Chaitanya and their successors

R. K. Banerjee

Kalna Temple III

Several years had passed since the inauguration of the Kalna temple by Gauridas Pandit.

About 150 years ago, the temple sewait happened to be Sril Gorachand Thakur.

One day he was devoutly engaged in worshipping the Lords Nitai and Gour inside the temple, when a splendid and glorious Vaishnav arrived before the closed doors of the temple, and exclaimed. "It is customary to offer darshan of the Lord by opening the doors—but is it not possible to obtain darshan now if the doors open by themselves?"

No sooner had the powerful Vaishnav uttered these words then the doors of the temple opened of their own accord.

Observing this phenomenon, Sril Gorachand Thakur became frightened, and wondered if those whom Gauridas Pandit had confined in his temple through the bonds of love, would now, as a result of his own misdeed in service, relinquish the temple itself. The visiting Vaishnav appeared to be so powerful, that he had compelled the temple doors to be opened of them own accord, so he could also

be expected to carry the Lords away in his bosom.' He then thought that there was no way left except to take refuge in his Guru-Bhakti. Crying out aloud and lifting his hands high above his head, he shouted, "If you happen to be truly deserving of Gauridas's love, then let the temple doors be closed once more."

Glory be to God. 'What else could the Lord do, devoted as He was to His devotees? He could not himself open the doors to go out of the temple, neither could he fail to take this unique opportunity of confirming evidence of the strength of Gauridas's love for Himself to the new comer. So, in order to justify the truth of Gauridas's spoken word, the doors of the temple again closed by themselves.'

This mighty Vaishnav was none other than Shri Bhagwan Das Babaji. He had travelled in many lands, but he had never before witnessed such a wonderful miracle. So he resolved to spend all his remaining days until his last breath at Ambika-Kalna, and to settle down there.

There was a large pond called "Giridhari" by Gauridas, adjacent to the temple, on the Southern bank of which there existed a few caves, utilised by Sadhus as "Gambhira", the tiny room in which Mahaprabhu spent his last days at Nilachal.

In one of these caves, Sri Bhagwan Das Babaji took up his abode. The remains of this cave are still in existence.

He used to recite the "Nama" aloud in the cave at least a lakh of times daily. As he had

become completely obsessed by this Maha Mantra, people used to call him "Siddha Bhagwan Das Babaji". When he was asleep, his tongue would be heard uttering, "Hare Krishna" clearly. Due to continuous japa the ten fingers of his hand would be automatically rotated in keeping count. He never allowed anybody to bow down in pranama to himself. When he used to walk in the streets, he used to deliberately allow his outer garments to fall on the ground behind him, so that his footprints would be obliterated, and no devout followers would then be able to lift up the dust from his footprints. He used to walk daily to the Ganga for his bath, and so long as the river was visible, he would walk backwards facing the river, so that his back was never turned to the river as long as it was in sight.

After being in Ambika-Kalna for sometime, the thought arose in him to establish a regular place of worship. While pondering over this issue, he heard a voice reminding him, "The Name is Brahman Himself," so he established a "Nam-Brahma" temple.

Compare this with the name Ma bestowed to the first circular hall built in our Delhi Ashram.

Once upon a time, Jahnava-Ma (Sri Nityananda's consort) was cooking prasad on the banks of the Ganga nearby for her flock of devotees. When she saw the congregation suffering from the heat of the sun's rays, she took up the piece of a Muchukunda tree with which she was cooking the dal, and planted it on the soil nearby. By

the grace of God this piece of stick sprated up into an enormous tree, the branches and leaves of which afforded shelter and shade to all pilgrims.

In due course, owing to ravages of nature, the tree fell into the river, and at the time under discussion only a small portion of it was visible above the receding river level. The Babaji carefully took out the kernel of this remnant, and arranged to inscribe the mantra "Hare Krishna..." on it before installing it in his new temple.

Such is the wonderful Lila of the Lord ! Whoever has heard of such an use for the kernel of a Muchukunda tree, particularly as it had remained immersed in the river for a few centuries ?

The Babaji managed to procure a piece of land in the possession of the Burdwan-Raj to the west of the Ambita Bazar, and built his Nam Brahma temple on it. Subsequent to this, he left the cave where he used to live before, and moved to his newly established Mandir. Devotees in due course donated land for the upkeep of the temple, so the Babaji made out a will to the effect that future sevants of the temple would be selected from among his followers but that if a suitable incumbent was not found, then the sevait of the Gauridas temple would be entreated with the running of the Nam-Brahma temple.

Time passed away, and on the Krishna Astami of the month of Aswin in the Bengalee year 1290 (1883 A.D.), Sri Bhagwan Das Babaji, after entrusting the running of the temple to his disciple Sri Vishnudas Babaji, entered into Mahasamadhi, and

was buried in the courtyard of his Nam-Brahma temple.

Ever since his arrival at Ambika-Kalna, the Babaji had never partaken of any food except prasad from the Gauridas temple. Even today, prasad from the Mahaprabhu's temple is sent daily to the Nam-Brahma Mandir as Bhog for the Babaji's Samadhi.

The following true anecdote illustrates some of the miraculous powers attained by the Babaji during his long Sadhana.

The then Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan, having heard rumours of the achievements of the Babaji, came one day to have his darshan. The Babaji was in deep Samadhi when the Maharaja arrived, but at that moment the latter was very surprised to hear the Babaji utter the words, "Hat ! Hat !" aloud soon after his arrival. The Maharaja assumed that as he was a wealthy and worldly potentate, the Babaji had chosen to ignore his presence. He waited a while and then left the place thoroughly disappointed. When the Babaji arose from his samadhi his followers related all the details of the incident of the Maharaja's visit. The Babaji smiled gently, and said that he knew nothing of the Maharaja's visit as he was at that time in the grounds of the Govinda temple at Vrindavan where he was driving away some goats eager to destroy the temple's Tulsi trees.

When this information was duly conveyed to the Maharaja, he at once telegraphed Vrindavan and obtained confirmation of the fact that at that

particular time on that day, an old Babaji had indeed been seen driving away goats bent on mischief at the Govinda temple.

Needless to say, this incident, only increased the Maharaja's veneration for the Babaji's person.

When Ma visited Vrindaban in the early days before the present Ashram site was acquired and the Ashram built, She wandered to the Burdwan Kunj there belonging to the Maharaja of Burdwan, and was invited to stay there by the Manager of the Estate, the late Jogendra N. Bhattacharyya, who later became an ardent devotee of Ma.

When in the course of time, the last Maharaja could no longer spare the time or energy to look after his Burdwan Estate, he handed it over to his Manager Jogendra, who in due course owing to advancing age beseeched the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha to take it over. After certain legal measures, Burdwan-Kunj is now being administered by the Sangha. Incredible are the inscrutable ways of Ma in leaving her footprints all over the wide world.

About 100 years ago, the then Sevait of the Gauridas temple of Kalna, Sril Gorachand Thakur, mentioned earlier, received a message from the Lord Nityananda in his dream, saying that, "I have lost one of my Khadams (wooden footwear) while walking outside last night, so find it and restore it to me." On receiving this request before dawn, the Sevait at once bathed his person and hurried to the temple. The same dream was dreamt at the same time by another

old Pujari of the temple, who also washed himself in a hurry and came fearfully to the temple in the dark. They opened the doors to find that one of the Sri Nityānanda's Khadams was indeed missing. Both came out into the temple courtyard in search. At this juncture, a paik (darwan attached to guard property) who had come out to have a wash with the advent of dawn, had found the Khadam lying on the road leading to the courtyard. He at once assumed that this belonged to Sri Gorachand Thakur, and brought it to the temple to restore it.

When Sri Gorachand beheld the paik with the Khadam, he embraced the paik and with tears streaming down his eyes he exclaimed, "How fortunate you are." You have yourself brought the Lord's Khadam on your head, and I failed to do my duty. You are the special recipient of the Lord's mercy, came to my bosom.

When the paik realised he was holding the Lord's own Khadam, he lost consciousness. When he revived after a while, a wonderful joy and tumult arose in the precincts of Gauridas's temple.

There are several such stories credited to the temple in the course of time.

To quote from Vaishnav literature,

"Adyapio Sei Lila Kare Gora Ray

Kono kono Bhagyabane dekhbare pay."

"Even today Gora Ray carries out such Lila,

A few fortunate ones only are able to witness

the same."

From the precincts of the Kalna temple, we will now move to the doings of the direct followers of Mahaprabhu, and his successors, as faithfully recorded in Vaishnav literature, such as "Bhakti Ratnakar."

"If you really, with a heart sincere to the core, wish to attain perfect freedom and happiness and not fall into the clutches of pride, exclusiveness and misery, walk on the path of Universal Love and service and thus bless your life with the vision of immortality."

—Swami Ramdas

Man experiences happiness and sorrow as a result of his past actions. He enjoys and suffers — and again new karma is created. In order to be liberated from all this, one must sustain the remembrance of THAT. Endeavour to keep your mind ever immersed in *japa*, *dhyāna*, the thought of God — this leads to peace.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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The way to Sri Krishna

Dr. M. Hafiz Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

It is the innermost desire of every aspirant and devotee of God to attain His nearness and in due course be united with Him. Every religion, ancient or modern, has laid down certain methods of approach to Him. Some religions have enjoined the need of a mediator, a link between God and man and in order to attain Him one has to surrender himself heart and soul to the mediator before one is blessed with direct contact with the Divine. Lord Sri Krishna, the highest manifestation of the Divine according to Hindu tradition, is directly accessible to all earnest devotees. The only condition laid down by Him is complete self-surrender and utter devotion to Him. He says, "He who constantly thinketh of Me, not thinking ever of another, of him I am easily reached, O Partha, of this ever-harmonised yogi. (VIII. 14)

Knowing human nature full well as He does, He knows its limitations, drawbacks and shortcomings. For, a large number of people having trodden the path of fourth-going (Pravr̥tti marga), it takes time for them to become familiar with the laws and conditions of the path of Return (Nivr̥tti Marga).

The blessed Lord has advised them to march forward on their adventure step by step. The aspirant is expected to do everything as an offering

to him. The Lord says, "Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou doest of austerity, O Kaunteya, do thou that as an offering unto Me." (IX. 27).

Thus he is gradually accustomed to hear Him in mind and develop devotion to Him by means of offering and service. Further the Lord says, "he who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept from the striving self, offered as it is with devotion." (IX. 26).

The easiest and the best way to Him, as assured by the Lord Himself, is through sheer giving, complete self-surrender to His Feet, unreservedly and unconditionally, not through any complicated rites or ceremonies. The disciple must reverse the process of grasping, which builds up a personal self, and strive away all that he has, including his petty self. Instead of expecting to get anything from Him in the form of earthly gifts he should desire the God and not anything that He can give him.

The first step in this process of self-elimination is symbolic gifts of leaves and flowers and fruits but afterwards the gift of self, the consecration of all acts to Him. Nor should any one think that his gifts are not accepted by the Lord. As a matter of fact all gifts, however small and insignificant, if offered with love and devotion, are acceptable to Him, because all giving as an offering is a breaking down and weakening of the barrier which cuts off the soul from the wide life outside.

The smallest act of giving is a step upon that Path, and leads the aspirant by easy steps to that sublime stage where the whole personal life, with all its acts and thoughts and feelings, is dedicated to the service of the one in all, where acts can bind no more since the personal self is eliminated and nothing remains that can be bound by them.

The way to Him is clearly pointed out by the Lord Himself, but each has to tread it by himself. No special privilege can be found upon this Path. He who seems to climb with glorious ease today is not a favoured darling of the gods ; but one who reaps the fruit of arduous struggle undergone yesterday.

There is no other way to Lord Krishna than giving of the self to Him in service ; by his own efforts each must climb the Path, as the Blessed Lord Krishna dwells equally in every human heart. None who seeks to offer up himself can be refused. Though he must climb in weary loneliness, striving alone with his own heart, yet is that loneliness a mere illusion ; for there stands unseen his eternal Friend and inmost Self. Therefore, is it said that even if the most sinful of men turns to Him and serves Him with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous ; for he too has entered on Homeward path. Once the resolve is made and solemnly kept to act in future for the higher and not the lower self, progress on the Path is certain. It should be borne in mind that while treading the path the aspirant will have to face many a failure ; yet once the link with the Divine

Self has been established he cannot fall again into the utter darkness, because something has been awakened within him, which will never let him rest again in matter, and though at times he may even fight against it, the inner pull will again and again be felt and the blessed Lord's words will be fulfilled, who says, "Know thou for certain that my devotee perishes never."

It should be remembered that the Atma dwells within the heart of all and therefore this Path is open to all without the distinction of race, caste or sect. The Path of Vedic ritual needed a wealth of learning and therefore was inevitably closed to women and Sudras. This path calling only for sincere self-giving needs no scriptural or philosophic learning and so is open to all.

In conclusion the most merciful Lord teaches us at the end of Discourse IX : "On Me fix thy mind : give thyself in love to Me ; sacrifice to Me ; prostrate thyself before Me ; having thus united thy whole self to Me, with Me as thy Goal, to Me shalt thou come."

The Malady of the Age, its cause and cure*

Dr. B. L. Atreya, M.A., D.Litt.

Padmabhushan, Knight Commander, Darshanacharya

Honoured Guests, Members of the Reception Committee & Fellow Delegates,

I am very thankful to the Executive Committee of the Indian Philosophical Congress for the honour it has done me. I feel diffident in occupying this chair, which has been, in the past, occupied by distinguished thinkers of India. My only justification for being here is that it is another opportunity for me to serve the great organization of which I have been a member since its very inception, and which I have served as a Joint Secretary and Treasurer for the last six years and as a Sectional President for two sessions.

Ladies and gentlemen ; We are living in a very strange age today. Whereas our knowledge of the external world, and our means of securing mastery over it are increasing by leaps and bounds, our acquaintance with the inner nature of man and his aspirations, powers and potentialities is decreasing. We are more worried about wealth, power and possessions than about the right use we should make of them and the purpose they should serve.

* Presidential Address delivered at the XXXIII Indian Philosophical Congress, 1958.

Although, thanks to science and technology, the world is becoming one and its parts more and more interconnected by economic and political ties, mankind is becoming more and more divided into political blocks, parties and groups. A cold war is going on everywhere. Even families are breaking up. While all nations and communities are talking of peace, goodwill, co-existence and non-aggression, they are preparing for war under the cover of defence. Power-pacts, military aids, and federations for mutual protection are common. There is a keen desire for independence all over the world, still all small and weak countries are becoming more and more dependent on the resources of big ones, and appending themselves to more powerful ones, risking their own freedom of thought and action. While old castes and communities are breaking up and vanishing, new political castes and communities in the name of parties and groups are springing up, generating greater difference, hatred and enmity than the older divisions ever did. All kinds of propaganda, mostly false, are made use of for lowering others in the estimation of the ignorant masses and securing support for oneself and one's party. While nations talk of *Panchashila*, individuals and political parties within a nation cast to winds all the time-honoured principles of *sheela* (good conduct).

In place of self-control, control over others' property and resources has become the desired end of clever individuals. In this age when much public harm can be done by negligence of one's

duty and when countless lives can be jeopardised thereby, negligence of duties has become common. Most accidents in buses, trains and planes are said to be due to this factor. We care more for rights than for duties. Stability has given place to revolution, obedience to revolt, co-operation to competition, harmony to discord, contentment and meekness to ambition and aggression. Administration being carried on by those who are appointed on key-posts on account of party-allegiance, and not on account of adequate qualifications, there is mismanagement, partiality, injustice and dissatisfaction everywhere. Even commodities essential for existence and health are becoming rare, difficult to obtain, and costly beyond expectation. Every body tries to put the highest price on what he possesses and can supply to others. Even when it is purchased at the highest price, the buyer is never sure of the genuineness of the article, for adulteration has become a common practice. Food-materials, medicines, and even the free gifts of nature—air and water—are being adulterated and contaminated on account of the capacity of those who observe no moral principles, and who are neither afraid of God nor of the Law of Karma, simply because they have ceased to believe in their existence and operation.

The common man is now living more or less a vegetative and animal life, and is more concerned with food, clothes and house than with any higher and deeper problem of life. And even those he is not able to secure with ease. No one has initiative and freedom to think and live independently. His

thoughts and life are controlled by party-affiliation, and unconsciously guided and determined by newspapers, radio and cinema. Life has lost value and sanctity. Regimentation, conscription and compulsion are coming into vogue in every country. Man has lost faith in religion, in morality, and even in himself. He is pessimistic, pleasure-seeking, secular, party-minded, money-minded, amoral, confused, nervous, quarrelsome, explosive, exploitative, and restless. He has little respect for life, private property, age, wisdom and woman. Life is meaningless, purposeless. Its only business is to eat, drink and be merry. Money being able to purchase all pleasures and comforts, it has become the only object of pursuit throughout life. Our happiest moments are only those when we enjoy the pleasures of senses. Those who are not fortunate enough to secure them continuously and in abundance try to forget their very existence by the help of anaesthetic drugs. Much of our vital and nervous energy having been exhausted on account of over-work and over-enjoyment, we seek the help of stimulants. Our social life is in a chaotic condition. All respect for parents, teachers and administrative authorities has vanished. Either there is too much of regimentation and police control or every individual is a law unto himself. Where the former exist, fear and anxiety are common, and where the latter, social anarchy prevails.

Many western thinkers (and some eastern too) attribute the present unsatisfactory state of the world to modern science and technology. Tyrrell,

for example, writes in *Man the Maker*, "The scientific perspective is hopelessly out of focus with reality and the philosophy to which it has given rise is useless as a guide in life" (p. 291). "The central feature of the modern outlook is, however, the belief that the universe is without purpose or meaning, without directing factors, without anything which transcends the range of our senses and our powers of intellectual investigation. Man, it is asserted owes his origin to the forces in the physical world which lie within the range of his observation. There is nothing beyond this. There is nothing teleological or supra teleological" (p. 293). About the advance made by technology, he says, "These achievements are not simple steps to Paradise. They are blessings ; but they have repercussions.....They make life too complex for peace of mind. They have increased the speed of living to such an extent that there is no time to look beneath the rapidly moving surface and to reach firm foundations." (p. 27). "The urgent need of our times is not for more and more science but for clarity of vision which will enable us to raise our eyes from the foreground and to realize something of the importance of those things which lie in the shadow.....*must* see the whole in true perspective and not any longer build on the flat screen which the specialized technique of science has created" (p. 304). Alexis Carrel similarly writes in his well-known book, *Man the Unknown*, "No advantage is to be gained by increasing the number of mechanical inventions. It would per-

haps be well not to accord so much importance to the discoveries of physics, astronomy, and chemistry. Man must now turn his attention to himself, and to the cause of his moral disability.....There is no shadow of doubt that mechanical sciences are incapable of giving us intelligence, moral discipline, health, nervous equilibrium, security and peace" (p. 50). Gerald Heard writes, in his work *The Source of Civilization*, "The ship of our civilization goes now with so great and so growing a list that we are compelled to throw any ballast we can on the other side." (p. 239). "Our dangerously disproportionate advance in physical knowledge and power over means" (p. 239), he says, "must be counterbalanced by psychological knowledge, knowledge of that complementary aspect of reality which can only be obtained through our subjective, common, integrated depth of consciousness" (p. 391). "A psychological revolution is therefore our only escape from material destruction and mental derangement." (p. 421).

We have to consider these opinions very seriously in view of the fact that in our country, where science and technology are not yet sufficiently advanced, there is a cry for more and more of science and technology ; and science, scientists, and science teachers and students are being patronised by our state in the same way as poets and philosophers were patronised by kings in the past.

There is no doubt that technology has given unimagined and unprecedented power to man ; and this power is a double-edged weapon. It can be

used both for good and evil, and it has been used in the recent history of the world more for evil than for good. Automobiles, aeroplanes, atomic power, telephone, film, fire-arms, anaesthetic drugs, bacteria, hypnosis, suggestion, scientific methods of propaganda—all are capable of being used with equal advantage by the benefactors of mankind and by antisocial individuals and groups. The police and criminals vie with each other in making use of the same means in trying to defeat each other's purpose. If today the world is enjoying the benefits of technology, it is as much suffering from its harmful effects. It is, however, not the fault of technology that it is misused. It is that of those who misuse it. Neither power nor possession of it is evil. It is but natural for man to crave for power. The evil lies in the misuse of it. As Shakespeare said long ago, "It is excellent to have a giant's strength ; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant."

Technology is science in use and action. It is a natural outcome of the present-day advancement of science. All knowledge is power. Much more the scientific knowledge of nature. There is nothing wrong with science as such. Science has penetrated deep into the secrets of nature and life, and has given us exact knowledge of most of the things and happenings around us. Knowledge being power, man is more powerful today than ever before. He has conquered space and time ; neither oceans nor mountains nor even clouds offer any barrier to him. He can fly not only to any place on the earth, but also to any place within the earth's atmosphere.

Nay, he is likely soon to land on the Moon or the Mars. His voice can be heard instantaneously at any place in the world, and even far away from it. He has at his disposal enormous electrical, atomic and solar energy with which he can reshape the world or destroy it in no time. Medicine and surgery are now capable of performing miracles, and no disease is now regarded as incurable. Large areas of earth which were formerly sterile have been made fertile and habitable. In short, science has given us mastery over Nature. How can man part with the knowledge and power he has acquired? How can he cease to have a craving for more and more knowledge and power?

It is really not science, pure or applied, that is to blame for our miserable plight, but a particular outlook or philosophy of life based on the findings of some of the physical sciences. This great success science has achieved is due to the self-imposed limits within which it has worked. Science has confined itself to the knowledge of impersonal facts of objective experience, and has tried to formulate a working thought-model of the world around us with the help of the intellect working on the data collected by verifiable and shareable observation and experiments. It is satisfied with description, classification, and explanation of one phenomenon in terms of other intelligible phenomena. It tries to avoid all reference to unverifiable ultimate realities and to human feelings and values. It tries to reduce the variety of its data to a common denominator which may be amenable to mathe-

mathematical calculation and formulization. Our objective world, which is in itself an abstraction from our total experience, being vast and varied, scientists had to approach it piecemeal ; and this division of labour gave rise to a large number of sciences dealing with the different aspects of nature but following more or less the same method of investigation. Success was inevitable and humanity came to possess greater and greater theoretical and practical knowledge in narrower and narrower fields of experience. Thus we have today experts and specialists who have greatest acquaintance with minutest things and who know very little about other things in the world. They are apt to see the whole world with the glasses coloured by their experience in the narrowest field of nature.

Scientists, students of science, and common men affected by science, are, after all, human beings. They have problems, theoretical as well as practical, which extend beyond the narrow limits of science and which press for their solution. There are certain questions which every human being, unless he is an idiot likes to be answered. Some of them are : What am I ? How am I related to the world and to other beings in the world ? What happens to a person when he dies ? Is my birth an accidental coming into being ? Why inequality and differences in men ? Is there any purpose or goal which I should strive to attain here or hereafter ? Are some actions right and others wrong, and do they effect me favourably or unfavourably ? Am I free to make a choice between two courses of action

open to? Is nature or the universe hostile, indifferent, kind or benign to man? Is there any intelligence behind the processes of nature? Was the world ever created by some intelligent being? If so, what is its nature and powers, and how is it disposed towards its creation and the creatures therein? What is the ultimate nature of the stuff of which the world is made? Is it one, two, or many? If two, or many, how are they related? If one, how has the plurality and variety been created? What is knowledge? How is the subject of knowledge related to objects? When is knowledge regarded as valid? Is there anything like Truth, Goodness, and Beauty? Is life worth living? What is happiness? Can it be attained? If so, how?

Genuine scientists who are experts and specialists in their own particular fields and who are too busy with their special problems plead ignorant and refuse to answer such questions. Pseudo-scientists, fanatic admirers of science, and scientists who go out of their way, do attempt to answer them or some of them. But their answers are coloured by and soaked in the limited knowledge of a particular aspect of nature or life, with which they are specially acquainted. The basic sciences—mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology—deal with only physical entities, forces, forms, qualities and the laws governing them; and, therefore, an outlook of life and universe built around their findings cannot but be materialistic. All questions of life and death are answered in this science-ridden age

in terms of the known laws of these sciences, and it is forgotten that there is in men something which defies materialistic explanation. Materialism, which in some form or other, has always existed in the world, has now gained great status, and is the most popular outlook today on account of a false belief common to mankind that it is the only outlook which science supports.

According to Materialism man is a product of nature and is wholly governed by mechanical laws. There is nothing like a soul or spirit in him. Even the mind is not anything immaterial. Consciousness and other mental processes and activities are either movements or products or functions of the brain and the nervous system. Life and consciousness are accidental and recent phenomena in the history of the world, originating out of material forces, which have been in operation for an incalculable period of time. In such a material and blindly and mechanically working universe there is no place for God, and there is no possibility of survival or immortality. An individual is nothing more than an effect of natural causes, heredity and environment. He has no power and freedom to carve out a destiny for himself. There is no final meaning or purpose of life which is governed by blind forces of nature. Individual life begins with birth and ends in death. Nature is indifferent to life, which it produces in abundance and destroys ruthlessly. Serious consequences have followed from this doctrine. It has made man sceptic about all that was formerly regarded as valuable, sacred

and holy. It has exploded belief in the spiritual ends of life. It has crushed faith in Truth, Goodness and Beauty, as the highest values of life. It has deprived man of the support of the Deity, and of the hope of Heaven. Under its influence man now thinks of truth as expediency, of goodness as prudence, and of beauty as attractiveness. Under its spell man insists upon "the right to the unfettered enjoyment of the pleasures of the moment." Spiritual life is regarded as an escape, religion as an opiate, and my sticexperience as an illusion. There can be no doubt that our present day malady is due to the prevalence of such an outlook on life.

(To be continued)

N. B.—Reprinted from Ananda Varta, Vol. VII, No. I, (May issue, 1959).

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