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In every home God is present in an infinite variety of guises. For the very reason that one has entered life, one has to quit it again — be it sooner or later. While living as a householder, this terrible, smarting pain is unavoidable ; it is similar in every family. Does any balm exist to soothe this burning agony, save to take refuge in Him, from Whom all beings emanate, by Whom they are succoured and in Whom they ultimately are absorbed ?

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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বন্দনীর সীমা

# 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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# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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Vol. XXXV

JANUARY, 1988

No. 1

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To begin with keep up your habits regarding bath and diet, so that you may get undisturbed sleep. This will make it easy for you to think of God and meditate. When the body is healthy it helps to fix your mind on Him. As you progress in your *sādhana*, your diet and sleep will automatically undergo certain necessary changes.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

*By Courtesy of :*

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# Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

( *Translated from Sri Gurupriya Devi's  
Vol. VII in Bengali* )

One day, as a conversation was going on, Ma said, "How long will you stay in the *Dharmashala*? Won't you go back to your own home? How beautiful! You yourself are 'home', you yourself are the 'traveller', you yourself are an outsider, and again, you see, you are back in yourself!" Saying this, Ma began to laugh.

\* \* \*

A gentleman asked, "Ma, we see so many problems, so much misery in the world; what is their impact on you?"

Ma: "Look, you are seated here, and over there on the hill there are so many people coming and going. You are quietly observing them, just as an observer—a 'seer'. Even this is just one aspect of the matter." Saying this much, Ma kept silent.

Afterwards, while resting in Her room at night, Ma resumed the talk on this subject in private. To Srimati Gurupriya Didi she said, "Look, all thoughts are not always expressed in words. At that time, they were asking me, 'In what manner are you influenced by the joys and sorrows of the world?' You know, what exactly is the fact? It is like looking at my own hands, feet, head, etc. and moving them. Exactly if someone, in terms

that you people use, behaves aggressively with this body, calls it names, you know, what happens ? It is like hurting oneself with one's own nails ! Hence, with whom to be displeased ? Moreover, there is no question of hurting. Verily, there is just One without a second. Again, if you talk in terms of 'I', 'You', etc. even then, do you know how it all appears ? He Himself is manifested in all these forms, He is causing injury to Himself — that is how it appears. Therefore, there cannot be any reason for feeling grieved or offended."

After this, while talking in a certain context, Ma said, "Everything is important ; nothing should be disregarded as valueless. For example, you see, when you plant a young plant, you have at first to steady it with a prop made of dry twigs, weeds, etc. With the help of those things the plant grows into a tree or a creeper. Later on, huge quantities of flowers and fruit can be obtained from the same tree or creeper. That is why it is said that everything is important. Again, you see nothing happens until the time comes. You sow the seed, but even if you tend to it with excessive care, it will take its own time to sprout. You cannot just pull the tree out of the seed ; you have only to wait with patience for the time of its natural growth, and take care of it. Only then in due course of time will the tree appear, and it will yield flowers and fruit. In fact, patience is a basic requirement for spiritual practice."

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# In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Sri Amulya Datta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

*(Continued from previous issue)*

Later Ma stopped laughing and said to me, "Well, suppose you worship somebody in the knowledge that he is God. What is the result therefrom? And suppose you worship somebody in the light that he is a human being, what is then the result?"

I: If anybody worships somebody in the belief that he is God, then he who does so goes up to a higher plane. And if anybody worships another as a human being, then this leads to bondage.

Ma: Yes, if the Sadhaka worships somebody in the belief that he is God, then he reaches a higher state. But remember, it is most difficult to believe that a human being is God. It is to the good if you can do so. He who succeeds in doing so, can eventually supersede his human guru and reach a higher plane. But for normal people, this does not happen. In such a case if anybody worships or sits in meditation of somebody in this way, then all the faults and the goodness of the other will enter into him. That is why it is for-



bidden to touch or do pranams to all and sundry.

Ma : “You may well ask why do we carry out Kumari Puja ? Why worship the Shalgram ? There is scope for the same danger here.” In reply it can be declared that by whatever name, in whatever form, you may call out for Him, there will definitely be a reaction because the name is indistinguishable from Him who bears the name. That is why there is a custom whereby everybody may be looked upon as God and even worshipped or bowed to accordingly. “And you have also submitted that I never speak of anything to hurt anybody’s feelings. This too is not quite correct. You have heard that I behaved the same way in connection with the Mauni Baba of Nabadwip. He used to live in silence in a room. It looked as if a stone statue was sitting there. Not a particle of his body showed any movement. The devotees and disciples of the Babaji told us, “Baba sits like this throughout the day and night. He hardly eats anything. After 15 days he may sip a little milk.”

“But his appearance was quite well nourished and smooth, there was no sign of any fasting. We also learnt that the Babaji never spoke to anybody. But if somebody showed unusual eagerness, he did converse with him a little. But he talked quite a lot with me, and many people there were surprised at this, and declared that they had never seen the Baba talk so much previously. Everybody looked upon him as a very mighty Mahatma. In the

mornings and evenings his door used to be kept open for a few hours when he would grant darshan to people, at other times his door would remain locked."

"Arrangements were made for this body to live in the same house. It was God's interesting whim that the room occupied by this body had a clear view of the Babaji's room. The inner door of Babaji's room was often not locked but merely closed. One afternoon this body had the Kheyal to visit Babaji. At such a time the public were forbidden to have his darshan. In entering the room, this body saw that the Babaji was lying comfortably on a cool mat. He had on a Shantipuri Dhoti. When the Babaji used to give darshan to the public, he used to wear a short piece of cloth round his loins. Babaji had placed one foot above the other, and was reading a letter. On suddenly seeing this body in his room, he was thunder-struck ! Ultimately, he confessed to this body that he really did not intend to deceive the people in this way. But the owner of the house had compelled him to behave in this fashion, because the possession of the house had passed into the hands of others, due to debt or some other reason. It was the strong belief of the land-lord that if he succeeded in housing the Babaji in his house in that state for some time, his house would no longer change hands."

"Whatever it may have been, when we next returned to Nabadwip later on, we found the Babaji was no longer there. So, you realise that by expos-

ing the Babaji in this fashion, it resulted in his own ultimate good. Whatever happened today will be for the good of all.”

### **Friday 10.3.43—Departure of Ma from Dhaka :**

Ma would be leaving today. We tried to persuade her to stay at least upto Dol Purnima, but we were unsuccessful. I went along to the Ashram at about 9 A.M. Even at that time the Ashram was thronged with devotees. I saw Pramatha Babu, Nibaran Babu, Charu Babu etc. there.

In the kirtan hall, the ladies were making a lot of noise over Ma. Instead of trying to enter into this conflict, I took myself along to the veranda of Baba Bholanath's Smriti Mandir (memorial temple), and started conversing with people there. Some non-Bengali devotees of Ma who had accompanied her to Dhaka, came to bid us good bye. We also spoke with them, assuring them of our good wishes and friendship.

At this stage kirtan was commenced in the kirtan hall. Realising that Ma had persuaded the ladies to start singing, we also entered the kirtan hall. I saw Ma seated in a small cot playing the kartal and accompanying the singing. Men and women were both singing with Ma, who sang “Narayan, Narayan, Aum, Aum.” The sweet smile on her face and the ecstasy of the song seemed to pervade into the entire room. The devotees also spent all their energy in accompanying Ma as loudly as they could. After singing kirtan

there for some time, Ma was taken along for her meal, and we came outside. It was nearly 10.30, so I started for the station with Monoranjan Babu. The Calcutta Mail was scheduled to leave at 11-30 A.M. Arrangements had been made to take Ma upto Narayangange in Jatin's saloon. For this purpose Jatin was waiting at the station from the morning instead of going to the Ashram.

I met him at the station. Ma arrived at about 11 A.M. Here also many devotees were waiting to have darshan of Ma. She was first taken to the 1st class waiting room, but within a moment the place became so crowded that there was no possibility of entering to convey our pranams to Ma.

After a while Ma was taken along and seated in the saloon. All the inmates of my house were already in the saloon. My daughter placed a garland round Shree Ma's neck. Ma sat near the window and smilingly conversed with the devotees outside. We went along to the next compartment and the train started.

On reaching Dolaigunge station Ma recalled us to her compartment. Monoranjan Babu, Jatin and I went along to Ma's compartment. On seeing me, Ma said, "I wished to speak to you yesterday on a certain matter. I can do so now. This opportunity has now risen only because the matter needs to be clarified to you."

Saying this, Ma asked the others to stay away at some distance, and I brought my ears close to Ma's face. Ma said, "Last night you had inquired if

this body had massaged that Ma's ( Siddha Ma's ) feet. In actual fact this body had never massaged her hands or feet. When she fell upon the ground this body saw that one of her hands was somehow hidden behind her body. That is why this body pulled that hand away to put it right. But in doing so, it was noticed that the fingers were closed round a fruit. This body was already well aware of the fact that the fruit was in her possession. Still, I pulled her hands to see if she would resist such an act. I wanted to check, if indeed she was in a trance, why should she show such strength in resisting me ? Of course, ignoring this particular case, I can also confirm that in a real trance the hands can indeed be tightly folded. But that is a different matter. I wish to point out to you that whatever this body perpetrated yesterday, was not done of its own free will. It all happened in the natural course of events. This body was well aware of everything, yet you have noticed that this body even asked permission to touch her asana. Had she objected then this body would have sat quietly at a distance, and none of this would have been divulged."

I : Ma, is there any difference between what you perform in such a mood, and what you act deliberately ?

Ma : No. But when sometimes I refer to a wish, I do so to speak from a certain angle. Yesterday, you had declared that in such a case somebody might feel hurt inside. It is true that there was such a time when I could not perform

any action to hurt the feelings of somebody also. Whenever I used to be confronted with such a situation, I would start to shiver inwardly, because such a hurt would merely rebound on this body. In the case of this Ma (Siddha Ma), had you perceived any such action on the part of this body, then this body would have burst into tears, thinking "Oh Lord, can I do so much harm through this body?" I would have started crying bitterly. But no such feeling was aroused yesterday, whatever happened that day took place quite naturally of its own accord. This body does not reveal what and when somebody else may do at any stage. Whatever took place yesterday may have been painful to you, and you may have thought that it would have been better for it not to have happened in that way. If you look at it in the ordinary way it will naturally seem so to you. But even if you behold something evil in the ordinary way it is possible that some real benefit may accrue from it, but you do not then readily perceive it. But I hereby repeat to you that whenever you see something good taking place, you should receive it with the correct amount of reverence. You must not try to find fault with others. Because remember that whatever one does before acquiring true knowledge is done in some sort of a paralysis. They cannot help themselves acting thus. Never try to speak ill of others. Of whom will you speak this evil? You are all fashioned similar to God. Whether good or evil, it is His manifestation. When you wish to become

good and pure, then whatever appears to you must be received with faith and devotion. If you notice something evil, you must say, "Oh Lord, we do not wish to behold you in this aspect! Let this remain with you." Thus you must imbibe the good in everything." Ma said all this to hold the attention of all those present.

### **Diksha (Initiation) :**

Monoranjan Babu enquired, "What exactly is Diksha?"

Ma : (Looking towards me) Baba, when were you initiated ?

I : When I was 15-16 years old.

Ma : What is meant by Diksha ?

I : What do I know of such things ?

Ma : (laughing) Well — you have been initiated for such a long time, yet you do not know its meaning !

Ma asked the same question of Suren Babu.

Suren Babu : Initiation is a method to realise God.

Ma : What is the use of this ? If I do not know what God is, then how can I know which is the true path to Him ?

Suren Babu kept quiet.

Ma : Diksha is a method of knowing one's true Self. To know yourself truly is to know God. So that we can realise what we really are, God mercifully shows us the way in the form of a Guru. He indicates the way to realise our true Self

through a mantra or a manifestation of power. This is what Diksha represents.

Monoranjan Babu : The Guru may provide us with a mantra or Nama, why should we repeat this in Japa time and again ? God has many names, suppose I take any one of them that I prefer, will I not get the same result ?

Ma : One has to take the same Name again and again. Do you know why ? You consume a lot of different types of food for the maintenance of your body. You eat your rice daily with new or different types of vegetable preparations — even if the vegetables may be of various kinds, yet the rice is the same every day, otherwise the body is not nourished. In the same way, although God has many different names and forms for Japa, all these are not suitable for any particular person. For instance, your spectacles do not suit somebody else, nor does somebody else's glasses suit you. In the same way, God is perceived differently by different people. Of course, when one has acquired full knowledge, then his God is the same as other people's Gods, but before reaching such a high stage, God is seen in a different light by different people, and one should abide with whatever the Guru has advocated.

Monoranjan Babu : It is due to these different names and forms that there is such a difference of opinion between various religious bodies, such as the Shaivas and Vaishnavas !

Ma : I am not alluding to anything like that. I maintain that even if any of them worships Shiva



alone, their Gods are not identical. To each, Shiva appears in a separate form. Suppose you call out to your Shiva in a certain way, somebody else does not see his Shiva in the same light. Take for instance Kali and Vishnu. There are infinite Vishnus contained in the one Vishnu, and infinite Kalis in the one Kali. That is why the Guru chooses a mantra that will liberate a particular person. The Guru is not different from his mantra. Just as you behold the nose, ears, and face of the Guru, so can you perceive the same in his mantra. In actual fact the mantra represents the nose, ears and face of the Guru. If you continue to work diligently with this, you will in due course realise God, or your true Self."

By this time the train had reached Naraingange, and we had to alight from the train. Shree Shree Ma called out to Monoranjan Babu and said, "I could not say anything really about Diksha. This cannot be done in such a short time."

*(To be continued)*

It is the single-minded who are blessed, for they shall have peace in all its fulness. How was it that some of the saints reached such heights of perfection and contemplation? They strove to die completely to every earthly longing, and so they were able to hold fast to God with all their inmost heart and concentrate, without hindrance, on the life within.

—The Imitation of Christ

# A Strange Experience

Dr. med. D. Krauth

Roonstrabe 3, 6700 Ludwigshafen.

After I had a vision of Anandamayi Ma in Sri Lanka in August 1981 She began to guide my Life in dreams. It is well known that Ma indicated to Bhajji and Bholanath the spots where they had been living in former births. One day I got the wish to meet Ma in a former life, if there had been a contact. In the following night a dream ran as follows :

— “In the room of a tower of a castle I made obeisance to MA and She said : Look for enemies ! I went out, but I could not distinguish enemies from other people. Coming back into the castle-yard, there suddenly was an uproar and a fight. I ran away and was, probably, killed by a weapon in the back. —Then scenery changed and I was flying together with Ma and others over a countryside of nowadays (there was a gasoline-station). I knew in the dream, that it was Wales in Great Britain. In this country we saw the ruins of a castle situated at a river.” —

Later I made a journey to Wales and I found in reality the dream-castle, which I recognized on certain details, called Dryslwyn-Castle. By kind help of the Mayor of the region I found out that this castle is of oldest Welsh-Celtic origine and was

the center of the Lords of Rhys, and is closely associated with the legend of a "Lady of the Lake", who's behaviour is described rather MA-like. It must be known that the old Celtic religion of Wales worships the Universal Mother. I myself only once, twenty years ago, passed by Wales on the way to Ireland, but surely not by this castle region.

I enclose copies of the attained informations, which might be of interest for your readers.

**BOROUGH OF DINEFWR**  
**BWRDEISTREF DINEFWR**

His Worship The Mayor - Councillor E. R. Thomas

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(STD 0269)



*Mayor's Parlour:*

Municipal Offices  
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Llandello  
Dyfed SA19 6HW  
Tel. Llandello 822521 (STD 0558)

*Please reply to Home | Mayor's Parlour*

20th May 1986.

Dr. med. D. Krauth,  
Roonstr. 3,  
6700 Ludwigshafen.

Dear Dr. Krauth,

I regret delay in replying to your letter, but, nevertheless, I now have pleasure in enclosing details of Dryslwyn Castle as illustrated in the Wales's Book of Castles.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

*E. R. Thomas*  
Mayor

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### DRYSLWYN CASTLE

*A lost town of the middle Ages, with fragments of a castle, being excavated from just below the surface on the summit of a steep, isolated hill. The ruins comprise traces of a chapel and hall.*

There is only one approachable side to the hill of Dryslwyn and its castle ruins, which command a narrow point of the Tywi valley. The view from the steep track which leads to the top of the hill is a fine one, for Dryslwyn is surrounded by rich farmlands rising to wooded uplands. But the castle remains are scanty, although more is being uncovered by excavation every year. This site has a long history, though we first hear of it in 1245, when John of Monmouth attacked the Welsh castle here.

After the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd ('the Last') the Lord of Dryslwyn, Maredudd ap Rhys, rose against Edward I. Maredudd had been one of the few Welsh lords to oppose Llywelyn, but had not been given Dryslwyn as his promised reward. Whilst Edward was still in Gascony, the Earl of Cornwall brought up an army of 11,000 men to besiege Maredudd. This famous siege lasted more than two weeks. Miners filled up the ditches, but an undermined wall fell on 150 men and the castle was finally taken by battering down the chapel wall. The incoming royal constable spent over £300 on repairs, including felling the trees round the castle and building a new mill. *The castle was betrayed to Owain Glyndwr in 1403, and thereafter leased out, its last constable was appointed in 1439.*

To day, humps and bumps — the remains of buildings just under the turf — cover the whole hilltop. There was a wall around the edge, and the clearest traces of the town which once stood here are the well-preserved house sites backing against this wall on the north side.

One upstanding tower fragment marks the outer ward of the castle and at the southern corner of the hilltop (overlooking the bridge) are the main surviving ruins : two buildings protruding from the line of the curtain wall. The upstanding wall with two rows of windows probably belonged to the hall. The other wall (with three narrow pointed windows) may have been the chapel, and the breach between them might be the result of the siege of 700 years ago.

### **BOROUGH OF DINEFWR—OFFICIAL GUIDE**

High in the mountains in this area is Llyn Y Fan, a lake that supplies Llanelli with much of its water. It is the *legendary deep dwelling place of the 'Lady of the Lake', the maiden with whom a young farmer called Rhiwallen fell in love. Their three sons became the legendary physicians of Myddfai.*

#### **Llandovery**

Dinefwr's most northerly town, Llandovery stands low beside the Tywi where that river is joined by the Bran and the Gwydderig streams. A historic town and a market and shopping centre for a wide surrounding area. Llandovery has some

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2,100 residents and is served by a station on the Central Wales Railway.

Aptly enough the town's name derives from Llan-ym-Ddyfri the 'meeting place among the water'. The Romans here built a fortress to guard the river crossing and so protect the road to and from the Dolaucothi gold mines. Llandovery, strongly resisted the Normans who, like the Romans before them, found the town's site strategic enough to build a castle. Through later centuries Llandovery became a droving centre, and its cattle and sheep sales as well as its market are still of great importance. Not only did the drovers take cattle and sheep on the long walk to England but pigs, geese and even turkeys were herded together. The Drover men were people of affluence as they commuted between the rural areas and the cities. They were entrusted with the proceeds of the sale of the stock. The problems of safeguarding the money were great indeed. They were, in fact, instrumental in establishing banks as in 1799 one of their number, David Jones, set up the Black Ox Bank, one of the first in Wales (now Lloyds Bank).

Llandovery's castle has already been mentioned. Between it and the town's main shopping street is the stock market, a natural link between past and present. The narrow shopping streets have a charm all of their own and they lead to the market square over which preside the town and market halls, side by side. The latter is a long low structure but the Town Hall with its prominent lantern tower

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stands on arches above a ground floor used by market stalls.

### **Myddfai**

East of Llandovery and set in a beautiful cwm under the Black Mountains, Myddfai is well away from main roads. It centres around its interesting church which has an unusual octagonal 14th century font and 15th century barrel vaulted roof.

Myddfai's main claim to fame, however, is *that it gave its name to the line of physicians "Meddygon Myddfai" the first of whom, Rhiwallen, was said by legend to be the son of the 'Lady of the Lake'.* These three physicians were, it was said, unrivalled in skill and sick people came to this remote village from all parts of Wales to be cured by medicinal recipes that were widely acclaimed. *They were made physicians to the Court of the Lord Rhys of South Wales* and, after their deaths, their sons and later children continued the calling and added to the knowledge of medicines and herbs.

### **Penygroes**

West of Ammanford, the village of Penygroes was once a mining community but the pits have closed and a brickworks is now on the site of the Penygroes colliery. Near here, too, is the site of the extensive new Capel Hendre Industrial estate which, hopefully, will bring new industry to the area.

Penygroes is the international centre for the Apostolic Church which was established here in

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1904. The Apostolic Church's international convention is held here during the first week of August every year when members of the church attend from all parts of the world.

### **Pumpsaint**

On the Llanwrda to Lampeter road, Pumpsaint is famed for the Roman gold mines of Dolaucothi which are now open to the public and have been described earlier. They, the surrounding estate, and much of the village itself are owned by the National Trust.

The village name, translated as 'Five Saints' to commemorate a legend that five saints sheltered from a storm here huddled on a large rock. It said that this rock still bears the impression made by their shoulders !

### **The Lady of the Lake**

In the north of Carmarthenshire is a small village, nestling in the hills, called Myddfai. Not far from Myddfai is Llyn Y Van, or Van Pool. The pool is a small lake set in a countryside that is wild and desolate. One can wander for many miles without meeting a single creature.

Long ago there lived near this lake a peasant woman and her son, Rhiwallon. Rhiwallon's father had been killed fighting the Normans when they came to conquer Wales. The widow and her son worked very hard for their living on the small mountain farm,



Rhiwallon's duty was to take care of the herds that grazed on the hillside. He liked his work, and often spent the lonely hours of his watch in carving beautiful things in wood.

One evening he was returning home, tired after his day's work. When he reached the bottom of the great crag towering over Van Pool he stood still in astonishment. A herd of ghost-like oxen was coming from the pool.

Rhiwallon watched the oxen climb on to some pastureland. He grew more astonished when he saw that the herd was being driven by a swan, which suddenly turned into a most beautiful maiden.

Rhiwallon had lived so much alone that he was very shy of speaking to anyone except his mother. When he saw the beautiful maiden, however, he forgot his shyness. He ran up to her, and when he held out his hands towards her she gave him a piece of bread.

"Take it," she said in a sweet voice. "Take it and eat it as a sign of friendship."

He did so. She laughed and vanished. Then Rhiwallon looked round for the strange oxen. They too were not to be seen. He rubbed his eyes. Had he been dreaming? Surely not! He was certain the beautiful maiden had spoken to him. Bowing his head, quite at a loss, he made his way home to tell his mother of the strange adventure.

Rhiwallon continued his work of taking care of the herds on the lonely hills. As the days went by his thoughts centred more and more on the

beautiful maiden. He longed to see her again, but though he searched throughout each day he could not find her.

It was New Year's Eve. The lads of the village of Myddfai called to Rhiwallon.

"It is the night of Nos Calan ! Come, Rhiwallon, we will have a gay time together in the village."

But Rhiwallon turned away. His mother ran after him and tried to persuade him to join the merry party. Rhiwallon explained to his mother that he wanted to be alone to think of the lovely maiden he had seen. The mother shook her head sadly, and Rhiwallon, turning up a path that led to the mountainside, made his way to the lonely lake.

A full moon sailed high in the sky. Rhiwallon saw that a heavy mist hung over the lake. As he gazed he saw something moving on the surface of the water close by. Very quietly the lad crept nearer, and saw that the object floating on the water was a piece of bread. He reached out and took it.

"She said that bread was a token of friendship," he muttered to himself. "I will eat this small crust."

Hardly had he done so when he heard a rustling in the waters of the lake. Rhiwallon looked and saw the strange herd of oxen approaching as before.

"This time," exclaimed Rhiwallon, "there is no swan following them, but there is something else." He peered into the shadows, and then the moon lit up the waters. "It is a little golden boat !" he exclaimed.

When the boat reached the lakeside out stepped the beautiful lady whom Rhiwallon had seen before.

“This time she shall not escape me,” declared Rhiwallon. He ran to her and told her that he loved her.

“I love you too, Rhiwallon,” said the beautiful lady.

Rhiwallon led her to his home. On the way thither the Lady of the Lake told Rhiwallon that she was willing to marry him. Rhiwallon was overjoyed, but the lady raised her hand in warning.

“You are a mortal, Rhiwallon. I am immortal. There must therefore be one condition on which I marry you.”

Rhiwallon declared he did not care what the condition was if only the Lady of the Lake would stay with him. Looking very sad, she then said, “If ever you should strike me three times I must return alone to the place whence I came.”

Rhiwallon laughed aloud. “I accept the condition,” he said boldly. “It is not likely that I shall ever strike thee whom I love so much.”

Rhiwallon’s mother welcomed the Lady of the Lake. When she was told of the condition on which the young couple could be married, she, like Rhiwallon, laughed aloud. It was not likely that her son would strike the fair lady. Had he not sought long and patiently to possess her ?

The young couple were married. They lived very happily.

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“We shall grow rich,” said the Lady of the Lake. “I possess great herds of oxen. They shall be yours and shall graze on the mountain-side.”

Wealth was theirs. They owned sheep and cattle and wide stretches of pasture land. Their greatest treasure, however, was their family of brave sons and beautiful daughters.

The old condition governing their married life was far from Rhiwallon's mind when one day he and his wife made their way to the church at Myddfai to attend a christening. The guests were bidding farewell at the church door. Rhiwallon was anxious to return to his farm. In order to summon his wife, he tapped her lightly on the shoulder with his glove.

“Beware, Rhiwallon, beware!” cried the Lady of the Lake.

Rhiwallon looked at her in astonishment.

“Remember the old warning,” she said in great distress. “You have struck me once.”

Many years went peacefully by. Rhiwallon had again forgotten the condition, when he and his wife went to a wedding. The guests at the wedding feast were merry, all save the Lady of the Lake. She burst into tears and cried bitterly, refusing to be consoled, for in a vision she could see the troubles and sorrows that lay ahead for the newly married couple.

Rhiwallon went to her and scolded her, telling her that she was damping the pleasure of the other guests.

“Come, come, dear wife,” he said coaxingly. “I know you can be the happiest creature in the world.”

He touched her lightly on the arm, bidding her join the merry folk.

“Rhiwallon !” she exclaimed through her tears. “O my dear husband ! You have now struck me twice. Only once more remains.”

Rhiwallon promised he would take great care in the future not to strike her. Many, many months passed and all was well.

Rhiwallon’s friend who lived in a neighbouring farm died. Rhiwallon and his wife attended the funeral. All were sad in the house of mourning. Suddenly the silence was broken by peals of fairy laughter. The Lady of the Lake was laughing at the sorrowful faces around her, for she remembered that Rhiwallon’s friend was now in a state of happiness with all his sorrows past. Rhiwallon knew that merry laugh. He ran to his wife and scolded her. In doing so he touched her lightly on the arm.

The Lady of the Lake grew thin and pale. She said, very faintly :

“Farewell, my dear, dear husband. You have struck me the third and last time.”

Her form changed. Rhiwallon saw her as he had first seen her, and then she vanished from his sight. He ran to the mountainside and then to the lake, hoping to overtake her. He called and watched till sunset, but saw no trace of her.

Months and years passed by, but the Lady of the Lake did not return. Grief-stricken, Rhiwallon

remained at the lakeside, seeking some news of her. Oftentimes his sons and his daughters waited with him, for they too were in great sorrow.

One night the sons were watching by the Van Pool. They saw something appear ; it was really their mother as their father had first seen her, but they did not recognize her, and turned away heart-sore. The Lady of the Lake called :

“My sons ! My sons !”

They knew her voice and ran to kiss her. She told them that they might only kiss her hands. Then as they knelt before her she blessed them.

“Your work, my sons,” she said, “is to become great physicians. You must heal the suffering.”

They looked at her in surprise. She knew that they were farmers, tending Rhiwallon’s herds, but the mother went on :

“Have no fear, my noble sons. I will tell you of the healing herbs. I will guide your footsteps to the places where they grow.”

Having said these words the Lady of the Lake grew thin and vanished.

The sons hurried home to tell their father of the strange meeting. Rhiwallon told them that they must obey their mother. He and his daughters would take care of the flocks and herds.

Rhiwallon’s sons climbed the mountainsides. Guided by their mother’s invisible form they collected goodly herbs to heal the sick. They became very skilful and reports of their healing powers spread all over Britain. The Lord Rhys, owner of the greater part of South Wales,

gave them lands and bestowed great honours on them.

When Rhiwallon's sons died, their sons in turn became skilled doctors. For many generations their skill was preserved in the family.

Some of the knowledge was written down in a book that we can still read, called *The Physicians of Myddfai*. Many of the cures seem very strange, though not so strange when we remember that they were suggested by the Lady of the Lake.

### CYFRI'R GEIFR

Oes gafr eto ?

Oes, heb ei godro

Ar y creigiau geirwon serth

Mae'r hen afr yn crwydro.

Gafr wen, wen, wen

Ie finwen, finwen, finwen

Foel gynffonwen

Foel gynffonwen

Ystlys wen a chynffon

Wen, wen, wen.

### Prescriptions of the Physicians of Myddfai

A cold mouth and warm feet will live long.

Good are a salmon and a sermon in Lent.

Suppers kill more than the Physicians of Myddfai can cure.

A light dinner and less supper, sound sleep, and long life.

If thou desirest to die, eat cabbage in August.

# Repeated births and the sage Vamadeva

Nirmal Chandra Ghosh

Bhagavadgita tells us

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णानि नरोऽपराणि ।  
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥  
ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।  
मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥  
शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाश्रुत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।  
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥  
श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।  
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥  
उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।  
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥\*

[ Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies and take on others that are new.

A fragment ( or fraction ) of My own self, having become a living soul, eternal, in the world of life, draws to itself the senses of which the mind is the sixth, that rest in nature.

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\* Verse 22, chap. 2, Samkhya Yoga. Verses 7—10 chap. 15, Purushottama Yoga. English rendering is from Bhagawad-gita by S. Radhakrishnan



When the Lord takes up a body and when he leaves it, he takes these ( the senses and mind ) and goes even as the wind carries perfumes from their places.

He enjoys the objects of the senses, using the ear, the eye, the touch sense, the taste sense and the nose, as also the mind. When he departs or stays or experiences, in contact with the modes, the deluded do not see ( the indwelling soul ) but they, who have the eye of wisdom ( or whose eye is wisdom ) see. ]

Man does not die ; only the body perishes. The soul is immortal.

Those who identify themselves with their bodies, always think in terms of I and mine ( अहंकार ), engage themselves only in pursuits of worldly objects and sensual enjoyments, and do not acquire knowledge of the soul, to them repeated birth and death occur.

In reality when a transmigrating soul leaves its body then it is the death of that body, and when the transmigrating soul takes up the next body as preordained by the Almighty Lord according to its karma ( past action ), unfulfilled desires and attachments, then it is the birth of the next body. The soul is never born and it never dies.

When a man acquires knowledge of self and realises the supreme Soul then he becomes completely unattached to the body and knows that he is the same as the Supreme soul, eternal, infinite, everlasting bliss, joy and peace, and he

has no birth or death. So long, due to ignorance, he was thinking otherwise. He was always the same as Brahman, the Supreme self.

The present topic from Aitareya Upanishad, Part II, tells us about three births of a man, who is still to achieve self realisation, in order to give an idea how the cycles of birth and death continue from time immemorial till the man acquires self knowledge. It also tells about a sage, who while remaining in mother's womb itself, got freed from the repeated birth and death, broke away the fetters of the body and got free from the bondage of worldliness ( संसारसृति, संसारासक्ति ), which was the root cause of all miseries suffered by him again, by acquiring self knowledge.

ॐ पुरुषे ह वा अयमादितो गर्भं भवति यदेतद्रेतः ।

तदेतत्सर्वेभ्योऽङ्गेभ्योत्सेजः संभूतमात्मन्येवाऽत्मानं विभक्तिं

तद्यदा स्त्रियां सिञ्चत्यथैनज्जनयति तदस्य प्रथमं जन्म ॥\*

A transmigrating soul after exhausting the fruits of its action in different regions comes to earth and being in the food in the form of cereals, vegetables etc, enters the body of its would be father with the food which the latter takes and is conceived in his body in the form of semen, which is the essence and vigour of the body extracted from all the limbs. At first the man holds this semen in his body as his own self. Thereafter he sheds this at the proper time into his wife and the father procreates it. The issuing out of the transmigrating

\* Aitareya Upanishad, Part II, Chap. I, Verse I.

soul in the form of semen\* from father to the mother is its first birth.

तस्त्रिया आत्मभूयं गच्छति यथा स्वमङ्गं तथा ।

तस्मादेनां न हिनस्ति । साऽस्यैतमात्मानमत्रगतं भावयति ।†

That ( foetus ) becomes the mother's own self as if it is her own limb. So it does not hurt her. She understands that it is the self of her husband that has come to her and she nourishes it by taking proper care and protects it by observing the rules and regulations about food etc. that are to be observed by a pregnant woman at different stages. She also deserves to be properly nourished and taken care of by her husband and other members of the family. She bears it till it is born.‡ Soon

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\* According to medical science there are many components in semen. The main component is sperm (spermatozoa). Sperm is responsible for procreation by uniting with ovum of woman, if fertilized. One drop of semen contains hundreds of sperm, which have celliary movement.

The united sperm and ovum becomes embryo after fertilisation and then develops into foetus in the womb of mother.

† Aitareya Upanishad, Part II, Chap. 1, Verse 2.

‡ According to Garbhopenishad, which is one of the minor Upanishads, the child while in its mother's womb, develops consciousness of senses, mind and intellect. It remembers its previous births, the good and bad deeds done in the past, the unbearable pains and sufferings undergone by it, and thinks, "I have passed through thousands of such births, I have sucked the milk of so many, I have suffered innumerable births and deaths and passed through so many male and female organs and undergone unending miseries. At present I am alone and repenting for what I had done, and undergoing sufferings in the dark womb of a woman. The

after the birth, which is its second birth, the father protects the child and performs the necessary rituals as prescribed in the scriptures and according to customs. He takes such steps that his son grows up properly and becomes a man successful in life like him in course of time. By doing so the father is protecting his own self and that also for the continuation of the chain of creation in the worlds. In this way the continuation of the chain of creation and specially that of human race in the worlds is assured.

सोऽस्यायमात्मा पुण्येभ्यः कर्मेभ्यः प्रतिधीयते ।

अथास्यायमितर आत्मा कृतकृत्यो वयोगतः प्रैति ।

स इतः प्रयन्नेव पुनर्जायते तदस्य तृतीयं जन्म ॥\*

The son is the self of his father. The father makes him his representative for doing virtuous deeds, which he performed himself according to Vedic injunctions recommended for men of his caste and profession. Then the father becoming old and infirm dies and takes up a new body simultaneously like the movement of leech from one spot to another (जलौकावत्) as preordained by God

child promises, "When I shall be born, I shall take refuge in God so that I can get freedom from this repeated birth and death. I shall lead pure life, refrain from doing bad deeds, control my senses, perform austerities and meditate on Brahman for self realisation." The child is then born with great difficulty while suffering great pain. But such is the great power of Vishnu Maya that after birth it forgets its promises and all about previous births and deaths and terrible sufferings.

\* Chap. 16, Daivasurasampadbibhaga Yoga, Verses 19-20.

according to his past actions (good and bad deeds), unfulfilled desires and attachments. This is the third birth of the father (because he had already undergone two births like his son as a transmigrating soul). He then enjoys or suffers the fruits of his past actions in different regions and thereafter reaches the earth again, and being with the food enters the body of another man and is born in the same way as already stated. These cycles of births and deaths continue until he realises God.

If his past action is not good, he may not be born as a man but in a lower state of existence. In Bhagavadgita Lord says to Arjuna how He hurls constantly the evil doers only into the wombs of demons in (this cycle of) births and deaths, and how being fallen into the wombs of demons, these deluded beings from birth to birth do not attain Him, but go down to the lowest state.

In Chapter 8 (Aksharabrahma Yoga) He says to Arjuna,

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥\*

“Having come to Me, these great souls do not get back to rebirth, the place of sorrow, impermanent, for they have reached the highest perfection.

From the realm of Brahmā downwards, all worlds are subject to rebirth, but on reaching Me,

\* Verses 15-16.

O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), there is no return to birth again.”

Then the Lord narrates that this repetition of births and deaths continue for all beings who have not realised God during the entire day time of Lord Brahmā, which is equivalent to the duration of a thousand ages\* (4000 Yugas). During the night time of Lord Brahmā, the duration of which is also a thousand ages, they merge in the unmanifested called Avyakta or Prakriti. When on the next day Lord Brahmā awakes from sleep, all of them come forth from the unmanifested and are born according to their previous Karma (action) etc. and suffer repeated births and deaths and get merged in the ocean of sorrows and griefs. This state of affairs continue till the end of the life of Lord Brahmā when the great deluge (Prakritik Pralaya)\*\* follows and thereafter the Almighty Lord, the supreme Person, in whom all existences abide and by whom all this is pervaded, takes everything, the living and non-living, in His own self like a spider and its webs, and after that the new creation follows in the pattern of the former.

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्यते च

यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः सम्भवन्ति ।

यथा सतः पुरुषात् केशलोमानि

तथाऽक्षरात् सम्भवन्तीह विश्वम् ॥†

\* Age has been taken as equal to four Yugas.

\*\* See Srimadbhagavat, Skanda 12, Chap. 4.

† Mundaka Upanishad, Part I, Chap. 1, Verse 7.

As a spider spreads out and withdraws its webs, as on the earth grow the herbs and trees, and as from the living man issues out hair on the head and body, so out of the Immutable Brahman emerges the universe here (in this creation).

So what is to be done by a man, who has got this human body as a reward for his good deeds in the previous births? The Upanishads give the answer that he should try to realise God, i.e., strive for self realisation, as there is no other way to get out of the terrible sufferings due to cycles of repeated births and deaths.

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।  
तमेव विदित्याति मृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतंस्यनाय ॥\*

One sage, who has realised Brahman is declaring, "I have realised the supreme Person, who is the greatest of all the great, beyond the veil of darkness due to ignorance, and who is self effulgent like the sun.

By knowing Him only, man can be free from the perpetual bondage of the cycles of repeated births and deaths. There is no other way to achieve immortality."

यदा चर्मत्रदाकाशं वेष्टयिष्यन्ति मानवाः ।  
तदा देवमविक्षाय दुःखस्यान्तो भविष्यति ॥†

As it is impossible for men to cover the entire sky with a piece of leather, how much long and wide it may be, so it is impossible for men to end all their miseries without knowing God.

\* Shwetashwetara Upanishad, Chap. 3, Verse 8.

† Shwetashwetara Upanishad, Chap. 6, Verse 20

The sage Vamadeva, having indirect knowledge of all that mentioned above from his previous birth ( or births ), strove hard for self realisation, and this time, just before his last birth while lying in his mother's womb, he succeeded in realising the Supreme self and identify himself with Him. Being overwhelmed with great joy he, while remaining in his mother's womb itself, said the following :

गर्भे नु सन्नन्वेषामवेदमहं देवानां जनिमानि विश्वा शतं मा  
पुर आयस्तीररक्षन्नधः श्येनो जवसा निजदीयमिति ॥  
गर्भ एवैतज्यानो वामदेव एवमुवाच ॥\*

“While lying in my mother's womb I have come to know of the mystery of the repeated births of the gods ( the senses and the mind ), and that I am not any of them.† Innumerable impregnable iron fortresses (bodies) imprisoned me (life after life) and held me down in lower states due to my ignorance (lack of direct knowledge of Self). Now by acquiring self knowledge I am forcing my way out with great speed by breaking these iron citadels, and getting freedom from imprisonment I shall be

\* Aitareya Upanishad, Part II, Chap 1, Verse 5.

† See Nirvanashathakam by Shankaracharya.

First verse is given below :

ॐ मनोबुद्ध्यहङ्कार चित्तानि नाहं न च श्रोत्रजिह्वे न च घ्राणनेत्रे ।  
न च व्योम भूमिर्न तेजो न वायुश्चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥

I am not the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego (अहंकार), nor the heart, nor the ears, nor the tongue, nor the sense of smell, nor the eyes, nor the ether, nor the earth, nor the fire and nor the wind. I am the embodiment of knowledge and joy. I am Shiva (God). I am Shiva.



soaring high in heaven (Brahmaloka) like a hawk that breaks its iron cage and soars high up in the sky.

The following verse tells about the supreme status that the sage Vamadeva attained after death.

स एव विद्वानस्माच्छरीरभेदादूर्ध्वं उत्क्रम्यामुष्मिन् स्वगे  
लोके सर्वान्कामानाह्वामृतः समभवत् समभवत् ॥\*

Having known the mystery of repeated births and deaths and realising the supreme self, the sage Vamadeva's all desires were fulfilled and he became full of peace, joy and bliss. Exhausting the little karma† (past action, प्रारब्ध) for which he had to take the last birth, he ascended the highest state after death and became immortal.

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\* Aitareya Upanishad Part II, Chap. 1, Verse 6.

† Here karma means fruits of action which one has to enjoy and suffer according to their merits or demerits. Karma is divided into three categories, sanchita, prarabdha and kriyaman. Sanchita karma is that which is stored from previous births and not enjoyed and suffered so far. Prarabdha karma is that portion of sanchita karma for enjoying and suffering which he has to take to the present birth. Kriyaman karma is the fruits of current action done in the present birth. After God realisation kriyaman and sanchita karma (except that portion of sanchita karma called prarabdha) are not to be enjoyed or suffered,

# Darshan at Matri Mandir

Girish Chandra, M.I.E.

The author had the privilege and fortune to have the Darshan of Shri Shri MA's Samadhi as well as Her "Moorty" on the occasion of the inauguration of "Anand Jyoti Peetham" during the 1st week of May 1987. It was a great experience since we felt that a long cherished desire had been fulfilled. We felt that our spiritual cells had been re-charged in the same way as we felt on having Her Darshan when she was in body. The Matri Mandir is full of powerful spiritual vibrations which make it easy for us to meditate on Her holy feet and name. We received in full measure Her divine grace and benediction as we did in the past.

A question arises ; if Shri MA is present everywhere then why go to Matri Mandir at Kankhal. It is true that Shri MA is present every-where but Her presence is more prominently felt near Her Samadhi. Samadhi's of saints of all religions are visited with great reverence and devotion by their respective followers. It is, therefore, natural that we are attracted to Her Samadhi Mandir.

It is said of Shri Sai Baba of Shridhi that he once told his devotees that every particle of dust from his body in the tomb will answer to the prayers of his devotees. In some Shastras, it has been mentioned that when a Mahatma attains Maha Samadhi, some of the Kalas (Powers) are

retained in the body and that is the reason why we feel vibrations coming from the Samadhi.

Just as idols of Gods and Goddesses in Temples command our respect, similarly we offer our obeisance before Shri MA's Samadhi and Moorty in the belief that Her spirit is present there.

It is advisable for MA's devotees to pay a visit to Her Mandir at least on the occasion of Her birth anniversary, Guru Poornima and Samyam Saptah since Mahatmas are generally invited to give lectures on spiritual subjects. In this way, we get benefit of both "Sat Sang" and Darshan of Shri MA.

Matri Mandir is a structure of modern architecture and beautifully constructed. In course of time, it will become an important place of pilgrimage and a powerful spiritual centre attracting seekers from all over the world.

It is generally believed that every leaf or fruit which grows in the premises of the Ashram of Mahatma is blessed. From this one can conclude how powerful and soul elevating will be the Darshan of Mahatma's Samadhi. This truth is equally applicable to Shri MA's Ashram.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Management of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangh through whose Herculean efforts a magnificent temple has been constructed. We are thus enabled to quench our spiritual thirst and receive MA's blessings and grace by having a Darshan at the temple. May Shri MA bless us with greater devotion to Her holy feet, Her Leelas and Her name.

# Dictionary of National Biography

Anil Ganguli

## **Anandamayi Ma (1896-1982)**

Anandamayi Ma appears to be a divine incarnation of rare universality. To enquiries about her identity she replies : "Whatever you think me to be."

Bipin Behari Bhattacharya, a saintly Brahmin of Vidyakut ( Bangladesh ), was a God-intoxicated composer of sacred music. To his wife, Mokshada Sundari, household work was worship. On 30 April 1896, at village Kheora ( Tripura ) was born her angelic daughter, Nirmala Sundari, now universally revered as Anandamayi Ma. Radiantly beautiful, lovable, obedient, ever ready to help, always happy, never voicing any desire, never complaining or crying, Nirmala often seemed incomprehensible already during childhood.

In 1909 she was given in marriage to Ramani Mohan Chakrabarti. When she came to stay with him in 1918, she kept house faultlessly. But night after night innumerable kinds of spiritual exercises, yogic practices and forms of worship (not only Hindu) came to her spontaneously at breathtaking speed ; officiating as her own Guru she gave herself initiation. She calls this "play of *sadhana*", since there was nothing for her to be attained. Ramani Mohan, whom she named 'Pitaji' (father) or 'Bholanath' watched awe-stricken until he fell asleep. After sometime he became her formal

disciple. The question of marital relationship naturally never arose.

From 1924 Bholanath worked at Dacca. There, during *kirtans* and also otherwise, Nirmala was seen in states of spiritual ecstasy somewhat similar to those of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as described in Vaishnava literature. Devotees began to gather in ever-increasing numbers. Universally revered persons like Ram Thakur (Comilla), Balananda Brahmachari (Deoghar), Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj (Varanasi) paid her homage. Though almost unlettered, she deeply impressed by her wisdom many profound scholars including delegates to the Dacca session of the Indian Philosophical Congress (1929).

In 1932 Anandamayi Ma left Bengal for Dehradun where Kamala, wife of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, became her ardent devotee. Later, her daughter, Indira Gandhi emulated her. In 1934 Anandamayi Ma visited Solan. Its ruler Raja Durga Singh later dedicated himself to her service. Gradually many feudatory chiefs and their families were attracted.

Mahatma Gandhi had heard from Kamala Nehru about Anandamayi Ma. Subsequently, impressed deeply by Jamnalal Bajaj's report of his having received from her inner peace not attained in Mahatmaji's ashram, he invited her to Wardah in 1942. She responded. Their meeting was memorable in many ways.

Paramahansa Yogananda (Founder, Self-Realization Fellowship, U.S.A.) has recorded in his

*Autobiography of a Yogi* how he saw in Anandamayī Ma the egoless Self-realized Being.

For about fifty years Anandamayī Ma has been constantly touring all over India. Her blissful presence attracts irresistibly, kindling spiritual aspiration and divine fervour. She encourages congregational *kirtan* and sometimes herself sings entrancingly. She delivers no lectures but replies to questions. In successive *Kumbha Melas*, religious conferences and elsewhere, she has been a unifying force for the different *sadhu-akharas* (religious orders), and was hailed as the Mother of all-saints and sinners, rich and poor. Although claiming no position for herself and calling herself "a little child", she is recognized as a stupendous spiritual power by the highest religious authorities and the most learned *sannyasis* of the country. *Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha* and *Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society* were founded by devotees to run—1. ashrams, 2. charitable hospitals and dispensaries, 3. educational institutions with special emphasis on Sanskrit learning, and 4. to publish Anandamayī Ma's teaching and information about her in books and a quarterly magazine "*Ananda Varta*" in Bengali, Hindi and English.

Annual *Samyam Mahavrata*, organized by *Anandamayee Sangha* since 1952, is a week of intensive congregational *sadhana* (spiritual practice for the purpose of Self-realization) in Ma's presence. It enjoins strict discipline in food, sleep, speech, thought and behaviour and has a daily programme

of collective meditation, religious discourses and discussions, and devotional music.

Due to Anandamayi Ma's inspiration, the Institute for Puranic and Vedic Studies and Research was started in Naimisharanya, U.P. in 1976.

Anandamayi Ma revived *Vedic Yajna*, specially in *Savitri Yajna* (Varanasi) 1947-1950, with a ritualistic fire kept burning uninterruptedly since 1926, and *Atirudra Mahayajna* (Kankhal), 1981.

Anandamayi Ma preaches no creed or cult, nor has she founded any sect. Her catholicity attracts all. The important points of Anandamayi Ma's teachings are: The one unchanging, indivisible REALITY appears in infinite multiplicity and diversity. The ONE is ever present everywhere, in all circumstances. He is nameless and formless; yet all names and forms are His. "The one God is worshipped by all religions, just as the same person is father, son and husband."

Among all creatures the human being alone can realise God. This is the purpose of human life. Man's bounden duty is to strive for God-realization with all his might. Realizing God means realizing the SELF (Atma) which is ONE.

The four *ashrams* have been devised as stages on the path to Self-realization. The *brahmacharya ashram* lays the important foundation. Householders (grihastas) should emulate the ancient *Rishis* who were sages, leading God-dedicated lives with their families.

Love and serve husband, wife and children as divine manifestations. Sense enjoyment is slow

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poison leading to death. Perform all work as God's service.

Be truthful, seek *satsanga*, engage in *kirtan*, meditation, worship ; study scriptures. Obey Guru's instructions.

Each one should start along the lines taught by his own religion.

Dedicate a fixed time of at least fifteen minutes daily to God-remembrance in silence. Periodically dedicate certain days exclusive to God.

Accept whatever happens as God's gifts, nay God Himself in this guise.

The world (*duniya*) means "based on duality" which breeds sorrow (*dukha*).

God's name is He Himself. At every breath, try to be in communion with Him through His name.

Endeavour to be conscious of divine presence in everything.

Of Him alone must be the spoken word ; all else is but futility and pain.

Anandamayi Ma is completely free from attachment and unaffected by surroundings and circumstances ; at the same time very human, overflowing with compassion. Her charismatic grace, profound wisdom and extraordinary sancity evoke universal veneration. At her feet have bowed thousands from different parts of the globe, professing different faiths, belonging to different social, economic, intellectual and spiritual levels. Anandamayi Ma can see into the innermost recesses of one's mind and assist every seeker according to his



or her requirements and aptitudes without interfering with anybody's faith or principles.

Justifying her special concern for questionable characters, usually condemned in society, she remarks—"Should not a seriously sick person receive intensive care at a hospital? Can a mother forsake a wayward, ailing child?"

Anandamayi Ma's actions are prompted by what she calls her *kheyala*, which is to be understood as a spontaneous manifestation of Divine will. Her teaching touches one's heart directly, works quietly, often unnoticed, and transforms. She can reveal to everybody the "Secret of the Golden Flower" hidden in his heart.

"Here is an overflowing, irrepressible Joy... deeply rooted in the Absolute, beyond the dualities of good and evil, I and Not-I, of pleasant and unpleasant, because its unshakable base is Love and Wisdom." (Jean Herbert).

Anandamayi Ma departed from this world on 27 August, 1982.

*Mother as Revealed to me by Bhaiji ; From the Life of Sri Anandamayi Ma, 2 vols. by Bithika Mukherji ; Life and Teaching of Sri Anandamayi Ma by Dr. Alexander Lipski ; Ma Anandamayi—A Mystic Sage, by Shyamananda Banerjee ; Mother as Seen by Her Devotees ; Teachings ; Sad Vani ; Matri Vani-2 vols ; Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma.*

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# The contemporaries of Sri Krishna Chaitanya and their successors

R. K. Banerjee

## **Thakur Haridas :**

The origin of one of Sri Chaitanya's foremost disciples and Kirtaneas, Thakur Sri Haridas, is shrouded in mystery. It is believed he was born in a high caste Hindu family in a village which was ravaged with a dire malady in which both his parents lost their lives, and the child brought up by a devout Muslim couple in the village of Buron near Bongaon in W. Bengal.

From childhood, due to inherited instincts and the grace of God, Haridas was a staunch devotee of Sri Krishna. He built himself a cave near Benapole jungle, planted a Tulsi tree in his yard, and tended to it daily with devotion and care, performing Nam Kirtan from sunrise to darkness. After sunset he would wander out to beg in the house of friendly Brahmans, and after returning start his Nam Sankirtan again.

It was his invariable rule to sing aloud, 1 crore Nams each month, which works out to over 3 lakhs a day of nearly 24 hours. The practice of singing the Nam aloud used to liberate the neighbouring trees, human beings, and insects etc.

Ramchandra Khan was the Zemindar of Bongaon and a rich landlord under the Mohamme-

dan rulers of Bengal. The way his subjects flocked to worship Haridas for his piety gradually became unbearable to the Zemindar, who started to find a chink in the holy armour of Haridas. He failed to find any, so he decided to send a well known beautiful courtesan called Laksha Hira in the dead of night to entice Haridas to his doom.

The girl was confident of success and promised to accomplish the deed within 3 nights.

Laksha Hira dressed herself in her best clothes and jewellery and in the dead of night entered Haridas's kuthia which was like an Ashram.

The girl respected the sanctity of the place, and sat down in the kuthia in front of the open door trying to entice Haridas with all the tricks of her profession. Haridas did not send her away but quietly asked her to wait until he had completed his quota of 3 lakhs Nams, when he would fulfil her desires.

The night turned to morning and still the required number had not been reached, so Laksha Hira departed for the day, promising to return in the night.

The same thing was repeated on the second night and the girl had to return with her ambition unfulfilled as Haridas had not completed his Japa in time.

She returned the third night and Haridas this time completed his Nam Japa in time. He then quietly asked her,

“What is now your desire ?”

With tears in her eyes, humbly the girl prostrated herself before Haridas, and said, “Thakur,

you are a Mahatma, you have converted me. I wish to become clean and serve the Lord Krishna.”

Haridas replied, “I have waited for 3 nights here simply to save your soul, otherwise I would have departed the very first day. Your name from today is Krishna Dasi, and you will remain here to worship the Tulsi daily and keep the Ashram clean.”

The fallen girl gave away all her wealth and came and occupied the kuthia vacated by her Guru to comply with his request for the rest of her life.

Meanwhile Haridas had left for Chandpur, and became the guest of the well known Vaishnav Balaram Acharya who was the Kulaguru of the two landlords of Saptagram, Hiranya & Govardhan Das, who were two brothers.

The Zemindars were religious minded people, and often called religious meetings in their house. One day they requested their Guru Balaram to invite Thakur Haridas to their next meeting to listen to his Nam Sankirtan. During that discourse attended by local pandits, Haridas was asked what was the true result of Nam Sankirtan. Haridas replied that it led to the complete liberation of the soul, and finally realisation of Krishna Prem.

The Zemindari's head Pandit Gopal Chakrabarty, became exceedingly enraged at this reply, and cursed Haridas saying, “We will cut your nose off if you do not retract from your statement.”

Haridas kept quiet and left the Sabha. Within 3 days Gopal Chakrabarty was afflicted by leprosy, which first affected his nose. The fingers of his

hands got crooked and his nose was practically destroyed.

Thus was proved the truth that even if the Bhakta forgives the sinner, the Lord does not forgive any serious offence against his chosen devotee. Of the two Zemindars Hiranya & Govardhan only the latter had a young son called Raghunath who was being carefully trained by his elders to take over the huge Zemindary and look after its wealth.

Young Raghunath, who was destined to become the last and the youngest of the 6 Acharya Goswamis of Sri Chaitanya, at this stage became attached to Haridas's Krishna Nam at an early age.

Haridas gradually founded an abode nearer Phulia on the banks of the Ganga in a cave and continued to sing Harinam there, and give darshan to disciples later in the day. But the attendance became thinner and thinner and on enquiry Handa learnt that nobody could stand for long the potency in the air of the strong poison of the king cobra who also had his refuge in the inner recesses of the cave. Thakur Haridas then said aloud :

“If any Mahatma is being here with me of whom my devotees are afraid, will he please take steps to remove this fear as soon as possible.” Soon after a huge and beautiful snake hissing loudly, emerged from the cave with a shining jewel on his head and quietly left the cave, Haridas and the assembly.

Haridas soon found himself well conversent with Sri Advaita Acharya, and two became imbued with

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the same objectives, i.e. continuation of the worship of Sri Krishna, and the propagation of Harinam through that part of Bengal right up to Navadwip, while awaiting the arrival of the Saviour.

When the Mohammedan rulers came to hear of Haridas's prowess, of which complaints had already been filed with the Muslim holy men and Kazis, the ruler ordered Haridas to be arrested and accused him of going contrary to his Muslim faith by taking Harinam. Haridas quietly explained his inability to change his habits, so the ruler ordered him to be flogged in all 22 bazars of the neighbourhood in public to teach him a flagrant lesson.

Under this merciless beating Haridas soon assumed unconsciousness through Yoga, and believing him to be dead, his tormentors threw his body into the Ganga, reporting to the ruler that Haridas was now dead. Haridas however still lived, and gradually his floating body was borne to Navadwip, where he met and prostrated himself before Sri Gauranga, who said, "Haridas, look at my back. I have had to bear the brunt of all the lashes during your beating so that your precious life could be saved." Haridas's fame now reached the rulers, and they respected him as a Holy Fakir.

So Haridas became the life-long slave of his Saviour.

Haridas accompanied Sri Gauranga in all his Nam Kirtan expeditions throughout Navadwip, and was present during the Kazi's liberation in his own house, when the latter had banned Kirtan processions and Sri Gauranga and Sri Nityananda had

led a new procession to the Kazi's house now in New Mayapur.

Haridas had to pass through a much sterner test than that with Laksha Hira during his sadhana in the course of his living on the banks of the Ganga.

It was a bright moonlit night, and the waters of the Ganga were shining effulgently in the light, when a wondrously beautiful lady appeared before Haridas at the entrance of his cave. She first cleaned the bottom of the Tulsi tree, swept out the yard, and then bowed down in pranam to Haridas, who was sitting in the cave and chanting his Nam Kirtan aloud. She said, "You are renowned for your handsome and virtuous qualities. It is the custom of a Sadhu to take pity on a supplicant. Will you therefore please have pity on me?" Saying this she tried to entice Haridas with all sorts of womanly blandishments. But Haridas quietly replied "Lady, I am initiated into doing this Nam Sankirtan upto a certain number daily, and until this is completed, I cannot accede to your entreaty, so please sit at the entrance and listen to the Kirtan at the conclusion of which I shall fulfil your wishes."

But dawn arrived before Haridas completed his Name, and so the lady had to depart. This continued for 3 nights in succession, but she failed to break Haridas's concentration. On the 3rd morning, the lady assumed her normal Divine appearance and said, "I am Mahamaya Herself". I have enticed everybody in the universe with my Mohini Murti, including Brahma himself, but I have failed

in your case. You are a great Bhagavata Saint. Your penance and Nam Kirtan have purified myself. Now please tell me why you take Sri Krishna's name. Formally I had been taught to take Sri Rama's name by the Lord Shiva, but now I would like to learn how to take the name of Sri Krishna from you. I know Sri Rama's name is taken to liberate the inner soul, but now that you have succeeded in being initiated in the name of Sri Krishna, please teach me how to take His name."

Haridas replied in great humility, "Ma, we Vaishnavs do not seek liberation of the soul, we only want to be immersed in Krishna Prem by taking his name, even if this means rebirth — so that we can take His name again and again." Mahamaya then granted him a boon saying, "You are a siddha purush, you will realise the fulfilment of your desires in full at the end of your life from your preceptor." Thus Haridas passed through the sternest test of his sadhana through entire dedication to Krishna Nam.

When Sri Chaitanya departed to Nilachaldham after taking Sannyas, Haridas accompanied him but never entered the Jagannath temple due to considering himself as an "untouchable", nor did he reside with Sri Chaitanya or his other disciples. Sri Chaitanya then searched out a place for him which the Lord would pass daily on his way back from the Jagannath temple. From this spot in those days the top pinnacle of the temple could be clearly seen, and Mahaprabhu said, "Haridas, you do not



have to enter the temple to obtain the Lord's darshan, you can do so every time you look at the pinnacle of the temple from here."

Haridas continued his Nam Sankirtan of 3 lakhs per day there. One day seeing him sitting in the sun while doing his kirtan, Mahaprabhu decided to plant a twig from a Bakul tree which had been used to clean Sri Jagannath's mouth that morning after Bal Bhog, and later presented to Mahaprabhu by the priests. This twig later sprouted out into a huge tree with large and leafy branches, affording shade and sanctuary to Haridas for the rest of his life. Due to hearing 3 lakhs of Nam Kirtan daily the tree in due course became "Siddha Bakul" ( The enlightened ).

The story is prevalent that long after the disappearance of Thakur Haridas and Sri Chaitanya, there was an acute shortage of suitable timber that was used to repair the Lord Jagannath's chariot. Somebody had the bright idea that the Siddha Bakul nearby, which had by then blossomed out into sizeable proportions could be used. The authorities decided to cut down the tree the next day, but overnight the main trunk of the tree became hollow. The writer has proved this by tossing a pebble from the top and collecting it from the bottom.

Thus the tree was saved and still stands with leafy branches and the unusual hollow trunk, in proof of the potency of Thakur Haridas's Nam Kirtan. Haridas continued to live under the Siddha Bakul tree and entertained in due course Sri Rupa

and Sri Sanatan Goswami on their visits to Nilachal to obtain Mahaprabhu's darshan from Vrindavan. The daily visits of Mahaprabhu to Haridas while returning from the Jagannath temple continued for some time, but now Haridas's health started to fail. He could no longer recite the daily 3 lakhs Nama with ease. One day in the afternoon, Mahaprabhu sent Govinda to Haridas with special Jagannath prasada that had arrived from the temple.

And now we quote from the immortal words of Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj, from his biography "Chaitanya Charitamrita", which has been expanded into a beautiful pala kirtan with suitable Akhars by Prabhupad Sri Ramdas Babaji and his disciples in their beautiful rendering of "Haridas Nirjyan", still sung with the utmost reverence by the Baranagore Path Bari Sadhus.

Govinda arrived to see Haridas lying on the ground slowly reciting the Name. Govinda said, "Rise up and partake of this prasada". Haridas replied, "I am today unable to do justice to this prasada. How can I eat when I have not completed my full quota of Nam? But on the other hand I cannot ignore the Mahaprasada you have taken the trouble to bring, so I will just take a small morsel."

The next day, Mahaprabhu arrived as usual from the temple and enquired, "Well, how is your health Haridas"? Haridas did his pranams and replied, "The body is all right, but my mind is not."

The Lord said, "What is the disease? Can you diagnose it"? Haridas replied, "I can no longer complete my quota of Nam". The Lord said,

“You have become aged, you may now reduce the number of Japas. Your body and mind are already fully enlightened. Why are you still so keen on your sadhana? You have been born this time to save the soul of man, you have already preached the glory of the Name to the world. Now you can reduce the number of your Nam Kirtan.”

Haridas said, “Please listen to my prayer. I have been born into a lowly caste, my body is contaminated. But you have raised me from hell to heaven. You are a completely independent Lord, you make the world dance to your time. You have also made me divine by taking pity on me. Through your grace I have been the first Harijan to partake Anna-Bhog specially prepared for the sraddh of Brahmans. (This has reference to their visit to the Acharya Advaita’s house in Shantipur).”

“But I have one special request to make to you which I have thought about for a long time”.

“I have an inner feeling that you will in the near future relinquish your Leela on Earth. Oh Lord! please never let me see you perform this final Leela, but take my life away from my body before this happens.”

“Furthermore, I pray to you that I will clasp your lotus feet on my breast, I will behold your shining face with my own eyes and utter the name of Krishna Chaitanya with my lips at the final moment. This is the way I wish to give up my soul. If you are willing to grant me this favour through your mercy, then please do so. My lowly body should lie at your feet. This is my final

prayer to you". The Lord said gravely, "Haridas, whatever you pray for, the merciful Lord Krishna will surely grant this. But all my happiness is centred on you. It is not fit that you should leave me in the lurch".

Haridas caught hold of the Lord Mahaprabhu's feet, and exclaimed, "Please do not try to deceive me, through your Maya. You will please deign to bestow this final mercy on my unworthy self. My fetters in their crores still exist to assist you in each of your Leelas. If a small insect like me ceases to exist, what harm can the death of an ant cause to the well-being of the world?"

"You are famed for being merciful to your devotees, I am just a pretence of a Bhakta. Please, Lord, you must grant me this boon". It was now midday, and the Lord departed for his midday prayers. After having darshan of Lord Jagannath, he would return to Haridas the next day. So, Mahaprabhu embraced Haridas and departed for his ablution in the sea.

Next morning, after visiting the temple he gave darshan to Haridas together with *all his devotees*.

Haridas bowed in pranam at the feet of the Lord, and all the assembled Vaishnavs.

The Lord asked, "Haridas, what is your news?"

Haridas replied, "Lord, it is just as you keep me." Then Mahaprabhu started a Mahanam Sankirtan in the yard of the Bakul tree. Pandit Bakreshwar started dancing to the tune. Swarup Damodar and all the other devotees started singing kirtan by going round Haridas. In the front were

Ramananda Rao and Sarbabhauma. The Lord started reciting all the good qualities of Haridas. It looked as if he would take 5 months to speak of Haridas's merit and the more he extolled his virtues, the more ecstatic he became.

All present were surprised to hear of this high praise of Haridas and all bent to touch his feet. Then Haridas sat the Lord down in front of him, and fixed the glance of both his eyes on the Lord's face. He clasped both the Lords feet to his bosom, and placed the dust of the feet of all the devotees on his forehead. He recited the name of Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya, time and again and continued to behold the Lord's face with tears streaming down his eyes. While reciting the name "Sri Krishna Chaitanya" his soul departed from his body with the sound of the name on his lips.

Thus he went to his death of his own free will and everybody remembered the death of Bhishma in the Mahabharata in Lord Sri Krishna's presence. All present started singing the name of Hari and Krishna aloud. Mahaprabhu became obsessed in the ecstasy of Krishna Prem.

The Lord lifted up Haridas's body in his bosom, and started dancing in the yard full of love for his Bhakta. Seeing the Lord's state, all the other devotees were similarly affected and in their devotion started dancing and singing kirtan. When the Lord had danced thus for quite some time, Swarup Damodar intervened by begging Mahaprabhu to desist.

They placed Thakur Haridas's body on a chariot and took him to the sea with the accom-

paniment of Kirtan. In front Mahaprabhu went along dancing, to be followed by Bakreshwar and the other Kirtania devotees. The Lord bathed the body of Haridas in the waters of the ocean and declared, "This ocean has now become Mahatirtha, a great place of pilgrimage."

All the devotees drank of the waters washing Haridas's feet, and decorated his body with sandal paste.

They dressed him like a proper sadhu in Kaupin (loin cloth) and Anga-Bastra, and laid him down in a hole dug out of the sand by the Lord.

All devotees around him started singing kirtan and Pandit Bakreshwar started dancing crying out Haribol Haribol aloud, the Lord Himself covered his body with sand. They created a mound over the top, and covered the mound with pure cloth.

Thereafter, Mahaprabhu again started singing and dancing, the sound of Haribol filled the universe.

Thereafter the Lord bathed in the sea with all his flock of devotees. After going round Haridas's body the Lord proceeded to the Singha Darwaza (Lion's Gate) of the Jagannath temple, where the sound of Haribol again filled the entire city.

At the gate, Mahaprabhu himself sat down among the sellers of food-stuffs, and spread his cloth begging for alms for a Mahotsab (Bhandara) for Haridas Thakur, saying, "Please donate alms for this purpose."

Hearing this all the sellers became overjoyed, and came forward with their goods. But Swarup-

Damodar stopped them and persuaded them to sit in their respective places with their wares.

He sent the Lord home with 4 Vaishnavs and their baskets. Swarup then asked each seller to give him a handful of his commodity. He thus collected a lot of prasada from them and loaded them on the shoulders of the 4 followers.

Kashi Misra sent a huge quantity of extra prasada.

The Lord seated all the Vaishnavas side by side and personally started serving them with food. Mahaprabhu was incapable of taking small handfuls in his hands, and each Vaishnav was given 5 times more than the usual quantity at each handful.

Swarup Damodar again intervened by stating, "Lord sit down and watch us work", I will serve with the help of others. Swami Jagadananda, Kashiswar and Chandrasekhar continued to serve all those sitting down to the feast. But nobody made a start until the Lord ate first. The Lord had been invited that day by Kashi Misra. So the latter brought prasada with great eagerness and served the Lord himself.

The Lord shared this with Puri-Bharati and thereafter all the Vaishnavs present partook of the prasada. They fed themselves right up to the brim and still the Lord cried, "Give me more, give me more."

Ultimately after finishing their Bhandara, they washed their hands and the Lord placed a garland and sandal paste on each devotee himself.

In his ecstasy, in memory of his devoted Bhakta the Lord started granting boons to everybody, thus fulfilling the desires of each devotee.

The Lord said, "He who has beheld Haridas's Vijoy-Utsab, he who has danced and sung at his passing, he who has followed his body to his burial place, he who has eaten at his Mahotsab, will also soon obtain the grace of Sri Krishna. Such is the power of Haridas's darshan, Krishna had taken pity on me and allowed him to associate with me. Krishna is quite independent. He has now seen it fit to break up this association. When it became Haridas's wish to depart from this world, it was not in my entire power to stop him. Of his own accord he gave up his life at the moment of his choice, the same as I have heard speak of Bhishma's Nirjyan."

"Haridas was the salt of the earth, without him the world is that much poorer. All of you now sing Harinam by singing, "Jai, Jai, Haridas." Saying this Mahaprabhu started singing, "Jai Jai, Haridas," who preached the glory of the Name through the length and breadth of this land."

At last Mahaprabhu bade farewell to his disciples and in a mixture of sorrow and joy went to rest himself.

Let me compare the behaviour of Ma when her chosen devotees gave up their souls. In 1937, returning from Kailash, Bhaiji died at Almora Ashram with his head on Ma's lap when Ma had given him the power to see Ma herself everywhere, in Bholanath in Joshi and whosoever was present.



In 1938 at Dehradun, Ma had held the body of Bholanath with her hands at the time of his departure, giving him peace and solace in the middle of virulent small pox.

In Kashi later on she had held Hari Baba when the latter parted from his life, and Haribaba had taken the trouble to come all the way from Bandh to Kashi to be with Ma at his last moment.

In the same way, Avatars liberate the souls of chosen devotees on earth at the moment of their death. This has gone on in this land from time immemorial and will continue to be repeated in the future.

The writer has been fortunate enough through Ma's grace to being allowed to stay in Haridas Math for nearly 3 weeks during Ma's last visit to Puri, as Ma's Ashram is nearby.

The peace and atmosphere of this holy place is simply too wonderful to describe.

It is well looked after by Sri Ramdas Babaji's chosen disciples and is well worth a visit as a place of great pilgrimage during a visit to Puri.

Jai Mahaprabhu. Jai Ma. Jai Haridas...

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The intense desire for God realization is itself the way to it.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

# Love—The Sole Treasure

Ma Das

Pure love is the essence of religion — a direct link with the Supreme Power, because this Power is Infinite Love. That is why Ma says, “Whether it pleases you or not, you will have to make the Eternal your constant companion — just like a remedy that has got to be taken. Without loving God, you will not get anywhere. Remember this at all times. And, if you are able to love God really — this is the consummation of all love.”<sup>1</sup> because, being imperishable, this love leads to indescribable eternal joy.

At the same time, Mother warns, “Earthly love causes intense suffering and does not last, whereas the love of God gives extremely great happiness.”<sup>2</sup> “Infatuation (*moha*) causes entanglement, while the love of God (*prema*) leads to Self-revelation. Having been ensnared by *moha*, weeping and regret are bound to follow.”<sup>3</sup>

In spiritual quest, where the goal is everlasting bliss, love of God is basic and even self-sufficient, for, we are what our thoughts are, and our thoughts depend on where our heart is, i.e., on what we love. For this reason, scriptures, religious world teachers and saints belonging to every denomination have all extolled the way of love. In Bhagavad Gita, the following divine injunction appears twice,

once in the middle of the scripture, and again in the last chapter :

“Fix thy mind on Me, give thy heart’s love to Me, consecrate all thy actions to My service and hold thine own self as nothing before Me.”<sup>4</sup>

In the New Testament, the first two commandments are : “Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first great commandment. And the second is like unto it : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”<sup>5</sup>

### **The Goal of Life**

The following passage from ‘The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna’ reveals what importance the great prophet attaches to love :

“M arrived with Kalikrishna, who did not know where his friend M was taking him. He had only been told : ‘If you want to see a grog-shop, then come with me. You will see a huge jar of wine there’. M related this to Sri Ramakrishna, who laughed about it. The Master said, ‘The bliss of worship and communion with God is the true wine, the wine of ecstatic love. *The goal of human life is to love God. Bhakti is the one essential thing.*’<sup>6</sup>

### **Love is Truth, Love is God**

Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the celebrated Founder of The Divine Life Society, which has just celebrated his birth centenary, makes the following powerfully inspiring observations under the caption : ‘Philosophy of Love’ :

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“Love is a mysterious glue that unites the hearts of all. It is the greatest force on earth. It is irresistible. Love subdues an enemy. It can tame wild animals. Its power is infinite, its depth unfathomable, its glory indescribable.

“There is no virtue higher than love, there is no treasure higher than love, there is no knowledge higher than love, there is no *dharma* higher than love, there is no religion higher than love, because love is truth, love is God. St. John says, ‘He that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God abideth in him’ (which, according to the Catholic Church, sums up the whole Bible). Love is thus the clear, open way to God, so simple and so perfect that many fail to find it, seeking instead some elaborate road.

“Constant remembrance of the Lord ( a direct product of love for Him ) will eradicate all miseries and sorrows, and will confer immortality, bliss and peace on the devotee.

“Cling like a bee to the lotus feet of the Lord. Find out the path that leads to love. Taste the honey of divine *prem* ( love ). Become *premmaya* ( love all-over ). Become an embodiment of love. Live in love. Move in love. Have your very being in love.”

### **Expanding Love**

Paramahansa Yogananda, the well-known Founder of Self-Realization Fellowship shows an interesting way to the highest pinnacle of love through his following words :

### “Expanding Love”

( Meditate, dwell on and feel this )

“My kingdom of love shall expand. I have loved my body more than anything else. That is why I am identified with and limited by it. With the love that I have given to the body, I will love all those who love me. With the expanded love of those who love me, I will love those who are mine. With the love for myself and the love for my own, I will love those who are strangers. I will use all my love to love those who do not love me, as well as those who love me. I will bathe all souls in my unselfish love. In the sea of my love, my family members, my countrymen, all nations and all beings will swim. All creation, all the myriads of tiny living beings will dance on the waves of my love.”<sup>9</sup>

### Five Attributes of Love

Bhaiji, our dearest and seniormost brother, the peerless, immortal beloved devotee of Mother, has superbly summed up the chief characteristics of love in his following pithy definition :

“Love never claims, it ever gives ; love ever suffers, never resents and never revenges itself.”<sup>9</sup>

True love resides only in the heart that is exclusively ever full of devotion for the lotus feet of the Lord, and is, therefore, free from the least desire for anything else. Such a heart throbs with the firm faith and conviction that the Eternal Beloved resides within everyone at all times. Assertion of one’s individual rights is possible only when cons-

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ciousness in everyone, including one's own self is identified in each case with its respective separate concrete body-mind tenement. But where the self has been completely surrendered to the Divine out of fulness of love, as was the case with our revered Bhaiji, the question of claiming anything for oneself can just never arise. Pure love is for the sake of love alone, uncontaminated by any trace of selfish gain of any kind.

And to the heart throbbing with the love that spontaneously finds joy in total self-abnegation 'giving' is the positive aspect in which love experiences the same joy. To one whose greatest happiness lies in being the eternal servant of the Lord, nothing can be more welcome than an opportunity to serve the Divine Master, which 'giving' offers to him. And, therefore, love never 'claims' and ever 'gives'.

Now, although to the really earnest devotee, both these actions of 'not claiming' and 'ever giving' always bring the highest satisfaction, they appear, in the eyes of the ego-centric multitude as one-way traffic — an unjust exploitation of a simple loving soul. And it is because of this that love is said to suffer all the time.

Actually, however, 'never claiming' anything for itself any time and 'ever giving' on every occasion, is normal for true love, and that is why it 'never resents'. And when it does not even resent, how can it ever entertain any design to 'revenge itself' on any score.

### Love All Beings, All are He

The One who alone exists in all the manifested multiplicity in the universe is the embodiment of love. The crucial role of love, in the life of a sincere seeker of Truth, is the thrilling theme of the following forthright perspicuous pronouncements of Swami Ramdas (1884-1963) the great saint of Anandashram, whom Swami Sivananda called 'one of the rarest flowers of representative Indian spirituality.'

Says Swamiji, "Whatever you do or do not do, bear love in your heart — love for all beings and creatures in the world. This is religion, for love is God. Whatever your *sadhana* and attainments in other directions may be, you have not attained anything unless you have realized this love. Your life must burn like a flame of oblation at the altar of love. If you are a sincere aspirant for immortality, and wish to be blessed with absolute peace and bliss, then be a votary of love. The love is not circumscribed by any limitations, bound by any rules or regulations. It is as vast as space, embracing all beings alike."<sup>10</sup>

"God wants to be His simple, trusting and loving child. Worldly attainments like wealth, learning and position do not count at all. God looks at your heart. If he finds you sincere, guileless and pure, he becomes yours. If you are sympathetic to the distressed, kind towards all creatures, forgiving in your nature, patient and self-sacrificing, God bathes you in the radiance of His Grace. In all humility, approach Him in your

heart, for there He dwells — the Master and Mother of your soul and life. Let your love for Him be such that your mind thinks only of Him, even in the midst of your pre-occupations in the world. True devotion for Him makes you pine for Him day and night. The slow fire caused by His separation burns in your heart like a steady flame. It consumes all impurities of the mind and makes you fit for His vision.

“Leave aside egoism. Make life sublime by illuminating it with divine light, peace and joy. *Love all beings, for all are He — the be-all and end-all of your quest, the dearest to your heart, the eternal Truth — God.*”<sup>11</sup>

“In love, there is no fulfilment and no end, because love is infinite. The more you drink of it, the more thirsty you become for it. There is no satiety in love. Love is God. Know that you are this love.”<sup>12</sup>

*(To be continued)*

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Yes, if you can observe silence and be in harmony with everyone all round, it will be excellent. Try to remain without the help of signs and gestures for as long as possible.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# Ma Anandamayee, The Guru and Universal Mother

( *Translated and adapted from Bengali article in Ananda Varta of April issue, 1985 by the same Writer* ).

Harekrishna Goswami

God, the Supreme Guru, manifests Himself as an *Avatāra* ( divine incarnation ) to liberate those aspiring for salvation. Guru initiates the disciple and thus the primal ignorance ( *Mul Ajnana* comprising the ego ) is eliminated ; otherwise, owing to ego one has to revolve in the cycle of birth and death. 'Guru' means 'dispeller of darkness'. The other meaning of 'Guru' is 'heavy'. Light or fickle minded souls full of worldly desires and attachments are deepened in the ocean of Immortality by a 'heavy one', called 'Guru' ; to say — Guru makes the disciple aware of his or her ignorance and leads towards the Immortal Divinity. So, Guru is most valuable one in the world, the living embodiment of God. As a result of initiation ( *diksa* ) a soul is cleansed and one obtains a new dimension of life towards divinity. Initiated person progresses in divine channel towards blissful liberation or God-realization.

In fact, *Avataras* spread holy vibrations on all people on earth. They save spirituality from erosion of time. Lord Krishna, Buddha, Jesus

Christ, Shankaracharya, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and other divine incarnations uplifted humanity continually throughout the ages. Though *Avataras* have no bindings of Guru-disciple relationship in Absolute stand point, because such Cosmic Beings remain always in the state of *Atma* or Pure Spirit ever-free from any relationship, certainly they play the role of a Guru in practical views. Out of all people influenced by an *Avatara* few are blessed to become His initiated disciples.

An *Avatara* is the Guru of commonly available so-called Gurus. God's power flows in stream in an *Avatara* and spreads out in various channels. In recent days we had the golden privilege of having come in contact with God's *Avatara* Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, a spiritual beacon who was famous throughout the world by virtue of Her extra-ordinary spiritual power and exalted state. She also executed the role of Guru in true sense of it and was the best kind of Guru as delineated in our *Sastras* (Scriptures).

From Her very youth, activity as a Guru came to light. She initiated Her husband Sri Bholanath and elevated him to a high level of spirituality. Such action of initiating him played in Her spontaneously. Bhaiji, the well known dedicated devotee of Mother, got initiated by Her in *Samnyasa Mantra* while they were travelling in Himalayas. Latter days She used to make Didima, Her mother, to initiate people. As well, Bholanath also became Guru of few people on Her direction. Earlier

days the Divine Mother would not initiate anyone in formal manner except She did for Her husband. She started initiating people in a formal way from 1971 and by that time Didima and Sri Bholanath were no more alive. Holy Mother initiated people for 12 years — till 1982 and in 1982 itself She left Her body. By Her immeasurable grace I got initiation from Her ; so I wish I could narrate the process of initiation.

*Sastras* (Tantras) have mentioned three kinds of initiation or *diksa* namely *Sambhavi*, *Sakti* and *Mantri*. In *Sambhavi-diksa* Guru initiates the disciple by 'Look', 'Touch' or 'Advice (*Upadesha*)' and thus energy is transmitted. Such initiation takes place without any preplanning, that is, without prefixing the date of initiation ; neither Guru nor the disciple thinks beforehand of the initiation — they happen to meet and initiation takes place. In such kind, sometimes Guru brings the disciple to God-Consciousness on the spot itself or the initiation results in bringing the disciple to such highest state in course of time.

In *Sakti diksa* Guru infuses His power of divine knowledge (in fact knowledge is power) in the disciple without taking any external help. In both these types there are no laid down rules about the day and timing of initiation or about formalities (methodology) — both are bereft of binding rules. Both *Sambhavi* and *Sakti* are good varieties of initiation. In both these processes Guru transmits His spiritual power in disciple's vital being (*Prana*).

*Mantri diksa* includes several specific rules to be observed ( including prefixing the date and timing ) with a long process of formalities to be carried out and Guru puts *bija Mantra* ( seed *Mantra* ) in the ear of disciple. It is generally followed throughout the country and done by common Gurus.

These are the three types of initiation streamlined by Tantras and out of these *Sambhavi* and *Sakti* are specified to good Gurus having appreciable pitch of spirituality. But *Sastras* have not ( or could not ) formulated any type of initiation that an *Avatara* or Supreme Guru should follow. *Avatara* is the living embodiment of God Himself and acts fully as per Divine Will, no rule can bind their ways or methods. Their activity sometimes supercedes all laid down rules of *Sastras*.

Now we shall have descriptions of Ma's process of formal initiation. The disciple had to take only *sattvic* food on previous day of initiation and keep fast on the date of initiation till initiation was over. He or she had to wear special clothing (after bath) appropriate for such secret ceremony. They had to bring flowers, garlands and other things necessary for the secret ceremony. Ashramites or devotees of Mother used to put those things in order in the special closed-door-room for initiation. Worship of *Visnu* used to be done there by a follower-devotee of Mother, an ochre-robed middle-aged ashramite brahmachari.

Holy Mother would at first deliver sermons to the disciples in closed door — that one has to be regular in one's spiritual practice after initiation

and the *bija Mantra* have to be kept secret and *japa* have to be performed with it daily, that one has to leave out the bad habits of life. Sometimes She would indicate an individual about his or her serious draw-backs (as Divine Mother was beyond time, could see everyone's pre-births and inherent tendencies) and thus would turn the disciple towards divinity. On such sacred moments aspirants used to feel heavenly bliss as they were sitting in front of *Brahman* or God Himself.

And then She would initiate the disciples, one by one in closed door, by touching latter's spinal chord on the back. Mother would select *Mantra* for each individual as per love of the individual for particular *Ista* or Deity. Cases are there when She decided intuitively an *Ista Mantra* for Her disciple as per latter's pre-birth's spiritual practices. Having thus decided Mother would make powerful *Mantras* available to Her disciple by a special Vedic method very much uncommon in present days. Ma would not deliver *Mantra* in the ear of the disciple as common Gurus do.

The last part of the sceret ceremony would be *Puja* and *arati* of Guru by the disciple. The disciple had to worship Her with incense, holy light, flowery garland, fruits, sweets, cloth and hono- rarium (*dakshina*). Disciple would do *pranama* to Mother, the Guru. And Divine Mother would bless the disciple with fruits, sweets etc.

Because Mother used to initiate by 'Touch' on the spinal chord ( the passage of *Kundalini* ) of the disciple and thus transmitted energy in the vital

being (*Prana*), it indicates of the best category i. e. *Sambhavi*. Mother would induce power of Her divine knowledge by Her presence itself, so it includes *Sakti* type of initiation. Formalities were carried out and powerful *Mantras* were given (though not in the ear) by a nice method, so Her process included *Mantri diksa* as well. Though Mother's method of formal initiation apparently appears to be an amalgamation of all the three types namely *Sambhavi*, *Sakti* and *Mantri*, it fits to be called *Sambhavi* (though formal) because main part of the process was transmission of power by Mother by method of 'Touch'. How difficult it is to categorize all activities of *Avataras* exactly as per formulated *Sastras* !

As She did not deliver *Mantra* in the ear of disciples a rumour was prevalent in the country — 'Anandmayee Ma does not give actual initiation' ; (commonly people know putting *Mantra* in the ear to be the only process of initiation). This was utterly a wrong statement. Ma used to initiate by touch mainly and disciple would get *Mantra* also. But Ma knew this comment of people and would tell the disciples during sermonizing, "If anyone asks you about the location of your body wherein you have been initiated by your Guru, you should reply — in my *Prana* (vital being)." (That is — not in the ear as commonly done in the country). Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa told the same thing, "A common Guru delivers *Mantra* in the ear of disciple but a good Guru initiates in the vital being (*Prana*)." He also used to transmit power by

*Sambhavi* method (Touch, Look and Advice) generally. *Sakti* would also be involved sometimes. To few He gave *Mantra diksa* even, as found in His biographies. He transmitted His spiritual power in Vivekananda by 'Touch' and the latter was raised instantaneously to Cosmic Consciousness. When Ma Anandamayee initiated Her husband, he was soon absorbed in trance.

To recapitulate, following points affirm that Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was the Guru in the process of formal initiation :—

(i) She used to initiate (transmit energy) by 'Touch' on the spinal chord of the disciple which is the best type of initiation ; and the disciple used to get *Mantra* also in a special Vedic method.

(ii) Disciple had to adore Mother (Guru-barana) as his or her Guru.

In fact, we who have been initiated by Divine Mother are fortunate by our virtuous deed accumulated through many prebirths. Once Mother expressed so — "None could be close to this body (meaning Herself) in one's single birth."

Holy Mother was unsectarian. She would initiate the disciples either in Vaisnava-cult or in Sakti-cult as would deem fit for individual. As well, after initiation the disciple had no restriction in going to any saint for spiritual discussion or to any monastery of any sect provided the disciple's aim would be God-realization — because in widest sense, single Supreme Guru-Consciousness or God-Consciousness pervades everywhere. A pure heart realizes it.



Thus we have covered up descriptions of Her formal initiation-process. Now, we shall narrate how She used to initiate people without any secret ceremony. We can call these as transmission of power instead of initiation. However, such non-formal initiation was available to Bhaiji in *Samnyasa Mantra*, as told earlier. The *Mantra* was uttered by Mother spontaneously by Divine Will. It may be called a *Mantra Diksa*. Well known Gurupriya Devi and Sri Bholanath also got *Samnyasa Mantra* from Mother in similar fashion.

Mother has initiated many in their dreams. Some of them got *Mantras*, few of them 'advice'. Mother affirmed validity of such initiation. I met a spinster who saw Mother in dream — Mother merging in her body and became one with her. Such kinds of initiation or inspiration in dream is not categorized by *Sastras* though it bears no less importance than *Sambhavi*. And such initiation can only be given by an *Avatara*. Even now-a-days She helps people in dreams. Within few months after She left Her body, one day She appeared before me in dream and told emphatically, "Am I dead? See I have come out." Her powerful presence is felt by devotees even now for throughout the day.

While physically alive, She used to distribute flowers, garlands, fruits, sweets, etc. with Her own hands and would transmit power through those things. Once She disclosed that She transmits energy through those things. While giving a flowery garland She generally used to bless the

devotee by touching latter's head. Thus also power would have been transferred. She gave *Bilva-patra* (mirmelos leaf) and *Tulasi-patra* (basil leaf) to some people bearing Sakti *bija-Mantra* and Vaisnava *bija-Mantra* respectively and thus initiated in *Mantra diksa*.

Occasions are there when She told someone, without any pre-discussion, "You practice '—' this name of God." We have seen while answering questions on God sometimes She would tell the devotee, "Which name of God you like the most?" The devotee might answer a name. Then Ma would say, "Yes, you practice this name." The devotee was thus initiated; this would act in his or her life. And this we can call an initiation by 'advice' (*Sambhavi*). Initiation by 'Special advice' was very much prevalent in Upanisadic age of Jnana Marga or Path of Knowledge. The advice would constitute of *Mahavakyas*. (This was nothing but *Sambhavi diksa* though not called under this name. Name '*Sambhavi*' might be a creation of latter days). In those days Guru used to advise the matured disciple, "You art That" and on hearing such powerful words the latter would quickly get Enlightenment or Self-realization. Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee sometimes advised or initiated devotees in this form also. On the occasion of Her birthday ceremony celebrated at Agarpara-ashram near Calcutta She advised an earnest seeker — "You are That '— to know this is the aim of human life." Few cases of such 'Special advice' are there, found in books on Her.

Energy would flow from Her always. Whoever has gone near Her has felt it. Thus She would automatically act as a power-radiating source. She also used to infuse divine power by Silence (Mauna). She trained people to sit silently for 15 minutes or so before Her and She would also be sitting silently on a dias, thus elevating devotees to a spiritual height. Ramana Maharshi also used to transmit power by Silence, Look and Advice. Such transcendental method of Silence is hardly categorized as a process of initiation by Tantras. Of course, Dakshinamurti Stotra of Sankaracharya reminds us this.

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee put sincere effort in elevating all people. She would say, "Those who have never seen this body (meaning Herself), even not heard about, this body helps them also." So only it has been seen that She appeared before one staying at a distant place by dint of Her Yoga-Power and advised the latter. She helped many people in their dreams those have not seen Her at all physically. She used to break-through doubts of aspirants of this visible world, help their spiritual progress, and similarly would help souls belonging to implicit planes. In Varanasi a female aspirant got stuck up while treading high stages of *sadhana*. Shree Shree Ma appeared before Her in Physical form and removed the psychological obstacle, though She was actually resting somewhere else. Simultaneous presence is possible by higher Yogic Power only.

There are cases when Mother has directed people to go to some common Gurus for getting initiation and thus She acted as Supreme Guru.

I remember an instance of transfer of energy or power by 'Look', that is — *Sambhavi*. Three days before Her *Mahasamadhi* one devotee asked Mother to bless him for liberation. She gazed with Her exalted 'Look' towards the devotee for some time as if She was inundating him with blissful energy.

I have another vivid memory about initiation by 'Look' which is of this *Sambhavi* type, the best one. Once I went to Delhi to observe *Durga Puja* festival celebrated in Delhi-ashram in presence of Holy Mother. On the occasion, a number of devotees stood in queue with flowers and garlands in their hands to offer Mother. One young foreigner lady of about twenty years also stood at the end of the queue. Her pure face was serene but melancholic, as if she was thinking in despair, 'I am a foreigner. What importance have I here?' But I observed that in a short while Mother started gazing with Her ever-awake electric 'Look' towards the young lady and continued it for remarkably long time. In such period Mother was not responding anyone else of the queue who were offering Her flowers and garlands one by one. She had a penetrating spiritual 'Look' towards the young lady. On her turn the lady came near Ma and till that time Ma gazed only her with Her alert 'Look'. I could clearly feel it to be a case of initiation by 'Look'. Many foreigners got initiation from this Universal Mother; few of them little formally also.

Many from America, Germany, France, England, Italy and other foreign countries came to

this World Teacher and found success of their lives. Some of them were so overwhelmed with Her true love that they remained permanently in Her ashrams for rest of their lives. The Universal Mother had such a grandeur that She happily allowed people of different sects to stay in Her ashrams for performing spiritual austerities. She kept even a Muslim lady in one of Her ashrams. In fact, Ma did not build ashrams and neither She was in favour of doing so. She would say, "The whole world is an ashram." It is the devotees who have built the ashrams on their will and we call them "Ma's ashrams".

Union of all religions was Her natural characteristics. She viewed all equally. She did so not because She liked to make all people happy but for the reason God is all-comprehensive. Divine Mother being an embodiment of God Himself, such action of union used to play in Her automatically. That is why Mother was seen to pray like a Muslim and seen talking to a spirit of a dead Muslim *fakir* in Arabic. Though Mother did not learn Arabic, it played automatically in Her as She was in identity with God.

Now we shall put few more examples on Her Universal Motherhood. Once it happened, while moving on road, suddenly She went to a dying patient and cured the patient by Her power though none knew about the patient beforehand. One day She went unexpectedly to a devotee and helped spiritually. The devotee never could see Mother but was longing for many years to have Her *darsan*.

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Mother could feel the urge of the said devotee intuitively.

Few brinjal plants were pressed under loose earth. It was later known that they conveyed their pain to Mother. It was reflected in Universal Mother and She ordered people to remove loose soils to save those plants. It was carried out. As well, we know that She ate rice with a dog while staying in undivided Bengal in Her youth. And in a *Kali Puja* done by Her husband, super-compassionate Mother saved the life of the he-goat which had to be immolated otherwise.

Her boundless mercy and compassion well proved Her Universal Motherhood. Another example would be illustrious of it. A brahmachari of an ashram committed a nasty affair. Other members of the ashram complained to Mother such that She may drive out the brahmachari in order to maintain the sanctity of the ashram. But Great Mother replied, "Where to keep him away from me? Is there any place where am I not present?" A self-realized soul becomes omnipresent and finds the whole cosmos as own-self.

She played miracles (*Vibhutis*) by Her undaunted supernatural power. She did those out of compassion for benefitting people. She says, "This body does not do anything by own will. There is no 'Own Will' here; it is God's Will always." God's power played in Her to bring about those miracles. Few are enumerated here :

i) She cured Bhaiji from tuberculosis and saved his life.

ii) Mother cured a paralytic patient in Her youth.

iii) She helps people spiritually in dreams — this is also a *Vibhuti*.

iv) To save a man from life-risk or to help a man spiritually She appeared physically in more than one place simultaneously.

Now, we shall mention three important miracles played by Her which are very uncommon and hardly printed in any book. We, who stay in Tripura, very near Her birth place, know these well.

i) In her girlhood once She was playing ball with other children. The ball jumped far away. She resolved to bring it back in course of playing and automatically Her hand became extra-ordinarily long. She brought the ball back. It happened in a moment.

ii) Once She was feeding Her husband. He claimed for a lemon to eat with in a better way. Lemon plants were there in kitchen-garden nearby. She, sitting in the kitchen, collected a lemon. Here also Her hand became long.

iii) While Mother stayed at Bajitpur near Dhaka with Her relatives She used to do all domestic work including cooking. One day firewoods were exhausted. She asked Her co-mother-in-law to get Her woods for cooking. The middle-aged in-law burst out in anger in no fault of Mother and replied, “No firewood will be available, you have to cook with your hands and legs.” In those days Mother used to obey all orders of

seniors. She came back, sat near the oven and introduced Her legs into the earth-made oven. The in-law came after few minutes to observe what Mother was doing. To her astonishment, she saw fire burning out from Mother's legs and cooking was going on. Such incidence was possible only with God.

Holy Mother used to lead in countless religious ceremonies for benefit of people and society, and so some people named Her 'Ceremonial Mother'. She created a heaven on earth in getting done *Puja, Kirtana, rituals, Yajna, Bhagavata Parayana*, recital of various scriptures, *Samyama Saptaha*, sermons by saints and spiritual personalities ; She would also tell on God. The Universal Mother performed Vedic *Ati-Rudra Maha-Yajna* in 1981 at Kankhal, the largest kind of oblation-ritual, for world peace. She got done *Savitri Maha-Yajna* in Vedic procedure at Varanasi for public benefit which continued for uncommonly long period (1947-1950).

People irrespective of caste, religion or sect came to Her for solving their toughest problems. She welcomed everyone. Saints used to select Mother as Chief Guest in *Vedanta-Sammelana* (gathering) and tough problems on Vedanta had to be solved by Mother.

This divine incarnation was supra-intelligent and joy-permeated like Krishna, super-compassionate like Buddha, God-intoxicated like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, 'Love' personified like Jesus Christ and Her aggregate characteristics resembles that of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa — thus a great com-



combination of all dimensions the world civilization has ever known.

She taught people how to perform spiritual work and day to day activities unselfishly with perfection.

In Her life-time following institutions besides 28 ashrams were founded for benefit of humanity —

(i) A charitable hospital at Varanasi and other charitable dispensaries.

(ii) *Kanyapeeth* (Girl's institution for higher degrees in Sanskrit) at Varanasi.

(iii) *Vidyapith* (Boy's institution of education).

(iv) Institution for Puranic and Vedic Studies and research at Naimisharanya.

Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Kriya Yoga and Karma Yoga found culmination in this incarnation of God.

Full form of God may be achieved while Vedanta, Tantra (doctrine of *Parama-Siva* and *Para-Sakti*) and Vaisnava theology are combined together and Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was the living manifestation of such all-comprehensive Truth. She was an emblem of Upanisadic Vedanta, a living proof of Tantra and a pioneer in Vaisnava theology. She declared *Lila*, specially of Vaisnava theology, to be the acme of Truth which includes the full range of Vedanta ; in other words, *Lila* is the culmination of Vedanta. Her expression of Truth projected the full form of God, unprecedented in its style in the history of evolution. God spoke through Her mouth and so only Vedanta, Tantra and Vaisnava theology used to come out auto-

matically in a combined form. She never separated Vedanta from Vaisnava theology or Tantra. It is we separate out them as separate philosophies ; in God they co-exist without contradiction as a single Great Truth.

Moreover, Mother would put equal importance to doctrines of all religions and sects (as hinted earlier) and would tell, "All are true, in their own level, as expressions of Infinite". Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jainas — all came to this Universal Mother and found fulfilment of all religions in Her. She hinted that there are endless unfoldment of Infinity in its various facets. Unless She was God Himself who else could say these ? That is why MM Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj and other reputed scholars bowed before Her. Spiritual figures of both East and West came to this spiritual Genius. There came renowned singers and dancers, patriots, and famous people of all kinds.

People always put a question, 'Who Mother actually was ?' It may be answered in various fashions :—

(i) She was God Himself (*Avatara* of God, divine incarnation).

(ii) *Purna-Brahman* (all-comprehensive *Brahman*).

(iii) *Paru-Shakti* (Self-power of God having inseparable identity with God).

(iv) Divine manifestation of Infinite Knowledge (Wisdom).

(v) The timeless Truth,

(vi) *Brahmavid-Varistha* (highest among all the self-realized).

All gods were present in Her. In *Puraa-Brahman* or God all gods naturally dwell. So only, many devotees have seen Her vividly as their beloved *Ista* or Deity.

In Ma's physical absence, initiation is given now-a-days by other people to keep up the trend. No doubt Her message will be spread all over the globe more forcefully in course of time.

Divine Mother ! Kindly reveal Yourself in our hearts, otherwise it is impossible for us to realize the Truth by our own efforts in austerities. 'Unattainable' is attained only by Grace.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the members of the Charitable Society, Ananda-Varta subscribers and devotees in general that the *Head Office* (Administration) of Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society will be shifted from its present location at Shivala, Varanasi to "MATRI-MANDIR", 57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700 019 with effect from the next financial year commencing from 1.4.88. All relevant correspondences should therefore be made to our Calcutta address accordingly from the said date i.e. 1.4.88.

Dated : The X-mas day  
"MATRI-MANDIR"  
57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road,  
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Dr. G. N. Roy (Misra)  
General Secretary,  
Shree Shree Anandamayee  
Charitable Society,  
Calcutta Zonal Office.

# 'The Key'

Sita Rani Makrai

My mortal sight not able to see  
Grace of your could grant me to be  
An obedient on your lap to see  
Am nothing else but shadow of thee  
How can it be  
Unless your kindness  
Will oblige a Key  
To open the window  
and get it to see  
Reality is this———  
Am part of thy Soul  
nothing except a bubble in sea.

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I, Dr. G. N. Roy (Misra), General Secretary, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dr. G. N. Roy (Misra)  
General Secretary

# Ashram News

## **Kankhal :**

Under the grace of Sri Ma like in other years, this year also Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja and Annakut utsabs were celebrated in traditional style with Path, Stotras, Kirtan and Kumari Puja etc. Sri Ma's well-known devotee Sri Phani Roychoudhury was responsible for the Durga Puja. Many devotees from all over India thronged to these utsabs, and were able to offer puspanjali over Ma's Samadhi on special occasions.

Samyam Mahabrata was celebrated as usual according to Ma's instructions from the 29th Oct. to 4th Nov. in full vigour with Japa, Dhyan, Mauna, Kirtan and Sat-Sang etc. Nearly 300 Vratees congregated at Kankhal from various parts of India. For several days celebrated Sadhu-Mahatmas and Maha Mandaleshwars regaled the audience at Sat Sangs with their erudite intercourses. On the seventh night, under the direction of Sri Sisir Mukherjee, a musical play about Sri Ma was performed with songs.

At the conclusion of Samyam, on the morning of the 5th Nov., all were permitted to take part at the Maha Samadhi during Pranam, Havana and later Bhandara. The same evening Adhibas Kirtan was performed for a 24 hours Nam Yagna, and the girls performed all night while the men took over at dawn next day. Malsa Bhog was offered at midday, and after Nagar Sankirtan in the evening the 24 hours Akhanda Nam Yagna was suitably concluded. As in other years, Sri Sri Gita Jayanti was performed beautifully.

**Varanasi :**

On the 31st August, on the occasion of Gurupriya Devi's anniversary, a full scale Puja was performed on Didi's picture in the Hall of the Kanyapeeth. Br. Nirvanananda and Shivanandaji were present to give erudite lectures about Didi. On the 2nd Sept. Sanskrit Day was observed in the Kanyapeeth. The Vice-Chancellor Dr. Vidya Niwas Misra presided. Kashi Maharaj Sri Bibhuti Narayan Sinha was the Chief guest. This was his first visit to the Kanyapeeth, although he had previously frequently visited the main Ashram. Several erudite Pandits of Kashi were also present.

The fact that the whole proceedings were conducted by the girls in Sanskrit came in for considerable acclaim. The Ashram Sannyasis and Brahma-  
charis also participated. At the conclusion Kashi Naresh went round the Kanyapeeth with his daughters. He was accompanied by the distinguished visitor Dr. Uduppa.

The Maharaj and others present were very pleased to learn that the whole Kanyapeeth had been designed by Ma herself. The Kashi Naresh was very impressed with the ancient Indian cultures and pure and quiet atmosphere of the place. At his departure the smallest girls asked for sweets from him, and he also at once donated substantially for the purpose.

On the 7th September, on the occasion of Mahamohopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj's 100th birth anniversary 108 Kumari Puja, and Gopal Puja were performed in the Gopal Mandir, and special

Annapurna Puja and Shiva Puja were also celebrated. On the 8th September, the celebrations in Gopal Mandir were marred due to heavy rain. In the afternoon the Vice-Chancellors of the Sanskrit College, Hindu University, Kashi Vidyapeeth and Sanskrit Vidyapeeth and other distinguished guests assembled at the function. The doyen of Kashi's well known and learned Pandits Sri Pattabhiram Sastri exclaimed with gladness that this was perhaps the first time he had seen the Vice-Chancellors of all 3 Universities of Kashi together. This must be due to Sri Ma's influence. The previous Vice-Chancellor of the Sanskrit University Dr. Gaurinath Sastri and Sri Karunapati Tripathi were also present. The proceedings started with the recitation of Veda and Stotras by the Kanyapeeth. The Chief Guest was the Vice-Chancellor of the Kashi Hindu University Dr. Raghunath Rastogi. The proceedings were conducted by Dr. Rammohan Pandit of the same University. Later the leading guests present and other Pandits spoke in praise of the late Kavirajji and tendered homage and respects to his memory. A certain Pandit added that Sri Gopinath Kaviraj was no doubt a most erudite scholar, but in contact with Sri Anandamayi Ma he became a Maha Sadhaka. He used to behave like a child in her presence.

At the conclusion Dr. Rastogi presented to all on the special occasion as a token of respect a special publication called "Nabonmesh" consisting of nearly 1000 pages. Dr. Reba Prasad Dwivedi, a senior member of the Hindu University expressed

his thanks to assembled guests. Thereafter there was a fitting tribute paid in kind to the assembled Pandits. In conclusion the Vice Chancellor of the Sanskrit University Dr. Venkatachalamji expressed his thanks to all the guests.

The proceedings came to an end with the highly emotional and sweet Bhajans and Kirtans provided by Gitasri Chhabi Banerjee, Reader of the Musical Dept. of Rabindra Bharati University in Calcutta.

Sri Sri Durga Puja was duly celebrated in the Ashram as usual and later Lakshmi Puja and Annakut were celebrated as always with great pomp and ceremony.

Samyam Saptaha and Geeta Jayanti were also celebrated with erudite speeches by the girls of Kanyapeeth.

#### **Agarpara :**

As in other years, Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja and Kali Puja were celebrated with special ceremony and hundreds of devotees were treated with devotional songs, puspanjali and prasad. The annual Nam-Yagna was staged on 19th/20th December. Ladies with Kumari Chhabi Banerjee sang the whole night followed by male devotees from 20th morning. Malsa-bhog with other items of food were served to about 1500 devotees who had assembled on the occasion.

#### **Ranchi :**

Sri Sri Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja and Shyama Puja were duly celebrated. Brahmachari Makhanda



worshipped Ma, Brahmachari Nirmalananda performed Chandipath and gave intercourses suitable for the occasion. At midday over 500 devotees were fed with Mahaprasad after Pushpanjali. In the evening Kirtan and Bhajan and Sandhya Arati were performed with great success.

In Delhi and Bhopal Ashrams, Sri Sri Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja and Kali Puja and Annakut were duly celebrated properly.

### **Uttarkashi :**

This year Krishna Janmastami was celebrated with special pomp and ceremony. The temple was beautifully decorated and all night celebrations were enjoyed by numerous local devotees, both young and old, who were all served with prasad.

Swami Akhandanandaji, Brahmachari Tapan and Devdutta were all attention to the guests.

## **PROGRAMME**

January, 1988 to April, 1988

1. Shree Shree Saraswati Puja : 23rd January, 1988, Saturday.
2. Shree Shree Sibaratri : 16th February, 1988, Tuesday.
3. Dol-Yatra : 3rd March, Thursday, 1988. Lunar eclipse.
4. Shree Shree Basanti Puja : 23rd to 27th March, 1988.
5. 1008 Sw. Muktananda Giriji : 13th April, 1988, Sannyas Utsab Wednesday.

# Obituary

## 1. **Samirendra Nath Mukherji (Bindu) :**

One of Ma's foremost devotees, Bindu Mukherjee, passed away barely two hours after a massive coronary attack at 2 A.M. on the night of the 15th October, 1987 at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi.

He had hardly 6 months to go before retiring as A.G.M. of the L.I.C. (East India Assurance Divn.) in the Delhi region.

Bindu was born at Allahabad and a devout devotee of Ma and was a great favourite of Baba Bhola-nath and Ma from childhood due to his natural skill in singing Kirtans and Bhajans. Later he specialised in Vishma Digamber Palushkar's famous Bhajans. Later he had to give up singing for health reasons, and turned to Sarode playing, where he soon made friends with distinguished exponents such as Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar, Vijoy and Rabi Kichlu etc.

He was mainly responsible for having a small independent house built for Ma in their compound at Allahabad, which soon became the centre for Ma's devotees, specially during her frequent visits to Allahabad for Durga Puja at Gopal Thakur's Ashram, Saraswati Puja, and Kumbha Mela at Prayag.

Not having any children of his own, Bindu was devoted to the children of his relatives, a number

of whom lived with him, and for whom nothing was too much a trouble for him.

His death will cause a serious void among the selfless genuine devotees of Ma, as one who was always doing good to others with no thought for himself.

We extend our sincere condolences to his bereaved wife and family and pray that Ma will give them solace and comfort, as Bindu's soul is now resting evermore in Ma's lotus feet.

## 2. Charu Kumar Ghosh :

Born in 1893 as the younger son of R. B. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh at Dhaka, a premier devotee of Sri Ma during her stay at Ramna and Shahbag etc. Charuda later passed his M.A., B.L.

Aftet partition of Bengal, he migrated to Calcutta and founded several Rice Mills and became President of the Bengal Rice Millers Association.

Like other members of his family he was a close devotee of Ma all his life. His elder sister-in-law, Hirandi was the foremost Sakhi of Sri Ma in her younger days and was associated with her in composing and singing several songs which are incorporated in Kirtan Rasa Swarupa. The famous singer Utpala Sen was one of Hirandi's daughters.

Charuda was associated with Agarpara Ashram from its inception and contributed to a Smriti Mandir there in his Father's memory. He also looked after the worship of Sri Krishna & Gopalji in the Ashram and would be present at Holi and other utsabs in the Ashram as long as his health

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allowed it and contributed lavishly. This was made possible by the close personal attention of his eldest son and daughter-in-law and daughter, who always accompanied him in the later years.

After a long life, almost bedridden for the last few years, Charuda breathed his last at 11-40 P.M. on the 27th November in his Tollygunge house, leaving behind 4 sons, daughter and several grandchildren. Thus passed away possibly the oldest of Ma's devotees in Calcutta.

We send our sincere condolences to his family and hope that Charuda's soul now rests in supreme peace with Ma.

### 3. **M. K. Rai Dastidar :**

We regret to announce the death at Dehra Dun of a former Secretary of Kishenpur Ashram, Sri Monorath Krishna Rai Dastidar, who after a brief suffering, left for his heavenly abode in February. He was well known for his liberal views, simplicity and honesty, and was liked by everybody. He was a bachelor and we pray to Ma for the liberation of his soul.

### 4. **Swami Umananda Giri (Usha didi) :**

At a very advanced age passed away on the 14th November last at Varanasi Ashram Ushadidi who had embraced Sannyas as Swami Umananda Giri. Even on the last day she had performed her duties as Bhandari of the Ashram and then retired for an afternoon rest when she breathed her last within a few minutes. She arrived in Ma's presence in

1960 and on many occasions, under instructions of Sri Ma she had served maunima Bordi (another aged Ashram inmate) and Gurupriya Didi. She was well liked by all. We pray that her soul may rest in eternal peace at the lotus feet of Sri Ma.

**5. Kalandi (Sm. Urmila Devi) :**

One of Ma's original sakhis (close companion) Kalandi from her Shahbag days, passed away in Calcutta at the age of 87 on the 15th September last in her New Alipur house, surrounded by 4 sons, 4 daughters and several grand children. She suffered a brief illness.

In her long life of dedicated service, she was connected with Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Sangha, Hindu Widow's Home, Dhaka, All India Women's Conference, Dhaka etc. When the Kanyapeeth was first founded in Varanasi Ashram, Ma and Didi Gurupriya appointed her as the first Caretaker. When she was leaving her old home in Calcutta for the new house at New Alipur, she presented all her cooking utensils used for Ma's Bhog (whenever Ma visited her in her old Calcutta home) to Agarpara Ashram.

Kalandi has gone to her appointed refuge at Ma's feet after such a long period of service to Her in accordance with Her wishes. We pray her soul may rest in Eternal peace in Ma's lotus feet.

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