

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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Always keep yourself in a state which is favourable to the contemplation of the Divine. Thus will be provided the right sustenance for the mind.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

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

Ma was in a car on the way to the temples of *Devi Vindhyavasini* and *Astabhuja*. While talking about the impermanance of things, Ma said, "Even money has its own span of life and its movement from one place to another. It is here today, and tomorrow it goes somewhere else ! . When a coin is minted, it has its birth, so to say ; again, suppose the coin is melted and an amulet is made out of the metal, then it may be said that the coin has died or undergone a major transformation. So, you see, if you get involved with such things, you will also be in a state of mutability, in coming and going again and again."

* * *

Ma (addressing a congregation of devotees) :
"You should go to all those places where you can have even a little bit of spiritual gain. There is no restriction here ; one can freely go wherever he thinks he will find joy." One of the devotees complainingly said, "Ma, why are you urging us to go to another 'Ma' (Sri Sri Siddhimata of Varanasi) ?" Ma laughed and said, "Bah ! why do you make such discriminations ? All are my fathers, my my mothers. And, in fact, there is nothing, as

‘all’—for me all of them make just *one* father, *one* mother.”

* * *

One day a lady who had come to have Ma’s *darshan* said, “Ma, if I bring some fruits for you, will you eat them ?”

Ma smilingly replied, “Bah ! I do not know of any other estate of mine except *one* (the whole world) ; I shall eat the products of that *one* land of mine, not anything from anybody else. For I know that all people belong to just *one* household, *one* family. And if you talk of different houses, of different families, then I shall say that my food and clothes are kept in all those houses. Again, when some things are offered as gifts from here to the visitors, if they feel hesitant to accept them, then I say, ‘Since your houses are my houses, the boxes you have there are all my boxes. Hence, just take these things, and put them in those boxes of mine which you have in your houses.’” Saying this, Ma began to laugh with the simple mirth of a child.

* * *

The first floor of the Ashram building at Varanasi was under construction. For constructing a new storey, some portions on the top of the ground-floor were being broken. Pointing to that scene, Ma commented, “Look, for the making of something new, so much of the old structure has to be broken down and altered. Of course, the

foundation remains the same—just as truth is always in one position, as permanently stable, and at the outer surface, the process of changing and destroying the old goes on for introducing the new. Before giving shape to something new, one has to break the habitual system in a like manner ; only then can the new be created.” Reflecting on the suffering involved in the act of changing oneself, someone said, “Ma, there is such burning (suffering) !” Ma said, “This burning is for your good only.”

Meditation will help you to find your bonds, loosen them, untie them, and cast your moorings. When you are no longer attached to anything you have done your share. The rest will be done for you. By whom ? By the same power that brought you so far, that prompted your heart to desire Truth and your mind to seek it. It is the same Power that keeps you alive—you may call it Life or the Supreme.

—Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

In everything and in everybody is but the One Himself. Try to be constantly aware of the fact that whatever is perceived at any time, in whatever way, is but a manifestation of the Supreme Being. How can the perceiver be excluded? Exclusion and non-exclusion are also none but He. Even the feeling of the absence of God is His manifestation—so that His presence may be realized.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Sri Amulya Datta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

(Continued from previous issue)

Sri Sri Ma's Arrival at Dhaka for the 1945

Janmotsab

Thursday-24.5.45

Sri Sri Ma had arrived at Dhaka. This was nearly after 4 years. During this interval so much danger and unrest had blown over Bangladesh that there was no limit to it. In the 1943 famine, lakhs of people in Bangladesh had lost their lives. The mere remembrance of these sights was enough to send a shudder through one's limbs. During that period Ma was not in Bangladesh.

But she had forecast to her followers that there would be total disorder in Bangladesh. I heard Ma had also forecast that better days were in the offing for Bharat. I had witnessed the downfall of Bangladesh with my own eyes. Whether or not I would live to see better days Ma only knew. Whatever it may be, a few fistful of rice were now available, but side by side, the scarcity of cloth began to be felt. National disasters and pestilence stalked the land, so that the cry of "help, help" from the people were never ending.

Hearing Ma was coming to Dhaka at this critical juncture, in spite of the deep distress being suffered, Ma's followers started dancing with joy. That Ma had arrived at Nabadwip we had already heard. But nobody knew when she would reach Dhaka.

I first heard of Ma's arrival at Dhaka from Monomohan Ghosh's son, Sriman Saroj. As soon as I heard the welcome news, I started for the Ashram. On the way I collected my friend Monoranjan Roy, the librarian of Dhaka University. I also met my relative Sriman Jatin on the way. He had just reached Dhaka. Later I learnt Ma had travelled in his saloon from Naraingunje. I sent him home for a quick cup of tea, and proceeded to the Ashram. At the outset I met Khukuni Didi. When I had done my pranam to her, Didi said, "Ma is in the Panchabati." I went along there and found Ma sitting on the dais. Several ladies were there with her. Ma was smilingly conversing with them. On seeing me, she asked, "Did you not have any inkling that I was arriving at Dhaka today?" I bowed down to her and replied "Ma, you are beyond all surmise." Ma started laughing. Shortly afterwards, the wife of Sri Prafulla Chandra Ghosh arrived and told Ma, "We have now taken courage. Although there are soldiers everywhere, I have walked from my house to you."

Ma: "It is not right to take resort to such spurious courage. How and when He appears before you to comfort you cannot be predicted. Although everything is his image, yet in what way He acts

at any time cannot be foreseen, so it is safer to be always watchful."

The hurt caused to Ma's feet

Ma started talking about how she had sustained a grievous hurt in the toes of her feet while at Nabadwip. Ma said, "When arrangements were made for my bed at Nabadwip, the bricks that had been placed under the cot had been placed unevenly. One night I stumbled over one of those bricks. As I stumbled, there was a distinct crack, which still rings in my ear. I at once understood that something serious had happened. After standing motionless for a while, I myself made all subsequent arrangements. I had some water fetched, and immersed my foot in it. Then I asked everybody to clear the room, and told Nepal to bind the finger concerned tightly with splints of bamboo. After this was done I lay down on the bed. In the morning people thought that the wound had lessened and asked me to remove the bandage. I followed their advice. As soon as the bandage was opened, the finger was seen to have turned blue. So then, on the advice of the people present, ground Haldi was applied to it.

Bhudeb Babu : Was there no pain ?

Ma : Yes, quite a lot.

Bhudeb Babu : Perhaps you had no feeling of it ?

Ma : Yes, there was a feeling just as you also feel the pain being suffered by others, sometimes your face turns blue, the same thing happened.

Bhudeb Babu : You have this advantage over us, in as much as whenever you wish you can separate your mind from the source of pain. As soon as you do this, you have no further feeling of pain.

Ma : What you have asserted may be true for certain people. But it is worth noticing here that one must possess a mind, and be able to remove it elsewhere.

Ma : In trying to walk about with that wounded foot I was hurt 3 or 4 times more in the same toe, even if the doctors had diagnosed that the bone of the toe had twisted and not fractured. This body now realised that something had indeed snapped, because in walking about, I felt that something was loosen inside, as if some materials in a bag were making rattling noises when shaken to and fro. This provided another kind of enjoyment."

"Later on, whether it was rested for a time, or whether it was kept bound for a while, probably the broken finger had somewhat mended. But a lot of people started advising that a doctor must examine it. This body replied that if they could do so by not moving the finger at all, then they were welcome. The doctor duly arrived, examined the finger by moving it to and fro and then left it in the same state as before. Later this body was brought from Nabadwip to Calcutta and examined by a good doctor. Here they took this body into a dark room, X-rayed the foot and declared that a bone in the toe had become bent. Later they straightened it, bound it up and again X-rayed it

to declare it was now all right. They also requested that the bandage may not be removed for 10 days.

While Ma was narrating all this, the skies had become overcast. Ma was accompanied by many Bengalees and non-Bengalees to the Ashram. On the one hand, there was a lack of accommodation in the Ashram, on the other hand heavy rains would further inconvenience the visitors. On considering all this someone pointed out the state of the skies to Ma and prayed that there should be no further rains. In reply Ma said, "All of you can gather together here from various places, and do you not think that the clouds can do likewise?"

Bhudeb Babu : Yes, whenever they would see a crowd gathering together, they also like to converge into the same area so that people can be thoroughly drenched ! (Everybody laughs). After this kind of talk, Ma rose from the Panchabati. She came out into the open, and seeing several houses nearby, she asked, "What is all this?" I said, "They are meant as a hospital for the troops.

I stayed with Ma till 8 p.m. and then returned to my bungalow.

Friday — 26.5.45

I arrived at the Ashram in the morning with my friend Monoranjan Roy and Jatin. As soon as we bowed in pranam to Ma, she directed, "You must request Gopal Baba to recite the Gita now." Sri Gopal Chatterjee was a disciple of the Sadhan Samar Ashram's venerable founder Sri Satya Dev

of Deoghar. He was an M.A., B.L. and used to practice in Barishal as an advocate. Under instruction from his Guru, he was then engaged in preaching the Gita by forsaking his profession. Yesterday, Sri Sri Ma had mentioned about him, "Babaji has willingly embraced poverty. In the midst of various kinds of hardships, he has never lost his patience. And from the spiritual angle, Babaji is no mean advocate."

Yesterday Ma had pointed out Gopaldada and mentioned, "I emphasize to you that Babaji is a very proficient reader of the Gita. You can listen to him if you like."

In any case as instructed by Ma we requested Gopaldada to expound the Gita for us. It was arranged that this would be done from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Srijukta Amiya Bala with Sri Ma

After returning from Gopaldada we found that a few ladies were surrounding Ma, who was conversing with them. Going forward a little, I understood from the conversation that a young girl was telling Ma about her spiritual experiences. Later, on enquiry, I learnt that the girl was Amiya Bala Sen of Dhaka, with her home in Bari Lane. The name of her father was Sri Ishwar Chandra Sen. She had been married in a village called Taltolla near Vikrampur. In Calcutta too they had a house in 74 Beniatola Lane, where a Vighraha of Mansha Devi had been established. This Mansha Devi exercised a remarkable influence over Sm.

Amiya Bala. At such times a lot of words and instructions used to emanate from her mouth. Amiya Bala was 30 years old, but she looked much younger. It was since 8 years that she was in this condition. Since the day of Sravan when she first developed these symptoms, her devotees performed an utsab each year on such occasions. Within 6 months of reaching this condition, her husband had died. He did not believe in all this with regard to his wife, and so he used to ill-treat her in many ways. Due to instructions from the Devi, Amiya Bala stopped eating fish. Her husband used to persecute her by hiding pieces of fish inside her rice. We met some devotees of Amiya Bala, ranging from children to old people.

Amiya Bala in speaking of her obsessions to Sri Ma said, "Formerly when I used to have these spells, a number of words used to emanate from my mouth but I did not understand their meaning. But my elder brother was quite educated, and a relative of ours was a Sannyasi. He was a Pandit. They used to understand these words. Now even I can understand the meaning of the words. My brother is very religious minded. He composes beautiful songs, little children sing these songs. When they unitedly sing these songs, I used to get flooded with joy. I cannot communicate to you the kind of joy I feel within my self. In that sensation of bliss I sometimes spend two to three days in that condition.

At such times, even when I would carry out household chores the sense of bliss continued to

pervade me. See here, Ma, my brother's condition is also very beautiful. When his two sons died one after the other, not only did he stop crying or grieving on his own, but on the other hand whenever he used to see my sister-in-law crying, he used to say, "You should not weep for them. Ma had sent us these two flowers, now for her own puja she has plucked them away, "Herself".

Ma (to us): "What a nice thought! How beautifully are they facing death? This comes about through Satsang."

Amiya Bala: Ma I am getting this taste of bliss from time to time, but I still think that the full quantity is not being attained. Those who are near me, do not understand all this, which is painful for me. Furthermore they all love me, and take care of me so much that sometimes I feel completely cramped and would like to run away. Ma, you have liberated me in many ways. I have a son and a daughter. Their upbringing is being done by others. My husband does not understand me, but used to provide obstacles in my path, so one day the following words emanated from my lips, "He will be finished within 7 days." In actual fact he died within 7 days and I became a widow, but there is no grief or sorrow on my part on this account."

Ma (To us): See how simple she is. If His touch is within her, everything melts and flows.

Amiya Bala: Before my husband's death, the following words came out spontaneously from my mouth. "The time for dressing with Sankhas and jewels is ended, so why don't you dress her up

properly ?” On hearing this, they dressed me up with Sankhas, sindur and jewels. When these people (pointing to her devotees) used to call me ‘Ma’ and worship me, I used to feel a kind of constraint. But whenever I remonstrated, they used to say, “Why do you object to us ?” We do not exactly worship or perform any devotion to you, we do so to our own Mother.” I used to feel satisfied by this. Wherever there is a picture of Mansha Devi in our house, they have placed another picture by its side of myself when obsessed by this feeling. When I used to object to this, they used to reply, “Why do you object ?” This is not your photo we are keeping here, this is our mother’s photo.” Thereafter I used to do pranams to the picture and feel relieved.”

“Look Ma, people used to call me a fallen or an unchaste woman, which used to hurt my feelings and ego at first, but they do not do so now. I feel that if people criticize me to my disadvantage, this will result in my ego being destroyed.”

Ma (To us) : See what a beautiful Bhasa ! Srijukta Amiya Bala’s brother had composed some songs, her devotees now sang 2 or 3 of them. Sri Ma praised the songs and declared, “The songs have been composed from pure feelings, that is why they are so beautiful.”

(To be continued)

Ma

Mira Partfets

MA, sweet MA

I know myself only as Your sleepy one
A dreaming babe in the womb of God
All that I am lies within You :
The radiant sun and the mere shadows
Constantly restless, I stir where I am
Asleep, yet intensely aware
Of a longing for You
In its many disguises

MA, sweet MA

I sleep
And I dream of the grace of awakening,
Of one day, perhaps, being transformed
Into a smile on Your face
The peals of Your laughter
A flower in Your hair
The infinite love in Your boundless eyes
Or, would that I be
A simple child
Forever placed at Your eternal feet.

Influence of Sri Sri MA's Darshan

Er. Girish Chandra, M. I. E.

As a matter of fact, it is a devotee of Sri Sri MA to say what has been the influence of Her Darshan. However, the object of this write-up is to describe in general terms what has been the experience of the author and his friends. It will also be examined in this article if we can still have Her "Darshan" and derive the same benefits as we did before She attained MAHA-SAMADHI.

When Sri MA sat on the dias, She acted as a powerful magnet on the audience and all eyes were rivetted on Her. Just as a magnet magnetises iron particles and attract them, Sri MA transformed the audience who were attracted to Her. It was an act of grace of Sri MA.

Every one who had Her Darshan was promoted to a higher stage in spiritual sense. For example, if some-one came out of curiosity, he would be blessed to lead a spiritual life. If one was a spiritual aspirant, he would be blessed with greater devotion. A devotee would be blessed with knowledge of the self. Powerful waves would emanate from Her to carry out the above transformation, while She sat silently on the dias.

Like a powerful ruby, Sri MA would emit rays which would burn the dross of our soiled mind. Purification of mind was effected in course of Her "Darshan".

Ocean of grace and bliss had taken the swaroop of Sri MA. Therefore, when we had Her "Darshan", grace and bliss flowed into us. In normal course, one is blessed with grace and bliss as a result of a great deal of "Sadhana".

Lotus of a devotee's heart opens after meditation over a prolonged period. But in the presence of Sri MA, lotus of our heart opened by the effect of rays emanating from Her just as lotus opens when Sun's rays fall upon it.

Question arises if we can still derive the same benefits from Sri MA. The answer is in affirmative. If we do "Japa" of Her name and meditate on Her holy feet sincerely and regularly, we can still derive all the benefits enumerated above. One should have faith in the fact that Sri MA resides in our heart as our real self or Atma. We should not forget that Sri MA continues to bless us and guide us even after Maha Samadhi. By meditating on Her feet, we shall be blessed with "Shradha, Bhakti and Gyan." The sovereign remedy is to cling to Her feet as a frog clings to the stem of lotus.

Another clue to receiving Her grace and blessings is to surrender fruits of our action, our worries and responsibilities on HER feet. Sri MA is the universal Mother carrying on HER the burden of looking after all living creatures, so why should we carry the burden on our head.

May Sri MA bless us with ever-increasing love for HER holy feet.

It is not that, which people worship as a material object.

Nirmal Chandra Ghosh

Sacred words for peace and prayer.

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक् प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि
च सर्वाणि । सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदं माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां मा मा ब्रह्म
निराकरोत् अनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु । तदात्मनि निरस्ते य
उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

Om. May my limbs, speech, breathing system, eyes, ears, strength and all the organs become well developed. Everything is Brahman, about whom the Upanishads propound. May I not deny (disbelieve) Brahman. May not Brahman deny me (i.e., deprive me the knowledge about Him). May I not reject Brahman (i.e. refrain from acquiring the knowledge about Him). May not Brahman reject me (i.e., May He give me refuge in Him). All the virtues, about which the Upanishads tell, may be in me, as I am in pursuit of the knowledge of the Supreme Soul.

Om. Peace. Peace. Peace.

The present topic is from Kenopanishad which is in Talwakara Brahmana in Sama Veda. Since the first verse begins with the word Kena, it is called Kenopanishad. It is the ninth chapter of Talwakara Brahmana. It tells about the Supreme Brahman in a very mysterious way with indirect

hints in the form of a discourse between the teacher and his disciple, so that the latter can realize Brahman.

The disciple asks the following question to his revered teacher :

ॐ केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।

केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥*

Due to whose wish and impelled by whom the mind of a man thinks ? Engaged by whom the breathing system, which is the foremost of all functions of life, works ? Due to whose will people utter the words they speak ? Who is that God who engages and enables the eyes and the ears in seeing and hearing ?

The teacher said,

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्वाचो हे वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।

चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥†

He is the eye of the eyes, the ear of the ears, the speech of the speech, the mind of the mind, and the life of the life. He is the root cause and prime mover of activating the functions of all the senses, organs, mind and life. The wise therefore, after giving up self identification with the senses, the organs, the mind etc. (i.e. after forsaking the idea that I am the eye, I am the ear ; the eyes and ears are mine, etc.) come to know of Him, attain freedom from worldliness, and then after death become immortal (i.e., free from the cycles of repeated births and deaths, which ends all miseries

* Kenopanishad, Part I, Verse 1.

† Kenopanishad, Part I, Verse 2.

and sufferings for ever). They enjoy eternal joy, bliss and peace.

न तत्र चक्षुःच्छिति न वागच्छति नो मनः ।

न विद्मो न विजानीमो

यथैतदनुशिष्यादन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि ।

इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद्वयाचचक्षिरे ॥*

The eyes, the speech (and all the other senses) and the mind cannot reach Him (i.e. the senses and the organs etc., cannot function on Him and the mind cannot think of Him, as He is not a worldly object or subject and there is no idol of Him.†). It is not possible to tell that He is such and such because we do not know Him by our mind and intellect. From our previous teachers, from whom we have received instructions about Him (the Supreme Truth), we have learnt that Brahman is different from all nonliving perishable things (क्षर), which are known, and superior to all

* Kenopanishad, Part I, Verse 3.

† Shwetashwetara Upanishad, Chap 4, Verses 19-20 tell us

नैतमूर्ध्वं न तिर्यञ्चं न मध्ये परिजग्रमत् ।

न तस्य प्रतिभा अस्ति यस्य नाम महद्गणः ॥

न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैतम् ।

हृदा हृदिस्थं मनसा य एनमेवं विदुस्मृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

No one can catch Him at the top or obliquely or in the middle. There is no idol of Him. His name is 'the most famous one'.

His image does not stand before the sight. No one can see Him by the eyes. Those aspirants, who with devoted heart and purified mind get absorbed in Him lying in their cavity of heart and realise Him in this way become immortal.

living (जीवात्मा) which are imperishable (अक्षर) and unknown.*

The teacher further explains,

यद्वाचाज्जभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्भति ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥†

That which is not uttered by speech and expressed in words, but which is the source of consciousness and power by which speech is uttered and expression in words are given, know that alone to be Brahman and not what people worship as a material object.

यत्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥†

That which is not grasped and understood by the mind intellect, but which is the source of consciousness and power by which mind and intellect thinks and understands, know that alone to be Brahman and not what people worship as a material object.

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥‡

That which cannot be seen by the eyes but which is the source of consciousness and power by which the eyes see, know that alone to be Brahman and not what people worship as a material object.

*यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

Since I am beyond all perishable and even far superior to all imperishable, I am famous in the world and the Vedas as the Supreme Person (Purushottama).

See Bhagavadgita, Purushottama Yoga (Chap. 15), Verse 18.

† Kenopanishad Part I, Verses 5—6.

‡ Kenopanishad, Part I, Verses 7—9.

यच्छ्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रमिदं श्रुतम् ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ।*

That which man does not hear with the ears but the source of consciousness and power due to which a man hears with the ears, know that alone to be Brahman, and not what people worship as a material object.

यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते । †

That which man smells by the organ of smell is not Brahman. That which enables the organ of smell to smell, know that alone to be Brahman, and not what people worship as a material object.

Considering that the disciple may not misunderstand, the teacher tells him,

यदि मन्यस्ते सुवेदेति दहरमेवापि नूनं त्वं वेत्थ ब्रह्मणो रूपम् ।

यदस्य त्वं यदस्य देवेष्वथ नु मीमांस्यमेव ते मन्ये विदितम् ॥‡

From hearing what I have said to you if you are confident that you have known Brahman very well, as one being the source, root cause and prime mover of all functions of life in beings (जीव) and the gods, then you have known very little about

* Kenopanishad, Part I, Verses 7-9.

† Prana (प्राण) may also mean 'the breathing system', which is called Pancha Prana (the five pranas, viz. Prana, Udana, Apana, Vyana and Samana). In that case the meaning of the verse will be the following :

That which is active due to the functioning of the breathing system, is not Brahman, but due to (the existence of) which the breathing system is made to function, know that alone to be Brahman, and not what people worship as a material object.

‡ Kenopanishad, Part II, Verses 1-2.

His real nature, because the fraction (or fragments) of Him which is in all beings and which is in all the gods taken together is little expression of Him, and in that case your knowledge about Brahman requires to be tested and Brahman is still to be deliberated on by you.

On being asked by the teacher about the knowledge of Brahman that the disciple acquired, the disciple said,

नाहं मन्ये सूवेदेति नो न वेदेति वेद च ।

यो नस्तद्वेद तद्वेद नो न वेदेति वेद च ॥*

“I do not think that I know Brahman very well, but that does not mean that I do not know Brahman at all; I know also. One, who among us (codisciples) understands the real significance of my utterance, i.e., not that I do not know, but I know and I do not know as well, knows Brahman.”

The Upanishad now tells us the conclusion arrived at from the dialogue:

यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।

अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम् ॥†

One who says, “Brahman is not known to me”, knows Brahman (to some extent), because he knows that the knowledge of Brahman cannot be acquired by the senses, the mind and organs, and He is different from all known non-living (जड़ प्रकृति, अक्षर) and superior to all unknown living (जीवात्मा, अक्षर). One who says that I know Brahman, to him Brahman is unknown (because Brahman cannot be known with the help of the senses and organs and

* Kenopanishad, Part II, Verses 1-2.

† Kenopanishad, Part II, Verses 3-4.

the mind and intellect and different from all known non-living and higher up than all unknown living).

प्रतिबोधविदितं मतममृतत्वं हि विन्दते ।

आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यं विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ॥*

The intellectual knowledge about Brahman which can only be had through indirect hints, helps the aspirant (साधक) to acquire knowledge of Brahman (अपरोक्षानुभूति). By acquiring this knowledge man becomes immortal.

The strength needed for the pursuit (सधना) for controlling the senses and the mind, performing the austerities and meditation on the right line for acquiring the knowledge of Self, is achieved by ones own self† (and due to the grace of God). By learning the 'processes of acquiring self knowledge' (आत्मविद्या) one attains immortality.

The Upanishad now tells that it is very essential for a man to acquire knowledge of Brahman in his present life.

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ।

भूतेषु भूतेषु विचित्य वीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥†

If one realises Brahman in ones present life as a human being in this world, then it is all right. If

* Kenopanishad. Part II, Verse 3-4.

† उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

One should save oneself (from the miseries of this world again and again) by ones own (self) effort. One should not degrade oneself. Self is ones own friend (if one tries to realise Brahman), and self only is ones own foe (if one does not try to realise Brahman).

See Bhagavadgita, Atmasanyama Yoga, Verse 5.

one does not realise Him in this life, then there is great danger ahead of him because he will have to be born again and again and suffer unending miseries due to repeated births and deaths in different worlds according to his 'Karma' (action) till he realises Brahman*. So the wise men, understanding the consequences of not realising Brahman, acquire the knowledge of Brahman in the present life itself, feel His presence in every being, and after death, being free from rebirths and eternal miseries, become immortal. †

* Isha Upanishad tells us (Verse 3)

असूर्या नाम ते लोका बन्धेन तमसावृताः ।

तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिजच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥

Those men, who do not realise Brahman, are again and again born after death in the worlds full of darkness and ignorance and known as Sunless regions.

† Kathopanishad tells us (Part II, Chap. 2, Verses 12-13)

एको ब्रह्मी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा एकं रूपं बहुधा वः करोति ।

तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥

नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानामेको बहुनां यो विदधाति ज्ञानान् ।

तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥

The wise men, who realise always in their own self the one, the Supreme Brahman, the controller and inner soul of all beings, who manifests one single form (His own Self) into many many forms, enjoy everlasting happiness, and not the others.

He is the immortal among all mortals, the consciousness of all the conscious. He alone fulfils the desires of all. The wise, realising Him always in their own self, get eternal peace, and not others.

Love—The Sole Treasure

Ma Das

(Contd. from the last issue)

Love and Self-knowledge

All spiritual attainment becomes possible only through divine Grace. The individual self, by itself, is nothing without being blessed by God. Sri Swami Tapovanji Maharaj, the renowned *Brahma-Gyani*, whom Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj called 'a veritable ocean of knowledge and an embodiment of Vedanta,' pinpoints the role of love and devotion in the acquisition of Self-knowledge.

He says, "*The zenith of love is the conviction that everything in the world, from the highest to the lowest is a form of one's Ishta.... Give up pride and egotism, and devotedly immerse yourself in the thought of God.*"

"Pleased with man's sincere love and devotion, God lets him comprehend the Divine Principle, which is beyond name and form, beyond the perception of word and mind, which is self-luminous and of the nature of everlasting peace—peace that passeth the understanding."

"Love purifies the mind and easily leads to mental concentration. When meditation deepens, the mind gets detached from all worldly trammels. It becomes easy for that mind to realize God and gain

divine experience, thereby enjoying the highest state of bliss, finally securing full liberation.”¹

This is the picture of true love, its highest form and its relation to God-Realization. The following three authoritative pearls of wisdom from the teachings of the outstanding, revered living saint, Sri Satya Sai Babaji Maharaj also throw light on these three issues :

“The eagerness to progress, to serve, to expand one’s heart to take-in the whole of humanity in love, *to see all as forms of the Divine Consciousness is true love.*

“Love is the easiest way to win His Grace and to realize that He pervades everything. In fact, He is in and as everything. Surrender to God means to leave everything to His Will and is the highest form of Divine Love.

“Divine Love is the seed, devotion is the sapping, faith the fertilizer, good-company (*satsang*), the rain. Unconditional dedication to the Supreme is the flower and God-Realization the fruit.”²

Since no fruit is possible without its seed, Self-Realization or Self-knowledge cannot be had unless the seeker is full of love for God, Self or the universe as a whole. Again, since the fruit comes out solely from the seed without the addition of any other material to it, God-Realization or Self-knowledge on the one hand, and the power of Love on the other hand are essentially the same. The relationship between the two is comparable to that of pure gold and an ornament produced out of it without the addition of any other material.

The One Single Thing of Value

An eager American visitor, after moving about from *ashram* to *ashram* for some six months, once came to the well-known great *Brahma-Gyani* Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, the celebrated author of the remarkable book 'I am THAT'. The interview began with the following interesting question and answer :

Question : "To become an engineer, I must learn engineering. To become God, what must I learn ?"

Maharaj : "You must unlearn everything. God is the end of all desire and knowledge."

Since the visitor was in earnest, the interview proceeded fruitfully and after many questions had been put and answers given, the visitor was convinced that nothing in the world, including even his own mind, was of any value. In desperation he put the following as his last question, and Maharaj's reply is of the greatest significance in the context of the subject of this paper :

Question : "In all the universe, is there any single thing of value ?"

Maharaj : "Yes, the power of love."

Love and Attachment

On the very first page, it was stated, through Mother's words, that while loving God is productive of extremely great happiness, the consequences of attachment born of earthly love are ruinous. Attachment is a selective relationship formed at the body level between individuals with inherent limita-

tions. Based on duality created by ignorance of the Truth of cosmic oneness, attachment increases bondage. Love, on the other hand, is universal, with its basis as the Self that knows no discrimination between one individual and another. It operates to release the spirit from matter envelopments, enabling it to experience the eternal bliss of the all-pervading Supreme Self.

The eminent saint of Vrindaban, Sri Swami Sharananandaji Maharaj, the Founder of Manav Seva Sangha, had the unique capacity to deal with the most complicated human problems in a simple intelligible way. His all-comprehensive subtle remarks cover vividly the various aspects of love and attachment.

Swamiji says, "All attachment is only with that which is not ours ; what is ours is ours in its very nature, and no question of attachment arises. Attachment is always with the limited and changing ; love or yoga is with the Eternal and Immutable. The latter relates to the unity of the substratum, the former to the diversity of manifestation, giving rise to conflict and fanaticism."

"Love makes a man give without reservations, whereas attachment makes one a beggar, for love is free, while attachment makes one a slave. The latter feeds the 'I' and strengthens the body-consciousness ; whereas the former is a bringer of joy.

"All attempt to hold fast to the assumed 'I' is symptom of attachment, and is futile, for untruth must ultimately be consumed by Truth. Attach-

ment to the fleeting does good neither to the person who attaches himself to someone or something, nor to that person or object to which he becomes attached.

“Love consumes all desires because it is self-existent and not dependent on any other. Again, love for the Unlimited is also unlimited. But when it is chained to things, individuals and passing phases, it becomes greed, attachment, etc., even as the flowing waters of the river become the breeding ground of disease when stored in a pit. Attachment is the breeding ground of desire.

“Wherever love happens to be focussed, that object will appear dear. This is a characteristic of love. But when an object first attracts you and then you feel yourself in love, know that it is attachment. That is to say, love, when it is love, precedes liking ; when it is attachment, liking precedes love. Love is not caused by attraction, it can be the cause of attraction.

The Only Thing which Really Exists

“For the *sadhaka* (aspirant), love is a triangle — it may appear to him as universal love, or as love of the Self or as love of the Lord, depending on the temper of his approach. But in itself, love is an indivisible whole and the only thing which really exists.”⁴

Now, *Vedanta* teaches that besides *Brahman* — the Ultimate Reality, the Supreme Self — nothing else exists. Whatever is perceived in the world outside as the infinite multiplicity of names and

forms, and whatever is experienced in the world within as thoughts and emotions is all an illusion, of the nature of a dream — the result of misapprehension of Truth caused by its non-apprehension due to ignorance of the spiritual essence.

Since love is the only thing which really exists, and since what is real is only *Brahman*, it is clear that there is no difference between what Vedanta terms as *Brahman* — the transcendental Reality — and what is called True Love, operating equally towards all.

The Truth Supreme

That is why the great Maharshi Bhagavan Ramana declares, “Love is not different from the Self. Love of an object is an inferior order and cannot endure. Whereas the Self is Love, in other words God is Love” (Talks, 433). It is for this very reason that the other self-realized saint of the stature of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj calls the power of love, as stated earlier, the only single thing of value in the universe. And obviously, for the same reason, again, Swami Vivekananda, the all-time idol of all India, terms love the sole treasure in his following peerless verse :

“Listen friend, I shall speak my heart to thee. I have found in my life this Truth Supreme : Buffeted by waves, in the whirl of life, there is no ferry that takes across the sea. Formulas of worship, control of breath, science, philosophy, systems varied, relinquishment, possession and the like, all these are but delusions of the mind,

Love, love — that is the one thing — the sole treasure".⁶

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Ma ! We Remember Thee So Much

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

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

(Continued from previous issue)

Matri Satsang at Kashi :

I was in Varanasi for two years, for one year as Administrator of the Municipal Corporation and then as the District Magistrate. Administratively, it was a difficult period. Weighted down with diverse vested interests the lumbering machinery of the Corporation ceased to be a fit instrument of service to this abode of Shivaji. My desire to render some service to this holy city of Kashi had to run up against all kinds of obstacles and opposition. But here I am not concerned with that. Suffice it to say that while I passed through this mental state Ma came to Kashi a number of times and stayed for some time. This enabled me to have her *darshan* and company very frequently, and it proved to be like a soothing balm for my heart which had been subjected to cruel blows during my tenure as Administrator.

Once I got the news of Ma's arrival. I went to the railway station and as the train pulled up I did *pranam* to Ma alongwith other devotees. My wife,

because of some trouble in her leg, had stayed back. Ma enquired about her and I told her why she could not come. She listened and said, "She is alright".

We had figured out that in the evening we would go to the Ashram, but my wife would not. However, when I reached home I found that wife was very happy. Her trouble had disappeared and she was ready to go to the Ashram. I was delighted. So we went to the Ashram alongwith the children and had the benefit of Ma's *darshan* and company.

When Ma enquires after someone, or as they say she gets a "Kheyal" about any one, it becomes a source of blessing for him. This experience has been had by countless other devotees. Ma had told somebody once that when anybody remembered her his whole being appeared in a flash before her like something in the dark when the light of a torch is focussed upon it. And then in her mercy she did whatever was sought and prayed for.

Ma does not perform miracles, but her very presence and existence in this world is in itself a miracle. Ordinary mortals like us cannot understand a great person like her, but the little that she reveals about herself for our good is enough to make us indebted to her for ever.

We went for Ma's *darshan* every evening while she was here. It is difficult to give words for the happiness one feels on having Ma's *darshan*, but one thing can be said firmly that with every *darshan* the layers of sinful or wrong thoughts drop off one

by one, and the heart getting cleaner and purer is filled with more happiness, peace and joy, and in the same proportion one gets a clearer consciousness of right and wrong and the urge to proceed on the path of righteousness. I personally think that one also gets a divine insight which when attained in full measure enabled Arjun to comprehend the *Virat Roop* of Srikrishna, and which even in an infinitesimal measure enabled me to understand Ma, however little. It was all the result of Ma's grace which she showers unasked, otherwise for an ordinary person like me it was possible only after practising severe austerities and penance.

The observance of special occasions at Ma's Ashram always attracts a big crowd of devotees and there is a lot of hustle and bustle, but during the presence of Ma one sees the same scene even on ordinary days. People of all kinds come from far and near. Sadhus, sannyasis, administrators, scholars and devotees, old and new, all make a bee line to Ma's Ashram at Kashi. Outside the Ashram are seen heaps of flowers and garlands. The inmates of the Ashram, the girls of the Kanyapeeth and their teachers get busy doing their work according to Ma's instructions. Ma herself either remains immersed in calm and quiet meditation or moves about lending a hand to the other workers. Thus she presents an opportunity to every person to have her darshan. A wave of joy sweeps over the multitude, they do *pranam* and offer garlands. Ma stops, accepts their garlands and blesses them. And sometimes Ma talks to some one and bursts

into laughter. This golden laughter fills the entire ashram and fills every corner of it. This routine goes on for several days and we have for fill of it.

Now Ma is about to leave Banaras. She is to entrain at Mughalsarai. People elsewhere, at other ashrams, would be eagerly looking forward to Ma's visit, and this Ganga of joy and happiness would now turn in another direction. We feel sad. We throng around Ma who is sitting on a chair at the railway platform. It seems as if we do not want to let her go. People are talking, about the train, about the baggage—if everything has come—about spiritual matter and so on. Ma says, "Wherever one is standing, one will find a ladder. He should start climbing upward without loss of time." What a profound spiritual truth Ma has spoken out in plain and simple language ! Ma is all the Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. Who knows when a drop or two may spill over from this vessel overflowing with *gyan*, and who might be the lucky recipient of this drop, and who might be able to drink it in.

This simple, extraordinary sentence pregnant with wisdom can be explained, commented upon and elaborated in several volumes. Now where shall we find again this Ma who could express the deepest philosophical thought in such an easy and simple language ?

Shivaratri at Bhadaini Ashram

Once, it was decided to hold the Shivaratri Puja at Ma's Bhadaini ashram. Being at Kashi,

I too got an opportunity to participate in it. According to the Ashram rules it is observed as a complete fast, even water is taboo. At first I thought that going without water even for twenty-four hours would be impossible for me. But as the hours passed I began to feel Ma's *kripa* (grace). My diffidence vanished and the will power became stronger. In place of lethargy and unease, I began to feel more at ease, and more enthusiastic. The ladies at the ashram were busy with the Puja arrangements as directed by Ma. Very rarely such strict observance of Shastric rules is seen elsewhere.

When I began the fast, I felt thirsty and restless, but as the third quarter of the day approached the intensity of the thirst lessened, and I began to feel a kind of joy. At 6 O'clock in the evening people (observing the fast) took their seat at the fixed place. Four to six people sat in a ring round a huge plate on which was placed a Shiva Linga. Flowers, *bel* leaves, Ganga *Jal* and other things required for the Puja were placed near every *asana* (a small square mat made of grass) occupied by the fasting person. Ladies were seated separately, though arrangements were the same for them. Before the commencement of the first Puja Ma re-inspected the arrangements and sat down. People raised cry of "Ma Ki Jai". The devotees became overjoyed and their hearts were set in tune with the ceremonials of the Shiva Puja. Ma's presence, and a strict observance of Shastric rules enhanced the solemnity of the occasion. This Puja lasted

for an hour. Then began the *Arati* to the accompaniment of the usual musical instruments. And as the *Arati* ended, *Kirtan* began. People remained seated, for the rule is that nobody can leave his seat until the conclusion of the Puja. The second *Puja* started around 9 p.m. This too lasted for an hour, and was followed as before by the performance of *Arati* and singing of hymns. The third Puja commenced at 12 O'clock at midnight ending after an hour. It followed the same routine. By 2 O'clock in the morning most of the people showed signs of getting tired. Noticing that Ma herself started singing and doing *kirtan*, this sent a wave of joy and energy into their tired limbs. They became alert and active. I think that something like this must have happened to Arjun when noticing his restlessness during the Mahabharat war, Krishna started teaching and admonishing him. Such an opportunity of doing Shiva Puja, and that too in the holy city of Kashi and in the presence of Ma is a rare blessing for one.

And as the night was about to roll up its dark mantle and make room for the advent of dawn there commenced the fourth and the last stage of the Puja. People who had observed the fast felt a peculiar buoyancy of spirit and an almost unworldly joy. Such an experience is only to be felt and enjoyed. It defies description. When this Puja ended, *Arati* began. People stood up in their respective places and with hands folded joined in the *Arati* prayer and fixed their gaze on the immaculate figure of Ma. Outside, the pure waters of the

Ganga laved the walls of the sacred ashram, the first rays of the dawn streamed in and the stars of sky began to withdraw themselves and one by one the devotees too began to do *pranam* to Ma. Ma gave *prasad* to every one. This *prasad* is the real thing, the real gift of Shivaratri Puja and fast. Finally, the devotees with a garland (given to them by Ma) round their neck, some fruit as *prasad* in their hand and with faces beaming with joy gradually left for their homes. We did likewise, but we came again in the day and after doing *pranam* to Ma sat down before her. Ma seeing us said, "Nice that you have come."

After a while she added, "Someone had told Panna Lal that he had completed his life term. But he participated in the Shivaratri Puja and kept the fast too, and lived for another ten years". When I heard those words from Ma's mouth the importance of Shivaratri Puja and fasting became even more clear to me. The fact is that we are chiefly attracted by Ma. But she makes us observe various kinds of fasts which purify our hearts and make us fit to taste a little bit of the heavenly nectar. Ma has taken birth for the welfare of mankind. When again shall we see such a Ma ?

Ma's Birthday Celebrations

Ma's birthday was celebrated at Kashi under the auspices of Mata Anandmayee Sangha. But the venue is subject to change with Ma's permission. Devotees come from distant places in the country, even from abroad. The celebration

commences on her birth date according to Gregorian Calendar and continues right upto the day and time of her birth according to the Vikramiya Calendar. During the last watch of the night *Arati* is performed in Ma's bedroom, and this heralds the beginning of other activities which go on during all the intervening days. The inmates of the Ashram have plenty on their hands to do on these days. Men come for Ma's darshan throughout the day, but in the midst of all this hustle and bustle one feels an uninterrupted undercurrent of joy which flows like the Ganga unaffected by the various kinds of happenings in the city.

On Ma's birthday, according to the Vikramiya Calendar, one feels having gained an extraordinary merit.

Full arrangements had been made in the open space in Mata Anandamayee Hospital. A grand stage was set up with room for people to sit in front. On the stage there was a *chowki* (a small divan) for Ma. The place all around was tastefully decorated with flowers, leaves and laces. People in charge worked till late in the night.

Ma was born at 3 O'clock in the night, hence all the puja ceremonies commence at this time. The devotees and others anxious for Ma's darshan started streaming in from 2 O'clock, and by 3 A.M. the whole place was jam packed. Still, more and more people came in.

It has been observed that on every birthday Ma goes into *Purna Samadhi* by that time (3 A.M.). Her body becomes like that of inanimate creatures.

This condition continues upto 9 A.M. and occasionally upto 1 P.M.

Ma was brought to the stage in this state of *Samadhi* (a state of complete trance when the subject becomes oblivious to all his surroundings and is not himself) and laid down on the divan. Seeing Ma in this condition I was reminded of a statue of the Buddha known as "Reclining Buddha" which I had seen sometime before. Except for the few highly learned persons the majority of the people assembled felt a kind of shock to see Ma in this condition. I was not used to see Ma in this state. I felt sad and I watched this strange aspect of Ma like one fixed.

Gurupriya Didi in the early parts of her books on Ma has given a touching and unique description of the various states of Ma emanating from this kind of *Samadhi* which Ma goes in. She felt astonished, even unnerved. Didi was Ma's childhood friend and companion. Like her Arjun was also frightened when he saw the *Virat Roop* of Sri Krishna, although he was his friend and companion. After seeing that limitless, vast and all embracing *Roop* (form) of Sri Krishna he prayed, "Please let me see you again in your human form, as a friend, as a companion. I am frightened."

Seeing Ma in that state of *Samadhi* some of us, ordinary mortals, also felt likewise. Every one was overpowered by emotion. Hymns and bhajans were being chanted and sung all the time. Then started the *puja* and the *arati*. Ma was still in that state of *Samadhi*. All rituals and ceremonies

were gone through, the same as on the occasion of Durga Puja. Fruits, sweets and other kinds of offerings were heaped in piles. The air was heavy with incense, and the atmosphere was vibrating with the music of the bhajans.

Suppose Ma does not wake from the Samadhi ! Their thought troubled the minds at times, although it had no basis. The real Ma is deathless, eternal. She has no love for her mortal body. But we love that body, because Ma can be seen by us only in this frame. Only they who have deeper insight can penetrate beyond what the ordinary eyes can see, not ordinary persons. Now that she has departed from this mortal frame and gone into eternity—which is her real abode—we realise all the more the value of that body in which she lived for some-time.

Somebody had told me that on one occasion Ma carried away by some *Kheyal* surrendered her body to the Ganga. But some one pulled her out. Before going out of the Ashram she had said she would return soon after taking a bath. Perhaps, it was to redeem that promise that she allowed herself to be taken out of the Ganga. The physical body never had any significance for Ma.

Now it is about dawn. The electric lamps are losing their brilliance. The stars have set. The rays of the invisible sun are gradually descending upon the town of Kashi and the quietly flowing Ganga. But Ma is still in the same state—lying on the divan completely still and quiet and showing no sign of consciousness, and our eyes are fixed on

her, watching that holy figure. How I wished Ma came out of her *Samadhi* and looked at us with her still sleepy and charming eyes.

I am reminded of an incident in this context. Didi has in her diary given a description of a place in Bengal called Siddheshwari. Here Bholanath, Ma's husband in her present incarnation, had practised austerities in one of his previous births. Ma under the influence of some *Kheyal* went to that lonely, desolate place along with Bholanath Ji and Baul and passed into and through several different states. One night Baul saw that where Ma lay only her clothes were there, but her body was not there. Who can ever understand these wonderful happenings ?

At last the puja was over. The last *Arati* was also gone through and so also the *Pranam Mantra*. Ma was carried in the same condition to another room. People bowed and left for their homes. By noon Ma came back to her former state. In the evening *Satsang* when Ma talked and laughed as usual we felt very happy and our hearts blossomed forth with delight. We felt as if we had again found our lost mother, our life's treasure.

Where again shall we see this Ma ?

At the end of 1970 I was transferred from Kashi to Agra as Administrator of the Municipal Corporation. But I remained there for four months only. There was no opportunity to see Ma at Agra, but luckily I got the news that the Shivaratri festival would be celebrated at the Kankhal Ashram and Ma's presence was "expected". That is the

usual way of announcing anything about Ma, for Ma cannot be bound down to anything. She is above everything. Ma who usually is so tender and loving can also become hard when under the influence of a particular *Kheyal*.

God Himself has been described as tender as a flower and hard as a thunderbolt.

On the fixed day, after obtaining leave of absence, we left for Kankhal by car alongwith our eldest daughter Meenakshi and Gopal. My friend, Sri Jai Narayan Tewari, I.A.S. also accompanied me. At Kankhal we put up at the Irrigation Dak Bungalow.

Soon after reaching there we went to the Ashram. Ma expressed so much of joy on seeing us as if we had done her a favour, whereas we had gone there for our own selfish purposes—seeking salvation. It is impossible for worldly persons to understand such feelings of Ma. As far as I can make out that fact is that Ma sees no difference between herself and others. Besides, Ma also feels happy when she finds man on the path which will do him good. This is the feeling that prevails with God Himself. If man moves even a step forward towards God, God runs several steps towards him. Ma does not say or do anything to please any person, however big he might be. Ma is the same to everyone both inwardly and outwardly. All glory to Ma. And we are blessed that we got the chance to sit near her holy feet.

Steeped in joy and bliss we returned to the Rest house. The next day was to be Shivaratri when we

had to observe a complete fast—in which even drinking water is a taboo. We started steeling our will from the night preceding. Arrangements in the Ashram, for this festival, were in full swing. All the Ashramites were busy with them. Ma was inspiring them inwardly to make everything perfect. The presence of Ma in the Ashram imparted a glint to their eye, as also to that of the devotees who were streaming into the Ashram from early morning. It was a sort of *Yagna* in which everyone was involved, everyone was busy. There is no rest for these persons until God's work has been completed.

After a dip in the holy Ganga at Har-Ki-Pauri, we went to the Ashram and occupied our respective seats. This Shivaratri Puja was held in the old building of the Kankhal ashram where now stands a temple dedicated to Didima. The floor before the Shiva temple was unpaved then, and had a Bael tree on one side. Men and women had separate areas for themselves. A huge plate with a formally installed Shiva Linga was kept for the use of four to six persons. They sat around it. Any number of such plates could be seen all over the courtyard. The devotees were provided with enough Puja material for the puja of all the four periods. On the platform of the Shiva Mandir Ma herself was sitting draped in white. The entire atmosphere was permeated by cleanliness and godliness. Close by, there is a famous temple known as Daksha Prajapati Temple, and a sacred stream of the holy Ganga.

(To be continued)

Sri MA's Will

Girish Chandra, M.I.E.

Much has been said and written on the so called Sri MA's "Kheyal." The object of this write-up is to examine if Sri MA had a will to give practical shape to several projects undertaken by HER. If she had no will of HER own, how it was possible for HER to have successfully completed a number of gigantic schemes such as construction of a historic "Yagnashala" at Kankhal, building of a unique Puran Mandir at Naimisharanya ; a Vidya-peeth and hospital at Varanasi besides setting up Ashrams and Temples at several places. The author is of the view that Sri MA had no will. How this enigma is to be explained ? It is indeed a phenomenon.

The only explanation that I can offer is that the supreme power sent on earth a great spiritual personality in the shape of Sri MA and from time to time utilized HER services for the spiritual well-being of people. A question arises what is the point in supreme Being sending on earth such a powerful sage who was not conscious of HER body and who was in a state of continuous "Sahaj Samadhi" to undertake projects in the world. How is it possible for a person without a strong will power and considerable pre-planning to complete any mission ? We have to bear in mind that

projects for the spiritual well-being cannot be undertaken by ordinary persons, how-so-ever brilliant they may be unless their mind and actions are pure.

When the supreme Being thought of propagating Kirtan, He sent on earth Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who was not aware of his body and was always in ecstasy in love of Sri Krishna. Similarly the supreme Being sent on earth Adi Shankaracharya to preach Advait and set up spiritual centres in different corners of India, but before he was asked to undertake the mission, made him take Sannyas. It will thus be seen that great managerial skill and strong will power are not the criterion for undertaking work of spiritual upliftment on earth but what is required is a towering spiritual personality.

Sri MA was often heard to say that she had no "Kheyal" to do a particular thing at a particular time — this means that she had not received a hint from the supreme Being. But when she did get a hint from above, the work was done with great efficiency and competence. In other words, God makes use of the services of highly evolved souls to carry out work for the spiritual uplift of mankind.

An inkling into the mechanics of Sri MA's mind may be had from the following two slokas of the Bhagwad Gita. I believe that Sri MA was a living example of these slokas :—

(i) "The man who revels here and now in the self is satisfied and in the self alone is content —

for him there is no work which he must do." Chapter III. Sh. 17.

(ii) "For him there is no purpose in doing the work nor any in leaving it here undone ; nor is there for him in all the beings anything which serves a purpose". Chapter III. Sh. 18.

Sri MA has said that "HER activities are not prompted by will or purpose, nor influenced or coloured by desires". Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj ji has said : "Will power is not the spring of HER activities.....of course there is such a thing as Divine will but we have to interpret it as identical with supreme power rather than as will analogous to the human will."

The above write-up leads us to the conclusion that Sri MA was sent on earth to carry out a number of spiritual missions for the well-being of mankind. She was a great spiritual leader who belongs to the category of Lord Buddha, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Adi Shankaracharya. We offer our pranam at the lotus feet of Sri MA.

Friends

Sm. Radha Devi

Friend — no more longings, desires or hopes,
I know your being ever seeks that door,
Which leading over the mountain slopes
Leads you to return never more.

Frenzy begets unbalance sure
Peace — I plead, comes steadfast pure.
Reading, ranting, writing, searching
Wearying, halting, panting.

Beauty sought will it be found ?
Sweet surrender, in honed love be drowned
The unseen splendour will unfold
The quiescent heart of melting gold.

That which ever the mind eludes
And all meaning from wordy tracts denudes
Is slave to the great absorbed love
And fondly imprisoned is its enchanting grove.

Arms awaiting, breaths expectance stilled
Oh love, soft eyed; oh, heart be filled
Hold with ease the nil — the all and beyond
Hearts knots untied will unloosen your bond.

Saint Side

Gopalapriya Radich

Each individual has had their own personal reason which compels them to travel with Ma. The draw and fascination one experiences is so strong that it goes beyond reason, beyond intelligence, and has totally embraced our wills that we are overwhelmed by its pull. It is a familiar lure to most religious people to visit a spiritual leader, even though this type of compulsion may not be commonplace, yet in some parts of the west it is considered borderline insanity. Its crazy to use all ones financial resources and savings in order to suffer the inconveniences and physical hardships, culture shock and illnesses just to be in the presence of a "little old lady."

"Be realistic" is the argument from your western family and friends. "What could you possibly find in India that isn't available here?" And with complete resolve and all the self-confidence you can muster you answer, "I don't know why I am doing this but it's important and I must." Even after all the horribly painful illnesses, difficult journeys and intense emotional trauma, compounded by being in totally unfamiliar environments, it is not uncommon to sincerely feel that all these hardships were worth it to be near Ma! To this very day I still feel it was all worth it!

When I first met Ma I had just turned fifteen years old. It was my mother's idea to go to see Ma and find out if she really was as special as the stories say. At that point in my life I was very happy at the opportunity to travel outside the borders of the United States and to skip a few months of high school. When I left the States I had no idea what was in store because my knowledge of India was restricted to ideas of elephants, snake-charmers, flying carpets and the Taj Mahal.

I first saw Ma in Hardwar. She was to arrive by rail early in the morning and many people had gathered at the station awaiting her train. The air was buzzing with excitement. I was very nervous. Then the steam locomotive could be heard coming into the station. There it was : Ma's train ! A few people ran beside it as it released its steam and slowed to a stop. When she appeared in the doorway an ashramite was there to help her down the steps.

My knowledge of Indian custom was small so when Ma came I was instructed to present her with a sandalwood garland and pranam. As I watched her descend, Ma was suddenly mobbed by devotees and after they retreated she appeared smothered by layers of sandalwood garlands. Ma just stood there top heavy by the load and it occurred to me that if I were to put another mala over her head she would surely topple over, so I didn't.

Many thoughts ran through my mind and tears welled up in my eyes. I couldn't move so I just stood there : mute and dumbfounded. Somehow I

felt everyone was waiting for me to present the gift, but I froze.

Mataji was then taxied to the Kankhal ashram — a few miles away — where another small crowd awaited her. One by one they greeted her. I remained at the end of the line ; shy I suppose after my crying session earlier. I finally stood before her, and tears began to flow again (for no apparent reason). I prostrated and layed the garland at her feet. She picked it up, placed it over my head and pranamed sweetly. I sort of stumbled away, found a spot on the mat behind the gathering and plopped down.

“I’m not sad, so why all these tears ?” I wondered. “I’ve never done this before. Why all this emotion ? There is something different about this lady.” It was after I returned to the States that these questions were answered, because this lady was indeed different !

That year the Samyam saptah was being held in an ashram closer to the Govt. Tourist Bungalow where we found accommodation. Of course I had no idea what one does at a saptah, but I obediently tagged along with my mother to the morning and afternoon meditations. For me the whole saptah was a study in boredom. I couldn’t understand why all these people would crowd into a big hall, and sit, watching a collection of old bald men sitting on a stage with their bodies covered only with old blankets with their eyes closed for a whole hour. And if that wasn’t painful enough they would sit for another couple of hours giving lectures in Hindi

and read out of books. Still Ma was there and she held my interest. That is up until the moment she covered her whole body — head included — with a sheet and then no one could see anything. I figured that she must be tired and was taking a little nap.

Two days before the end of the saptah we were allowed to go up to her room at the Kankhal ashram and have what was termed a “private interview”, or simply a “private”. At this time we could in turn ask Ma any questions or make a request. I noticed that some of the people asked for names and mantras: this seemed to be the proper thing to do, so I just followed in suit. Br. Atmananda translated everything with impeccable accuracy. When I asked for a name, Ma asked what was my favorite Ista? I replied “Krishna or Govinda”.

Ma then said, “Your name is Gopalapriya”.

This I could not understand. Why Gopalapriya? Why not Govindapriya or Krishnapriya? I wasn't satisfied with the name. Obviously Ma had Gopal on the mind.

Next I asked for a mantra and she said that the mantra request would come later, not just now. Well, how do you like that? First a name that I didn't particularly want, then no mantra. To me it became another incident in the collection of incidents that I could not understand, and keeping with the trend of the culture, the logic of this country seemed quite reversed.

The next morning Atmanandaji came up to me with a message from Ma. She whispered my mantra

to me in my ear. She also advised me to repeat the mantra during the remainder of the saptah. I became greatly relieved that at long last I would have something to do during those long quiet boring hours of sitting. Later on I also realized that, thanks to that mantra, I would always have a wonderful mental activity no matter where I was : whether it be waiting, travelling, sitting, etc. Boredom was a thing of the past, and this proves very important to the adolescent mind. I never realised then the lucid accuracy of this statement that after coming in contact with Mataji, I would never be bored again !

“I am essence of Bliss.” Follow no ideal, you are all there. Fear naught : You are the essence of existence. Be at peace. Do not disturb yourself. You never were in bondage, you never were virtuous or sinful. Get rid of all these delusions and be at peace. Who is there to worship ? Who worships ? All is the Atman. To speak, to think is superstition. Repeat over and over, “I am *Atman*,” “I am *Atman*.” Let everything else go.

—Swami Vivekananda

(Inspired Talks, 1980, p. 149)

Ma's view about God

Harekrishna Goswami

I had the privilege to attend Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee's birthday celebration held in Agarpara-ashram of Calcutta. It was the month of May, 1975. The ceremony was celebrated in a grand style. Thousands of people assembled there including the invited saints namely Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath, Sri Sri Prakashchanda of Kankhal's Jagadguru (Shankaracharyya) ashram, Sri Sri Anandaswami Avadhuta and others. The atmosphere was purified by *bhajan*, *kirtana*, discourses by saints and scholars; it was a success because of Divine Mother's presence who was above body-consciousness and Self of all.

On the second day, in the night's programme, Shree Shree Ma sang songs, on the request of devotees, for more than an hour, including Her famous song '*hay Bhagavan*' with Her God-tuned voice. After that, She started doing *kirtana* propagated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu—

“Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

 Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,

Hare Rama Hare Rama

 Rama Rama Hare Hare.”

A *tulasi* plant and framed photographs of Sri Radha-Krishna and another joined photograph of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu along with Nityananda

was installed in the middle of the dias. Holy Mother and we, some disciples and devotees, did *kirtana* by moving in a circular fashion around the *tulasi* plant and those photographs. The *kirtana* continued till one O'clock in the night.

In the ceremony 108 little girls were worshipped (*Kumari puja*) with various gifts and offerings and they were fed with delicious foods. 108 *mridangams* (*kholas*) were played on the other day. Various other memorable performances were performed including Krishna-Lila-play conducted by a competent party of Vrindavan, *baul* songs by renowned Sri Purnadas Baul, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life-drama in Sanskrit language led by Dr. Rama Chowdhury, melodrama on Ramayana, vocal and instrumental classical musics by reputed artists.

On Mother's birthday's night Mother lied down on a specially decorated cot and was absorbed in Transcendental Samadhi. There *puja* and *arati* of Holy Mother was performed by an ochre-robed *brahmachari* in that situation. Mother came back (got up) to this world only the next day at 1 P.M.

Everyday in the night's programme special attraction was *Matri-satsang* which used to be held at the end of all other performances. In it people used to put questions to Mother and She would answer in presence of saints sitting on the dias.

The invited saints were put-up in nearby well-constructed buildings. I used to go to them for spiritual discussions. One day, for the same purpose, I went to Sri Sri Prakashananda, the head of Kankhal's Jagadguru (Shankaracharyya) ashram.

I asked him, "Is *Ajatavada* of *Mandukya-karika* the final Truth?"

His reply : "Yes, it is the final Truth. You will get the same thing also in the chapter *Nirvana-prakarana* of '*Yogavashista Ramayana*'....."

In those years I had a special liking for *Mandukya karika* for its marvellousness in projecting the *Nirguna* (Transcendental) aspect of God. Even today I have the same respect for *Mandukya-karika* as it has permanently re-established the *Nirguna* aspect of God as told in Upanishads, and to reach higher stages of God told in Upanishads and other scriptures one has to certainly pass through this *Nirguna* stage.

After that morning's discussion with Sri Sri Prakashananda, in the night's question-answer programme with Mother I asked Her—"Ma, how *Nirguna Brahman* has become *Saguna* manifestation? Was *Saguna* included in *Nirguna* itself? If so, how then *Nirguna* could include *Saguna* because both are contradictory to each other?"

Mother said : "What my fathers (pointing towards the saints on the dias including Prakashanandaji) do say on this subject?"

Saints did not say anything. Then again I told Mother, "Sri Prakashanandaji has told me this morning that as per *Ajatavada* this creation is not at all created. Creation is not there, so *Nirguna* is always maintaining its *Nirguna* state—there is no *Saguna* and thus *Ajatavada* is the final Truth."

Mother replied : "You people understand a thing with the help of mind. But how can this

body (meaning Herself) describe this subject which is beyond the reach of mind and language, which I am comprehending (how *Nirguna* became *Saguna*) but not able to express. (There is an intermediate stage between *Nirguna* and *Saguna*, called *Avyakta*. This *Avyakta* has different titles as *Avyakta Prakriti* (latent creation), *Avidya*, *Ajnana* (Nescience) or *Maya*. This stage cannot be expressed even by a God-realized one.) This subject you will realize when you reach a high state in your spiritual practice. Well, there is a state where there is no creation—not at all created, *Ajata* (*Ajatavada*)—but this is only one facet of the full Truth. (This reminds us of the well-known saying—“Like a diamond truth has its many facets.”)

“You have to find out your truest Self. ‘Thou art That’, ‘I am That’. Many many births you have taken as trees, creeps, insects etc. and now have got the precious human birth hard to obtain. So, try to utilize this birth (‘Thou art That’ and ‘I am That’—are the two *Mahavakyas* of Upanishads.)”

Ajatavada or *Nirguna* aspect of God is also a high stage attained by rare people, but still there are higher stages of God. What God is? Mother said on God, the full Truth or *Purna-Brahman* as—

“Transcendent and Immanent simultaneously and yet beyond both.” Mother’s this brief statement on God is found in the Bengali book ‘Ma Anandamayee Katha’ written by Abhaya. The book is out of print now-a-days. Mother said the same thing in the book ‘Mother as revealed to me’

written by Bhaji, that in *Purna-Samadhana* or in the state of *Purna-Brahman* the conflict between *Nirguna* and *Saguna* disappears. MM Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj has explained about Ma's statement of *Purna Samadhana*, in his article 'Mother Anandamayi' in the book 'Mother as seen by Her devotees', as... 'This state is transcendent and yet immanent, is *Nirguna* as well as *Saguna*, *Sakara* as well as *Nirakara* at one and the same time, and yet it transcends both.' Mother's this view is again explained by him (MM Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj), in Bengali, while explaining Absolute Truth told by Mother in chapter 'Twentyfour' of 'Amar Vani' that 'to comprehend *Sakara (Saguna)* and *Nirakara (Nirguna)* simultaneously and yet transcending both where both are one and the same *Brahman*—corresponds to the *Purna-Brahman* (full Truth).' Mother told the same thing, that Absolute Truth is *Sakara* and *Nirakara* simultaneously and yet beyond both where both are one *Brahman (Atma)* only' in sixth chapter of the book 'Mayer Katha' written by Bhaji. As well, we can refer to the book 'Svakriya Svarasamrita' volume-5 (chapter 'Six') wherein Ma said "Dynamic *Brahman* and static *Brahman* are but one *Brahman*." Such statements of Mother are also found in other volumes of 'Svakriya Svarasamrita' compiled by Brahmacharini Chandana Puranacharjya, in 'Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee... Upadesh-o-Prashnottara' written down by MM Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, in 'Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi' (10th volume and also in other volumes) by Gurupriya Devi and in the volumes of the book 'In

association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi' by Amulya Datta Gupta.

After realization of the above discussed Absolute Truth the God-realized Being stays in the state of *Para-Bhakti*. This is also termed as *Nirguna-Bhakti* or *Para-Jnana* or *Parama-Jnana*. In this state everything is God for Him or Her (*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*). There remains a higher stage of God called *Lila* or *Nitya-Lila* or '*Aprakrita Chinmaya Vighraha Nitya-Lila*' which is the actual highest stage of God comprehended in the eyes of *Nirguna-Bhakti* experienced by very very rare soul. But this is an ornamental expression of the above narrated Absolute Truth realized after *Nirguna* stage. This *Lila* experiences itself in its various new fashions, occurring continuously in Cosmic Plane called '*Goloka*'. Great Mother used to visualize this highest kind of *Lila*; and She compared this *Lila* or divine play with our Ph.D degree because of its highest position and ornamentalism (in chapter 'Six' of the book 'Mayer Katha' by Bhaiji). That *Lila* is the last stage of God is told by Mother also in 'Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi' by Gurupriya Devi and this *Lila* is discussed by Mother in the chapter 'Twentyfive' of 'Amar Vani' (explained in detail by MM Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj in the explanatory pages).

And Mother says that doctrines expounded by various dualistic schools are also included in the grandeur of God.

All the above stated stages of God are spoken by Mother in a combined style of unprecedance in

the books 'Svakriya Svārasamrita', 'Mayer Katha' and 'Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee — Upadesha-o-Prashnottara'; they include the whole of Upanishadic Vedānta, Advaita Tantra (namely Kashmiri style of Shaivism), Vaishnava theology (specially of Gaudia Vaishnavas headed by Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu), all doctrines of all religious schools — thus we get full form of God spoken by God Himself (Mother). The beauty of these three books lies also in special style of Ma's utterings in Her mother tongue as "Jakhan Jekhane Jeiti" which means "At any particular instant, at any particular place any particular thing that exists is He or God Himself" — thus is seen in the state of *Para-Jnana* or *Para-Bhakti*.

It is a sin not to say, 'I am God': It is the worst theft to steal the *Atman*. It is falsehood and atheism to say, 'I am a man or woman,' or to call yourself a poor crawling creature... With full force from within, casting away all hesitation, feebleness and weakness, jump right into the pure 'I am' of Self, Ye are God: He and I are one. What a balmy thought, what a blessed idea! It takes away all misery and unloads all our burdens,"

—Swami Rama Tirtha

(In 'Words of God Realization'

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My Experience

R. N. Madan

In summer many years ago, Mr. Mohan Narayan and Mr. T. N. Kaul both devotees of Ma and my friends were talking about Ma — and I was caught. This happened in Srinagar, Kashmir.

After this episode I suddenly developed a burning desire to meet Ma and if possible to get Diksha (Initiation) from her.

I was interested in philosophy but was not much concerned with spiritualism. The desire to meet Ma and have her darshan grew and so did my desire to get Diksha.

All this was only because two of my friends had talked about Ma in my presence. Eventually Swami Swarupanandaji came to Srinagar and stayed with Mr. T. N. Kaul. I met Swamiji and he also talked a lot about Ma. Swami Swarupanandaji left for Delhi and he sent me one picture of Ma which became my constant focus of attention. After this I went to Delhi and then to Allahabad and met Ma for the first time in my life.

I was very impressed and now wanted to get Diksha from her.

I begged the Ashramites to talk to Ma about my Diksha and soon I was told that I will get it but will have to wait. On Saraswati Puja Day which was held in Allahabad two days later I was given Diksha. In which Didima (Ma's mother) gave me Diksha in Ma's presence.

After the Diksha I was naturally elated and gradually my whole being changed. According to my experience I feel that Ma had the quality or capacity of seeing a person's past life and his spiritual progress and based on that she prescribed the particular sadhana for a particular person.

I used to wonder if only one sadhana is good for all but now I know that sadhana or spiritual meditation and practice is a very personal thing and only one style of sadhana cannot suit everybody. That is what we find in many religions and Gurus who only have and use one formula.

For example, Ma forbade my sister Mrs. Shashi Hargel to recite Gayatri Mantra and said it was not good for her. I feel when Ma used to say that I am like a drum and as you beat it so you will hear — Meaning that if one person asks Ma something what Ma will say will be true for that particular person only and for his benefit only and not necessarily true for others who might listen or hear about it.

Sometimes we might come across Ma's utterances taken out of context, and which was true for a particular person or situation.

In this Ma was unique and prescribed the best sadhana for everyone and did not use a blanket formula for everyone the like of which we see in many Gurus or Religions.

Even after her bodily death I continue to feel her presence. So much so that her passing away did not affect me at all. I still have her presence around me, since her body only has passed away She continues to guide us.

Bradley, Vedanta, and Ramakrishna : A Comparative Study

J. C. Mazumdar, M.A., I.A.S. (Retd.)

What the universe is depends to a very great extent on the context or attitude in which we look at it. The universe has one definite character when it is studied in science ; it has a different character when it is looked at with the eyes of a man striving for morality and ethical perfection ; it looks yet another thing when it is seen from the point of view of religion ; and it takes a still different aspect when we judge about its nature and reality from the point of view of philosophy. In philosophy the intellectual attitude is supreme. In order to be able to judge that a particular description or idea about the universe is philosophically true, we must be able to satisfy all critics that it has passed all the tests of intellect and it conforms to the ultimate criterion of truth. Absolute scepticism is out of court in philosophy. If you say that everything is open to doubt and nothing is true, you assert by implication that you have at least an absolute standard of truth which has been accepted by you unconditionally and irrevocably. Scepticism is therefore permissible only up to a limit, and it also goes without saying that scepticism has a most important part to play in philosophy as also in life.

The Role of the Intellect

Bradley has therefore said that you should not sit down to a game unless you are prepared to play. The questions that are normally asked in philosophy are about the nature of absolute reality and the status of the phenomenal world. Without claiming that the philosopher's point of view is the highest, and without denying that there are many other ways of approaching reality, Bradley has made it clear that it will not do to give up the claims of intellect while determining philosophical issues. He has said that 'no pursuit or calling is a private road to the Deity', and that there are many other roads open to mankind. He has also said that 'the way through speculation upon ultimate truths, though distinct and legitimate, is not superior to others'. The test of truth which he has adopted throughout is that of internal coherence or self-consistency. 'The end of metaphysics is to understand the universe, to find a way of thinking about facts in general which is free from contradiction' (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 103).

In this respect, Bradley is not far from Sankara. Though the absolute has been called the *paramartha*, the absolute reality is, according to Sankara, the uncontradicted reality; *ekarupena hi avasthito yo'rthah sa paramarthah*—that means it is the reality which is absolutely self-consistent; *abadha* or non-contradiction is the criterion of truth. The empirical world has been called the product of *maya*; it is the finite world of appearances which are shot through and through with contradictions; the

appearances do not pass the supreme test of intellectual truth as formulated in the *sutra* '*Badhakajnan-antarabhavat*' : the phenomenal world is therefore called an *avabhasa*, i.e. *avasannah avanatah va bhasah* ; in other words, an appearance or expression which stands contradicted.

Though it is commonly assumed that in Indian philosophy the intellect has an inferior part to play, the truth is that *buddhi* has been given a very high place in all Indian systems. True, it has been said in the *Katha Upanisad* : '*Naisa tarkena Matirapaneya*' or '*nayamatma pravacanena labhyo na medhaya*' ; but we have also been told in the *Gita* : '*Buddhinasat pranasyati*' ; '*jnani tu atmaiva me matam*' ; '*avyaktam vyaktimapannam manyante mam abuddhayah*' ; '*tesam jnani nityayuktah ekabhaktirvisisyate.*' There is, therefore, little reason to assume that, according to Indian thinkers, the ultimate truths should not be the subject-matter of intellectual analysis or judgement.

Ramakrishna was not a philosopher in the academic sense of the word ; but on scrutiny, it appears that he has a consistent philosophy which he seldom fails to emphasize in his many utterances and talks. He compared the common-sense view of things to a thorn, and he said that philosophical reasoning was also a thorn, and true wisdom lay in getting rid of the first thorn with the help of the second one and then throwing both the thorns away. This is an attitude which cannot be characterized as truly anti-intellectual. As a matter of fact, both Bradley and Sankara agree with Rama-

krishna that the knowledge of the ultimate reality implies going beyond all forms and categories of thought ; and that such knowledge cannot strictly be called intellectual knowledge, i.e. knowledge consisting of a set of intellectual judgements ; besides, full knowledge of the absolute reality is beyond man.

Human nature as it is constituted is composed of many parts. There is the element of what Bradley calls feelings, i.e. immediate experience ; there is the element of thinking ; there is the element of willing ; and there is the element of passive sufference or enjoyment. Though we talk of the various parts of human nature, they do not, in fact, function separately. The whole human spirit functions as one complete whole. If one element is regarded as supreme in relation to others in one context, it is only for some limited purposes ; and intrinsically no single element or part of human nature can be accepted as the primary or the most important one. Questions which are normally asked by a philosopher or a metaphysician are intellectual in nature, and as such they demand intellectual assessment. Having asked the question as to what is the nature of the absolute reality, one has got to answer that question as best as one can in terms of intellect because the question itself is an intellectual one.

One might define truth in such a way that one by-passes the intellect ; for example, one might define truth as only that which ennobles or edifies oneself. This is exactly what has been done by

one of the existentialist philosophers, namely, Kierkegaard. In other words, one might like to say that *paramasatya* is the *paramartha*—that which is of the highest worth is the highest truth. That is a different way of approaching reality. Bradley's and Sankara's ways as philosophers are different ; they judge reality from the point of truth. But philosophically, it is quite possible for the intellect itself to assent to its self-surrender or to accept its limitations. That is what has happened in a way in the philosophies of Bradley and Sankara. The absolute, according to Sankara, is the indeterminate *cinmatra* ; and the absolute, according to Bradley, is the one undivided experience in which all contradictions are resolved. Both have, however, ultimately agreed that it is beyond the competence of philosophy based on intellect to give or yield an experience or full knowledge of the absolute reality.

The Standard of Truth

It is always harmful to belittle the importance of intellect in human life. What commonly passes for intuition or super-normal experience is often an untested wild fancy, or the auto-intoxication of a heated mind which is under the influence of some potent suggestions. True intuition or *anubhava* is what comes after the intellect has of its own gracefully given its way and retired. The virtue of Bradley as also that of Sankara lies in the fact that they have based their philosophies on reason and reasoned arguments, having accepted the standard of truth which is set up by the intellect.

Though Ramakrishna has often stressed on *visvasa*, which is equivalent to faith, he has always tested and supported his perceptions by intellectual principles. He has accepted the demands of intellect, while trying to describe his own experience of the ultimate reality. As a matter of fact, his metaphysics, though stated in short and pithy sentences, is very close to that of Bradley, in so far as both say that the absolute reality is the total reality, which includes, conserves, and consummates all appearances. The supremacy of intellect is accepted when Bradley says : 'And to start from our general fallibility and to argue from this to the uncertainty of every possible result is in the end irrational. For the assertion "I am *sure* that I am everywhere fallible" contradicts itself.' And like Bradley, Ramakrishna also says : 'If everything is unreal, then can truth itself be real ? Truth is as unreal as falsehood' (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, Fourth Edition, p. 694). And thus he, too, accepts that there is an ultimate standard of truth which is but the application of our positive knowledge about the reality. Harmony or reconciliation or *samanvaya* was Ramakrishna's sole and exclusive principle for testing truth. (One recalls in this connection Ramakrishna's story about several blind men knowing an elephant by its parts.) Ramakrishna has said : 'He is indeed a real man who has harmonized everything' (*ibid.*, p. 446).

(To be continued)

God and Guru

—Yogi Sri Krishnaprem, disciple of Sri Yashoda Ma

I will tell you what is written in burning letters of fire in my heart that carry their own guarantee of truth.

Krishna and Guru are one ; but, if I leave Him, Krishna may leave me — at least, He may smile His '*Samoham sarvabhuteshu*' smile and say, "Well, if you don't care for me, then I don't care for you — at least not more than I care for the louse on a monkey's backside." But my Guru will never leave me whatever I do. I might leave Her but She would never leave me. I may fall from the Path, return to the flesh — pots and wallow in their filthy slops for five lives or fifty lives, I may blaspheme the Sacred Stone within my heart and die cursing God and man — all this and more I may do but She will never leave my side. Each separate folly of mine will be a stab of sorrow in the heart of Her who is sorrowless, but She will never turn away Her face nor cease from trying to assuage the pains that I must suffer from my own foolish acts. Never, never will She leave my side nor cease to guide my steps until I stand in that eternal *Braja* where She stands now. God-forsaken and man-forsaken I may be, but Guru-forsaken never.

(from the book Yogi Sri Krishnaprem, 1975, p. 241)

PROGRAMME

- (1) 13th of April 1988—Wednesday—Sannyas utsab of Shree 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri Maharaj (Didima)
- (2) 14th of April 1988—Thursday—Bengali New year's day
- (3) 19th of April 1988—Tuesday—Akshoy Tritiya
- (4) 24th of April 1988—Sunday—Tirodhan Tithi of Baba Bholanath
- (5) 1st of May 1988 to 5th of May 1988—93rd birthday celebrations of Shree Ma at Kankhal Ashram
2nd of May—Birthday of Ma
4th of May—Tithi day of Ma
- (6) 24th of June 1988—Friday—Ganga-Dashahara
- (7) 15th of July 1988—Friday—Ratha-Jatra
- (8) 29th of July 1988—Friday—Guru-Purnima

Ashram News

Kankhal :

On Paush Sankranti on the 15th January, a special Puja was performed for Sri Ma ; on the 23rd January Sri Sri Saraswati Puja was duly celebrated. On the 11th February Shivaratri was celebrated all night at which devotees from Delhi and Dehra Dun assembled together with all night session of Kirtan and Puja. On the 3rd March on the occasion of Dol, Narayan Puja and Sri Ma's Puja were performed. The entire assembly showered Abir at the foot of Ma's Samadhi.

From the 9th March to the 27th March a wonderful Sri Rama Kathamrita was performed by the World famous speaker Sri Morari Bapu from 9 to 12 and 3 to 6 P.M. On this auspicious occasion the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Sri R. S. Pathak was present with his family. From every corner Sadhus and Mahatmas were assembled, as well as devotees who made full use of this unique opportunity.

A new Ghat was built at the foot of the Ganga Mandir on behalf of the Ashram and named "Ananda-Tirtha".

Delhi :

As in other years Shivaratri was celebrated all night with the cooperation of the devotees.

From the 22nd February to 29th February due to the help of certain devotees a Bhagavat Saptaha Parayana was performed. On the 1st March Purnahuti and Bhandara were carried out. On the 2nd March, Adhivas for Nam-Yagna Kirtan took place in the evening with an all night session by the ladies and on the 3rd — for Dol Purnima — an all day session by men. During this auspicious time, a Marble Statue of Sri Mahaprabhu was inaugurated in the Nam Brahma Mandir. On the same evening during Lunar eclipse Dhyan and Japa were duly performed.

Vrindavan :

On the 16th February, Shivaratri was duly celebrated at the Shiva Mandir all night. From the 1st to 3rd March, Rashleela was performed from 4 to 6-30 P.M. On the 2nd March, from 9 to 12 P.M. a special Srimad Bhagavata Geeta Yagna was performed. On the 3rd March, Sri Krishna's Holi utsab and Sri Mahaprabhu's birthday utsab were duly celebrated. From 7 to 8 A.M. there was Veda Path, then Gita and Chandi Path. From 8 to 10 A.M. special Puja was carried out with due pomp and ceremony before Nitai Gaur, Chhalia Krishna and Radhaji, Shevaji and Sri Ma, with the accompaniment of Bhajan and Kirtan. At 12 noon there was Sadhu seva and in the afternoon Rashleela.

On the 4th March, at the earnest request of Sm. Virbala and in the presence of Sri Nigamanandaji, Akhand sweet Hare Krishna Nam was sung. In the evening Kumari Chhabi Banerjee

from Calcutta sang a full Pala kirtan on the occasion of Phagua festival.

Varanasi :

On the 24th December last, with the Mohantaji of Mahanirvani Akhara, 5-6 Mahantas visited our Kashi Ashram. They made their pranams at Sri Ma's room, and had midday prasad at the Ashram. They were very pleased to see the Kanyapeeth girls.

Like each year this year also on the occasion of Paush Parvan, from the 15th January to the end of Paush there was Nam Kirtan from sunrise to sunset, with the Bhog of Payesh and Peethas.

On the 23rd January in the hall of Kanyapeeth Saraswati Puja was performed with great pomp and ceremony. Local devotees were served with Prasad that day.

On the 1st February, the authorities of the Anandamayee Hospital invited Pandit Kamalapati Tripathi's son and the honourable Health Minister of U.P. Pandit Lokpati Tripathi, and distributed through his hands blankets to the Mallas serving the Ashram. On behalf of the Ashram he visited Ma's room in the Ashram. He was given a warm reception by the girls of the Kanyapeeth. On the occasion of Maghi Purnima on the 2nd February in the evening Satyanarain Puja was celebrated in the Chandi Mandap.

We are glad to inform the readers of Ananda-Varta that 1988 has been declared as the Golden Jubilee Year of the Kanyapeeth.

On this occasion on the 13th February last on the day of the birthday of the Founder of the Kanyapeeth Didi Gurupriya on Vishnupadi San-kranti, all the local and Ashram Vighras were specially worshipped and an Akhand Jyoti was lit to commemorate the Mangalachalan of the Golden Jubilee. On this occasion the fire was taken from the Yagnashala and 50 lamps were lit in the Puja Room of the Kanyapeeth in front of Ma's picture.

On the 16th February, Mahashivaratri was beautifully celebrated. On this occasion also in the Kanyapeeth hall Ma's picture was converted into a flower mandap with decorates of flower garlands.

On the 18th February, the Golden Jubilee of the Kanyapeeth was started off by their annual presentation of presents. On this occasion the Vice-Chancellor of the Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya Prof. Venkatachalan and Mrs. Venkatachalan accompanied by the well known pandit Padmabhushan Sri Pattabhusanam Shastri, Pandit Karunapati Tripathi and other distinguished pandits, were present. Local devotees also gathered together, and the function was held in the hall of the Gopal Mandir.

At 4 P.M. in the afternoon, the function started with an invocation song by the Kanyapeeth girls, next Veda path took place and the head Acharya Brahmacharini Kumari Jaya Bhattacharyya gave an opening speech.

For this occasion a special Sanskrit School song had been composed by the eminent pandit Sri Shivaji Upadhyaya. This song was sung in melo-drama tones after the inaugural speech.

Subsequently in describing the future proceedings of the Golden Jubilee, Brahmacharini Gunita said, "A Golden Jubilee is performed usually for some special person or institution. From this angle it seemed that the holding of a Golden Jubilee of the Sri Sri Anandamayee Kanyapeeth had a special significance. Because the most distinguished personality of the 20th century Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee had by her Kheyal nurtured and cherished this Kanyapeeth 50 years ago on the banks of the Ganga at Hardwar in the presence of Ma. The institution was started with only two Brahmacharinis. This institution of Ma had now resulted in the present establishment.

The fire that was lit during the famous Kali Puja in Dhaka Ashram was brought after 25 years on the occasion of Savitri Yagna. Thus the fire kindled by Ma 50 years ago had now resulted in the present huge institution.

From the 24th March to 27th March, the Ashram's Annual Basanti Puja was celebrated and special Puja of Sri Annapurna was also performed.

Calcutta :

As in other years Sri Sri Saraswati Puja was celebrated at Agarpara Ashram on the 23rd January with full pomp and ceremony. On the 2nd February on the occasion of Maghi Purnima, Sri Satyanarayan Puja was performed in the Govinda Mandir. On the 16th February on the occasion of Shivaratri local devotees gathered together at the Ashram. They also purified themselves with

bathing in the Ganga and performing Shivapuja every 3 hours. On the 3rd March, Dol utsab was celebrated with special Puja of Sri Sri Lakshmi Narain, Sri Radha Govinda and Sriman Nitai Gaur on the special Dol Mancha, when Abir was offered to everybody. There was Bhog and prasad after midday.

Each Saturday evening and Sunday morning Swami Chinmoyananda presided over Satsang in the 1st floor hall and sunrise to sunset Akhand Nam was sung on the 2nd Sunday.

In the Publication Office of the Charitable Society in Ballygunge Matri-Mandir, Adhibas Kirtan Nam was sung in the evening of the 19th March, and Nam by the ladies all night and next day the 20th by the menfolk. There was special Puja of Ma, Thakur Onkarnath and Narayan, and Purnahuti was performed at the end of the special Puja. About 1500 devotees were fed with Malsha Bhog and lunch from packets.

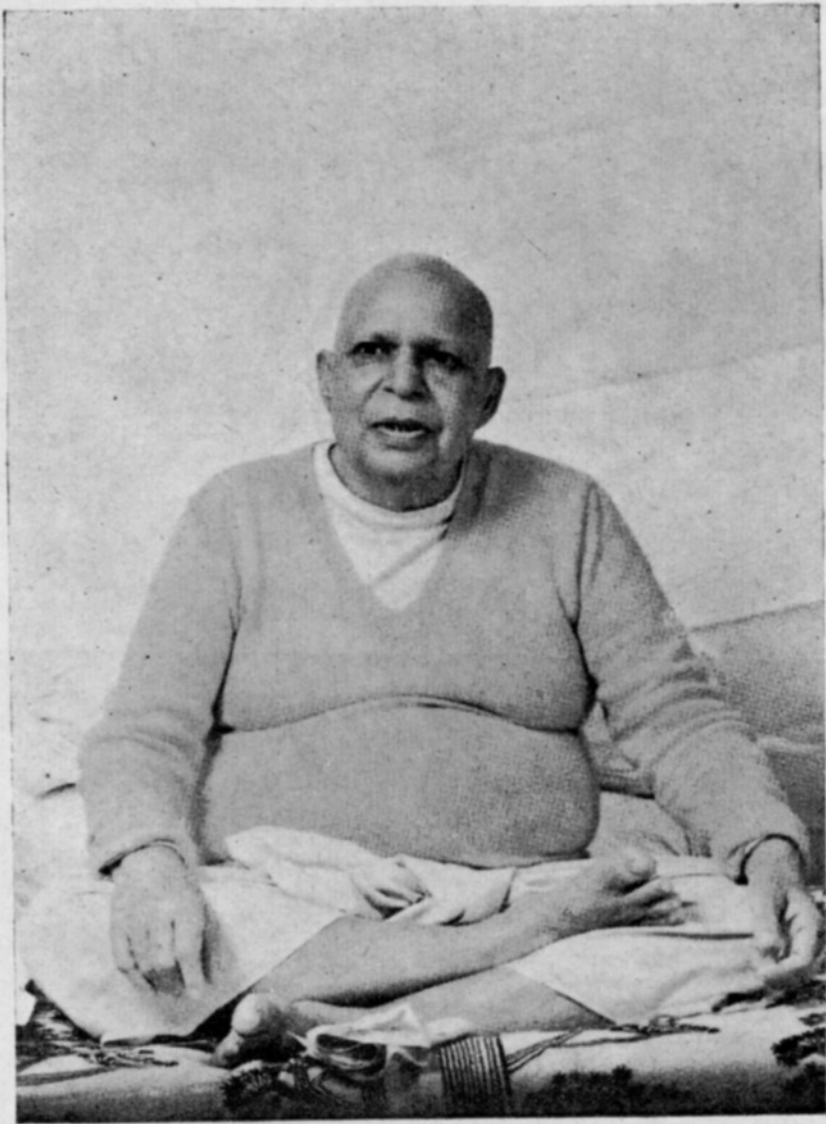
From 3.30 to 5.30 p.m. there were two soul stirring speeches by eminent Speakers in a pandal in the Garden presided over by Sri Triguna Sen. The first speaker was from Sri Naren Brahmachari's Ashram at Deoghar and the second from Mahamilan Math. Both speakers waxed eloquent over Ma's Leela which they had personally witnessed. The function concluded with Nagar Sankirtan and Haribol and distribution of Hariloot. The absence of Birenda was felt for the first time.



Devotees being entertained with prasad and lunch.



Kumari Chhabi Banerjee and other devotees singing Kirtan around the Mancha during the Namayagna at 'Matri Mandir' Calcutta



Sri Sri 1008 Swami Akhandananda
Saraswati Maharaj

Ranchi :

On the 15th January on the occasion of Paush Sankranti after special Puja etc. Peetha and Puli Prasad were distributed among all devotees. Saraswati Puja was duly celebrated with great pomp and ceremony like last year. Nearly 300 devotees were fed with Bhog after Pushpanjali.

On the 16th February, Shivaratri was duly observed. Br. Nirmalanandaji presided over the 1st Puja and gave a discourse. Prasad was enjoyed by all at the conclusion. On the 3rd and 4th March Holi utsab was celebrated, and special Puja was performed of Gopalji and Narayanji. Everybody poured Abir on Gopalji and Narayanji before sprinkling themselves with colour.

Each month, on the 1st Sunday, there was Akhand Ramayana in the Ashram and on the 3rd Sunday kirtan there was Satsang. On the 2nd Sunday, Satsang was performed in the evening in the houses of some devotees or others.

Jamshedpur :

After a long time with the assistance of local Bhaktas of Sri Ma and particularly of the late distinguished devotee Mohini Mohan Dutta, on Thursday the 11th February last, at Kadma on the banks of the Kharkai river, the foundation was laid of a new Ashram with the accompaniment of Vedadhani from Pandits before Sri Ma's elaborate Puja in the presence of Swami Chinmoyananda, Swami Dhirananda, Brahmachari Nirmalananda, and Dr. Triguna Sen. The Dy. Convenor

of Singhbhum Sri S. K. Saxena laid the foundation stone. Many devotees from Calcutta and Ranchi gathered at this function in the evening, when speeches by eminent speakers at the function were concluded with the furnishing of elaborate kirtan by Kumari Chhabi Banerjee.

Tarapith :

On the 20th and 21st February Sri Sri Ma's elaborate full scale Puja was performed at Tarapith Ashram and special Bhog and Bhajan and kirtan were arranged for the devotees present. On this occasion many devotees from Calcutta and elsewhere thronged at the Mahatirtha Tarapith to participate in the enjoyment.

Bhimpura :

This year on the auspicious Basant Panchami Tithi on the banks of the Narmada at Bhimpura Ashram Sri Sri Saraswati Puja was celebrated among old devotees from Ahmedabad, Poona and Bombay. Shivaratri was celebrated in the house of Ma's old devotee Sri Madhukar Munsha at Ahmedabad with great pomp and ceremony.

Jai Ma.

Obituary

Sri Sri 1008 Swami Akhandananda Saraswati Maharaj

On the 19th November 1987, at his beloved Vrindaban, Sri Sri 1008 Swami Sri Akhandananda Maharaj entered into his Maha Samadhi, at the same time the sun set on the horizon of the Pandit and Sadhu Samaj of Bharat. Sri Sri Ma was heard to say about him, "Inside him the light of knowledge is ever burning".

Sri Maharaj exercised a tremendous influence over the knowledgeable Sant Samaj of the entire country. The entrance of Maharaj in the history of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj was quite amazing. He was for some years head of several Sadhu Organisation. He was the chief of the body running the famous religious Hindi magazine "Kalyan".

A sage scholar was heard to say "Maharaj is the living embodiment of spontaneous joy. Whoever approached near to him, was invariably bathed in the pure and flaming flood of his joy. There was a wonderful combination of samadhi, divine knowledge and celestial joy ever present in his life."

Sri Maharaj was associated with Sri Ma for many years. He embraced Dandi Sannyas under the directions of the revered Sri Oriya Babaji Maharaj. His own Diksha into Sannyas took place

under Sri 1008 Brahmananda Saraswati Maharaj, Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath. On embracing Dandi Ashram when he visited Hari Babaji Maharaj's ashram at Bandh, he met Sri Oriya Babaji Maharaj, Sri Shastranandaji, Sri Hari Babaji and Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee for the first time.

Swamiji was master in explaining the Srimad Bhagavad. His grandfather initiated him into the Bhagavada from the age of 10. He used to place the boy on a Vyasasana, put Chandan and Mala on him and teach him to expound the Bhagavada. It was thus that he became intimate with the text of the Bhagavada. Pandit Sri Mohan Malaviyaji listened to his explanations once and exclaimed, "Bhai you have given us much joy. You must come to Kashi from time to time and expound the Bhagavad to us." He used to be quite familiar in the difficult context of the text, make it simple for the general public to understand.

Sri Ma requested him to expound the Bhagavada several times, both for a week and a fortnight at a time. In 1950 during the Savitri Mahayajna at Kashi he expounded the Bhagavad for the first time. On that occasion the crowds were so immense that they used to listen to him from boats in the Ganga. Thereafter at Naimisharanya in the presence of Ma he performed Bhagavad Parayana ; once more and again in 1970, he performed Bhagavad Parayana in the newly laid grounds of the hospital at Kashi. At this time all the sadhus of Kashi were present before him. Whenever Sri Maharaj used to go to Sri Ma she tried to make him utter words of

necter from his pure lips. The renowned Maharajji's life was significant for the reasons that he had complete experience of all the states of existence. He was a complete householder, or a completely renounced sannyasi. He had experience of all the Sastras, yet independent understanding of them; whether it was religion or service to the nation, or walking in the path of bhakti or deep spiritual knowledge. He was characterised by his wonderful learning and ever budding genius, invincible love of god and belief in the Vedas. He had first hand knowledge of all the Sagun and Nirgun aspects of God in his life of continuous renunciation. Whoever approached him could not fail to be struck by all this learning such as he never obtained elsewhere. On the one hand, those affected with grief found solace in his teachings, on the other hand devotees obtained the correct answers from him to their problems in learning the Sastras. If the simple bhaktas obtained irrefutable proof and grace from their questions to him, so did the learned people obtain answers to their difficulties. Seekers obtained new solutions to their queries concerning his learning, understanding and deep rooted knowledge of the great Vedic truths. The learned obtained ways of reaching salvation in life. And he was the very life and soul of them who had renounced the world and sought to understand the supreme Truth.

That is why at his funeral were present all the Sadhu Samaj of Vrindaban including the Sankaracharyas of Dwarka and Jyotirpith.

His body was taken in a huge procession to a special spot and consigned for ever in the waters of the Jamuna. Thus passed away from amongst us the very living embodiment of our eternal Sastras. But his learning will continue to inspire all for centuries to come.

Swamiji was well known for his writings in the quarterly journal he started in Hindi called "Chintamani" from Bombay. Here could be found gems of short articles from the Bhagabad, combining Bhakti and deep divine knowledge in their facile explanations which went straight into the heart of the reader. His masterly treatise on "Mandukya-Karika", the earliest work on Vedanta written by Gaurpada, the Paramguru of Adi Shankaracharya, will go down in history as a classic piece of Vedanta literature hailing back to 5000 years ago, yet applicable to modern life in various ways.

We, as devotees of Ma will never forget his wonderful expounding of the Bhagabada, on every possible occasion at our Ashrams as long as his health permitted, and when it did not, his short lectures were as learned and lucid as ever to the public surrounding Ma. May his example live for ever amongst the ancient Sadhu Samaj of India and may his teachings continue to provide solace and knowledge to seekers of the divine eternal truth in this blessed land.

AUM TAT SAT

Brahmachari Kamalakanta

Kamalakantada joined Ma's close adherents in the early days at Shahbagh and was promptly spotted by Ma as an ideal Brahmachari for his blind obedience and faith for Ma's principles. In particular he attached himself to Baba Bholanath as his ideal and was chosen by Ma to follow Bholanath alone to Tarapith and administer to his needs when Pitaji proceeded to Tarapith for his Sadhan and subsequent siddhi.

Kamalakantada was later chosen to be an ideal person to look after sacred yagna fires and he was responsible for tending the sacred fires at Shahbagh, Ramna, Kashi, Kalyanvan and Kankhal where he lived in the Havan room built specially for the ashram to house the sacred ever-burning flame.

Later when he became too old, he was moved to the Sadhu Kutir at Kankhal.

Kamalakantada had a special attraction for Tarapith, being connected with Ma's and Baba Bholanath's leela there from the start. So it was inevitable that he took upon himself the task of founding an ashram at Tarapith in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, aided by small amounts of money from Swami Prabhananda and Morarji Bhai Thacker, who helped Kamalakantada in starting the nucleus of Tarapith Ashram. Ma gave him special power as Brahmachari and would not enter into Tarapith Temple without the Brahmachari preceding her. Nor, as the writer has seen with his own eyes, would she enter into a devotee's

newly built premises near Vrindaban ashram without Kamalakantada preceding her to purify the abode.

Kamakantada was also entrusted with preparing and issuing Panchyagabya to new devotees before diksha or after their returning from abroad to ashram premises and many are the amusing stories connected with Kamalakantada's preparations for those devotees when he used to forget in his absentmindedness the sweeter ingredients of panchagabya when preparing the formula to wash away all sins !

Kamakantada took very little part in the Ashram affairs at Kankhal, specially after Ma's Mahaprayana, and when he felt his time was near, he did not hesitate to leave for Kashi accompanied by a single Brahmachari on the 16th of March 1987, during the writer's presence.

He passed away in Kashi Mukta Khetra under the will of Ma in February, 1988 after a whole life of brahmacharya dedicated to Ma's service and has surely now been gathered into her bosom as one of her favourite brahmachari sons.

Brahmachari Atul

A devoted Brahmachari of Sri Ma, Atul Brahmachari has passed into Supreme oblivion in the lotus feet of Sri Sri Ma on the 8th March on the auspicious 5th day of Dol at the Salvation Kshetra of Kashi Dham on the banks of the Ganga.

Atulda came into contact with Ma at Dhaka, Ramna Ashram and Siddheswari.

From the time of inauguration of Annapurna Temple at Kashi, Atulda was installed as the first priest for cleaning the temple, daily puja etc. as well as preserving the sacred fire of the Savitri Yagna, all these duties he performed with great sincerity and by himself. When Ma was constantly travelling the length and breadth of India, Atulda never left Annapurna Seva at Kashi Dham. This kind of completely devoted service in one place is unthinkable in these days.

Once the Maharaja of Mandi Sri Jogendra N. Sen distributed a whole bagful of Pahari Chappals to Ma for use of Ashram inmates, which Ma distributed among her children. Sometime later, in summer, many Ashramites were sleeping on the roof of the Ashram. Ma, on going round at night spotted Atulda sleeping there with the chappals given to him on his feet. Ma laughed and asked "What is this Atul? Why are you sleeping with your slippers on?" Atulda realised Ma's presence and fearfully rose up and replied after doing his pranams, "Ma, you have been kind enough to bestow these slippers to me, but I work all day and night in the Annapurna temple, and never go out, so when can I use the slippers? Even if I do not wear them, I am disobeying Ma's bequest, so I put them on now." What a wonderful devotion to Ma! Those nearby who had first started laughing at Atulda's words, were now struck dumb with respect for him. At sometime, Ma had said, "You have read about Munis and Rishis, have you not? They exist even today", and she pointed out

Jogeshda, Kamalakantada and Atulda, as perfect examples.

Nobody ever saw Atulda wear any pretty clothes, nor consume any good food. This kind of renunciation, devotion and sadhana cannot be seen normally.

He had fallen seriously ill about a year before his actual death. He used to live quietly in a small room next to Annapurna Mandir. When asked any question, he used to say, "I have nothing to say". When interrogated about Ma's advice, he used to reply "All this is my secret experience." I do not want to divulge anything externally."

Towards the end of his life, he obtained Sannyas mantra from Ma. With his death passes away the last of the close devotees of Ma's first life.

Jai Ma.

Satyendra Kumar Basu (Patalda)

On the 29th of December, 1987 passed away Sri Ma's devoted son and dear to all of Ma's devotion Patalda, at the age of 76 without being beholden to anybody for any favours. His death had come about at an advanced age, so it should not lead to all round sorrow, yet he was dear to his relations and friends.

His sudden departure reminded everybody of the Pauranic saying, "Your Sadhana and Bhajan may be whatever it may be but the real test is to know how to die."

Satyendra Kumar was born in a well-to-do Basu family of Konnagar (West Bengal) with an indepen-

dent spirit and was a life-long Brahmachari, so he was dear to Ma. When the occasion arose he never hesitated to repress anybody, on the other hand he was anxious to be liked by others, and was a tireless sevak without seeking any reward.

During his student days, he was influenced by the national Mahatmas and took an active part in the independence movement, being jailed on some occasion. He was awarded a Tamrapatra by the Government.

In the year 1938 he first had darshan of Ma on the banks of the Ganga at Kashi, and it was a case of "Love at first sight". When Ma returned to Kashi after 3 years Patalda became her devoted slave. In Bacchuda's house at Kamakhya there was constant interchange of joy, associated with Ma, and scope for listening to her advice and teachings. Thus was built up the special relationship between Patalda and Ma. In this connection we cannot do better than quote from the witty Anilda's (Ganguli) remarks, "Ma not only gave refuge to Patalda, but also plenty of scope". Such was Ma's grace that without contravening the Govt's regulations, Ma took the opportunity at this stage to give darshan to Patalda in jail in the company of Neruda (Sunit K. Bose) of the same family.

When he was released after a while due to her ashirbad, Patalda became closely associated with the activities of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha and Charitable Society in several ways, with full faith in Ma's guidance, so there is no doubt in our minds that in the end Patalda's soul was permanently

immersed in Ma's bosom in eternal peace. At his death he had been President of Kashi Ashram for some years.

Birendra Banerjee

Birenda was indispensable to Ma whenever a Nam yagna was held at her request from the earliest times to the present day, until his sudden death at Panihati, his ancestral home on the banks of Ganga north of Agarpara Ashram, on the evening of 9th February, 1988.

He had taken part in Satsang & Nam yagna in S. Calcutta until January 1988 and under the careful medical treatment arranged by Sri Sailen Ghosh, he seemed to be evergreen in his ability to participate in Nam Kirtan until his sudden death.

Birenda came of a long line of Vaishnab Kirtanias of Panihati and Khardah, the abode of Sri Nityananda, and grew up steeped in the tradition of Mahaprabhu, living as he did near Mahaprabhu's ghat where Danda Mahotsab was held by Sri Nityananda in honour of Raghunath Das Goswami's entry into the ranks of the Goswamis of Sri Chaitanya.

No Nam Yagna in the private houses of devotees or in ashrams was complete without Birenda and he seemed to be an inspired person when singing Adhibas or the aftermath of the Nagar Sankirtan at the conclusion of a 24-hour Nam yagna.

His father was one of the two or three senior devotees of Ma who used to sing Nam yagna in the

Harisabhas of Delhi and Simla Kalibari, and who became staunch adherents of Ma when they met her at Simla or Solan in the early 30's. Birenda followed in his father's footsteps just as Nani, Sarama & Khokan did in the footsteps of their father Haran Babu who was another ringleader of kirtans during their lifetime in Ma's precincts.

With Birenda dies a whole school of Nam yagna originally in Panihati and culminating in Ma's tradition for several decades.

Birenda was over 78 at the time of his death, and had long suffered from a strained heart and pulmonary diseases during a life devoted solely to kirtan, when he neglected the basic necessities of life. Perhaps Ma recalled him to her bosom in case his sufferings increased.

He lived a bachelor's life in strict brahmacharya throughout his life. He was closely associated up to the end with Chabbi Banerjee, Prativa Kundu, Tarun Goswami, Nani Banerjee, Ranjit Banerjee, Sailen Ghosh etc. in kirtan and he frequently took a leading part in performing Nam yagnas. The kirtan world will be poorer by his death but can find no better standards than set by him in his long and traditional adherence to the cult of Bengali kirtan according to the Khardah school. He will be surely missed in the kirtan world associated with Ma in Calcutta, Delhi, Kankhal and elsewhere. May Ma rest his indomitable soul in eternal peace in her bosom; Sri Birenda always looked upon Ma as an incarnation of Mahaprabhu.

Jitendra Chandra Majumdar

Sri Jitendra Chandra Majumdar, a former Secretary in the Animal Husbandry and Vet. Services, Fisheries and Forests Dept., Govt of West Bengal died in Calcutta on January 24. A member of the Indian Administrative Service, he held various important posts till his retirement in 1971. Then he was invited by the State government to head the West Bengal Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation and the Pay and Wages Committee for Durgapur Projects and Durgapur Chemicals.

He had a brilliant academic career. He secured First class in B. A. (Hons) Examination from Patna University in 1934 standing First in order of merit not only in his subject but amongst all Arts subject taken together ; he secured First Class in M. A. Examination in 1936 from the same University standing First in order of merit and securing 99 marks out of 100 in Essay Paper.

He was a profound scholar. To him philosophy was a way of life. All through his life he was a keen student of philosophy. He was the author of two important books, viz., 'Avabhasa O Tattva vastuvichar', 'Prem : Darsanik Vichar'. He also published various articles in different well-known journals.

He was very much religious in his outlook. His catholic outlook led him to practise a kind of universal religion by intermingling all the bests from the Gita, the Upanishads, the Bible and some of the teachings of Buddha. He was also one of the devotees of Anandamayi Ma.

Sarbani Basu

On 11th March last passed away one of Ma's oldest devotees, the widow of the Zemindar Bahar family, Rekhadi (Basu). She was a member of the Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Society and patron of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha.

We pray for the solace of the soul of Rekhadi who was always cheerful inspite of all adversity and send our sincere condolences to her bereaved family.

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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

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

As already announced earlier, the administrative Head-Office of the Charitable Society will be shifted from its present location at Varanasi and start functioning from the Calcutta Zonal Office, here of Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society at Matri-Mandir, 57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700 019 — right from the commencement of the new financial year 1988-89 i.e. from the month of April next. All urgent and important correspondences with the Charitable Society should therefore be addressed accordingly — to avoid unnecessary delays.

Annual members of the Charitable Society should also, hereafter, remit their subscriptions to this office and not to Varanasi Office as heretofore. It is also notified for the information of the members that the Regd. Office of the Charitable Society will continue to function from Varanasi as before.

Dated : The 30th March, 1988

Calcutta Zonal Office

Shree Shree Anandamayee

Charitable Society

“MATRI-MANDIR”

57/1, Ballygunge Circular

Road, Calcutta-700 019

Phone : 47-1993

Dr. G. N. Roy (Misra)

General Secretary