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

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# Editorial

We regret to point out to our readers all over the world that we are not getting sufficient articles from you in between issues to fill the next issue to the required amount. This will have disastrous consequences until devotees make an effort to send in suitable articles as soon as they can write them, so that we shall again be in the happy position to have in our possession a sufficient number of articles in hand to fill in the next issue after completing the quota of the current issue. It is preferable that your articles do not contain any long quotations in the Sanskrit script. The printers would prefer quotations from the Shastras in the Roman script together with their equivalent translation in English.

If references are required in the context to refer to the original Sanskrit divine books, then these should be simple and also in the English script. This would facilitate printing and proof-reading of mass turn over. We shall now look forward to your articles on the life and teachings of Ma, as experienced by you as well as personal experiences where they can be divulged now. Articles on religious and philosophical subjects as well as on lives of sages of all countries and religions are always welcome.

We thank you in advance for your ready response in the near future, as we are to keep up the standard and volume of Ananda-Varta in English in future to compete with other comparable religious publications of a similar nature.

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Ma said, "Look, Baba, it is a great joy to hear your words. That day by day you have given more and more time to *kirtan* is a matter of great joy ; If you wish, you may also do another thing : at the time you begin *kirtan*, sit together quietly for some time, meditate on the particular Deity whose name you are going to sing, and then start singing the name. Likewise, also when the *kirtan* is over, if you sit together for some time in that quiet manner, you will experience a state of tranquillity and you will feel joy. You may start, for example, with at least one day per month, and then if you go on increasing the number of days, there is no harm. All the ladies may get together at least once every month and do meditation and *japa*. The men may choose another time to perform *dhyana* and *japa* jointly. To tell you the truth, *dhyana* cannot be performed, it happens automatically. *Dhyana* is self-manifested, but just as in order to become a *sannyasi* one has to court the life of *sannyasa*, similarly, for the manifestation of *dhyana*, one has to undergo training in *dhyana* ; yet there is a great deal of difference between 'being' and 'doing'."

\* \* \*

Someone asked, "Ma, is *Guru-kripa* to be invoked by actions ?"

Ma replied, "The spontaneous, causeless *kripa* of the *Guru* is already there. Verily, the *Guru* is inside ; even the desire to act is caused by *Guru-kripa*. Hence it follows that everything is realized

by *Guru-kripa*, but there is a special state of realization when one feels the *kripa* of the *Guru*."

On the way to Baidyanath Dham, several houses, old and new, were visible through the windows of the train. Pointing to those houses, Ma said to Gurupriya Didi, "Look, Khukuni, how many pretty houses are built, how many beautiful statues are there, of what grand beauty, and graceful forms. You feel so much pleased to have a look at them. But while enjoying each and every object of enjoyment, you should think of its future. For lo! there, just in front of that newly built house, there is an old, dilapidated house, which also was a new one once upon a time. That is how everything ends. The new becomes old in no time. That is what is called the mutability of the world. If you contemplate this truth through all your activities, even while eating, while lying in bed, then you will be able to stay more or less detached."

\* \* \*

One day, Ma said in a certain context, "The other day, there was a discussion with Panu Baba (Pran Gopal Babu) about love — do you remember? I say all topsy-turvy things! I utter just what comes out, and *that* is what I shall utter. The fact is, one loves one's own self. Nobody loves another person more than his own life. For instance, a person says, 'I have done this according to that person's advice'; but if he has no inclinations towards the advice of that other person, he will not follow it: a desire must be present even if in a

subtle form. And if really against one's wishes one is forced to do a particular thing, then a complication is sure to be there, and it *does* occur. For there was perhaps a hesitation. The same proportion of willingness or unwillingness which lies behind the action gets manifested in the form of the result of that action. An action bears its fruit ; that is why in the same way as an action is confused, its result is also naturally confused. And even from the point of view of common experience, two persons between whom there is a similarity of deportment and thought become friends. A true friend is one who helps on the spiritual path. He is called '*dharma bandhu*' or spiritual friend. Hence, you see, even in worldly affairs, you do give an emphasis on the aspect of spiritual experience."

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### CORRIGENDA

“In our July, 1988 issue on page 227 (Appearance of Sri Sri Ma) in line 5, please read Bhawani for Bahurani”.

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# In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Sri Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

(Continued from previous issue)

**Monday, 28th May, 1945**

In the morning Ma came out of Ramna Ashram with the devotees that had arrived and then left for Siddheswari Ashram. When I arrived at the Ramna Ashram in the evening the Gita was being read. Ma was sitting out in the open field and there were many other people who were sitting there surrounding Ma.

A boy asked Ma, "Whatever we learn or understand, we do so through our intellect. Whatever you preach, have you read it out of books or learnt it from other pandits? Or do you know this automatically through your Bhava?"

Ma (laughing): "Whatever is said by this body is not studied in books, nor felt internally by this body. This body has no learning. So do you know how all this happens? In your childhood you have seen gongs being played. Whatever metal is used, the sound emanating from the gong is reflected by the way they strike the gong. The same applies to this body. Whatever question you ask, are reflected automatically by this body during answers. This is the sole truth."

I do not know what the boy understood from Ma's words. He made a request for all this to be explained to him in private by Ma. He was asked to come in the morning before 1 p.m.

### **The Length of a Yuga**

There were present some non-Bengali soldiers. They could not understand what was being discussed with Ma in Bengali and expressed their dissatisfaction. On noticing this, some people informed them, "Ma knows Hindi". On learning this one of them said to Ma, "Mataji, please tell us something". Ma laughed and said in Hindi, "Pitaji, my world is full of Pitajis and Matajis, and little children are my friends. All houses in the world are mine. I belong to no caste. So I do not have to worry about food or clothes. Whatever I eat or wear belongs to me. I do not take what is somebody else's". Ma laughingly uttered these words. One of the soldiers asked, "Mataji, is all this true?" Another advanced and asked, "Mataji, is it not Kali yuga now? When will it end?"

Ma: "You know people refer to this as Kali yuga. This yuga is confined with a fixed period, and it is forecast how long it will last. So you can enquire from wherever this is written down; or from those who are knowledgable. But there is another point of view concerning this. I maintain every yuga contains every other yuga. You say this is Kali yuga, but for some it may be Satya yuga. So you will understand that in each yuga, there may be Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali yuga.

Nagen Dutta : Whatever duration of time is indicated by the Shastras for Kali yuga, please tell us in your opinion how long it will last.

Ma : Will people believe whatever I say as the unvarnished truth ? If all agree to abide by my decision, only then will this body pronounce something on this subject, otherwise the views expressed by this body will just create one more opinion among ten more opinions already circulating.

Nagen Dutta : "Please make them understand all this."

But it was obvious that in the meantime the questioners had all disappeared !

### **God's Authority and Independence**

Ma got up from her asana and started walking up and down among the fields. I seized this opportunity and presumed to ask the following question of Ma. I said, "Ma, Jatin and I have a difference of opinion on a subject. Only you can solve this, so would you please clarify this issue between us."

Ma : Do I have to listen to you at this very moment ?

I : This is as you wish.

Ma : Will I listen to you sitting down, or while walking about ?

I : Whatever you decide is better.

Ma said, "Let us stroll about for a bit", and went forward a few feet. But it was not to be destined that she would be allowed to speak to me in peace. At each footstep more and more people came to ask her questions.

On noticing this, Ma sat down, and said to me, "Now ask me whatever you wish."

I: It is often heard that everything is well ordered in the world. Birth, death, meetings between different persons, whatever happens, is believed to be preordained from beforehand. Even the leaves that drop down from a tree do not do so accidentally. You also speak sometimes in this view. And it is also believed that if all these were not predestined from beforehand, then Vriḡu or the astrologers could not predict the future correctly. From all this it can be deduced that everything is destined to take place. If we acknowledge this, then where is the question of God's independence?

Ma: See here, as long as we talk of Karma and its results, so long can it be held that everything is preordained and thus such and such will be the result of doing such and such a deed. Whether it is an astrologer or a Vriḡu, they can only forecast the future upto this point. But everything is infinite. You will understand that there are infinite trees in a single seed. Suppose you see a seed, and a tree emanates from it. How many fruits are provided by the tree and how many seeds are contained in each fruit? Again, how many trees, fruit or seeds will emanate from that single seed? So you see a single tree can be infinite. In the same way everything is infinite.

"In the course of explaining the mysteries of creation, it is said that from a single one of God's creations, many worlds can be created. In the

middle of this multitude, each is infinite in itself. From this it would appear that creation is going on all the time. I have already pointed out that a tree can be born out of a single seed and from the seeds of that tree, several new trees can arise. Even if all these trees appear to be of the same type, yet there is some difference between each of them. In this way a new creation is taking place at every moment.

Jatin : If it is believed that whatever new creation is taking place is all contained in God's previous resolutions, it can also be maintained that everything is preordained.

I : If you say that creation has started due to a previous resolution, then whatever may be the time of this resolution, there must be a beginning to it. But this is against what is laid down in our Shastras, because the Shastras maintain that creation is without a beginning.

Ma : Yes, creation is without a beginning, and is infinite. When we speak of creation, we refer to a limited period of time. It is true that creation comes about within a certain time, yet there is another state which is timeless. Else how can the Guru, by giving initiation take his disciples beyond the realms of time ? It is not as if everything ends if a certain period of time ends. When we refer to something that is beyond the realms of time, then we admit that there is a lot that exists beyond the realms of our understanding.

Jatin : There may be a state beyond the realm of time, but we understand that creation lasts

within a definite epoch of time. There is no creation beyond the realm of time.

Ma : There is indeed a definite creation beyond the realm of time. The measuring of this creation which is timeless, is that creation, existence and destruction are all taking place simultaneously from times immemorial. There is no limit to this. If you state that God cannot create anything new, then you impose a limitation on God. But there is no limit to God's powers. He is single yet infinite. He is infinite yet solely one. Suppose you build a house out of sugar. Due to this construction, the sugar takes a certain form, in this case. But when you break down the house, and convert it once more into plain sugar, then you may believe that the special form it had been assumed had been destroyed. But in reality this does not happen, because within that sugar the special form of the house is preserved. And again consider that when water is frozen into ice, the formless water assumes a certain form. That form before becoming ice was simply water. Later, when ice melts to assume the form of water, then its individual appearance is lost in the water. That appears in its Ethereal form. Do you not refer from time to time to Ethereal form, or Ethereal abode? So it is proved that which was formless can yet have a form, again that form can be transformed into a formless state. In the same way, creation has been in existence from the beginning of time immemorial. This does not affect God's completeness in the least. Just as when you light a lamp by using the flame of another

lamp, the previous lamp does not lose any lustre. In the same way, even after bringing about infinite creations, God's infinite state is not affected in the least. The creation that existed beyond the realms of time is only evolved from completeness. Because God is complete in every way, a portion of Him is also fully complete. If you take away something from a Complete substance, the completeness of the remaining portion is not affected at all."

"When you refer to the fact that Vrigus can predict something from previous births, this is usually confined to a definite period. It cannot refer to an infinite period of time. If you believe that a Vrigu can forecast anything that has happened or will happen from the very beginning of time immemorial, then the Vrigu himself becomes God. So you see, just as it is true that everything that happen is predestined, similarly it is equally true that nothing is predetermined. It is only peoples' different viewpoints that dictate when and what anything is true."

"The other day, Biren Babu told me 'when people become concentrated within their one self, then he reaches the unitary state, or absolute identity with Divinity. That is, the world then loses its piecemeal identity, and becomes unitary. When this condition is reached, one realises that the world is full of illusion and is unreal, and that only the soul is divine. In this state one loses contact with riches and therefore escapes sorrow. This is another form of happiness. But even this is not a state of complete salvation. This is yet another

form of bondage. Beyond that state there is yet another state which you know simultaneously as complete in itself. At that time both the finite are realised simultaneously. In other words, Knowledge of the past exists at the same time as that of the whole. But even the past can be infinite, the simultaneous knowledge can also be infinite. Thus what we understand by something that is complete is the knowledge that God's infinite creation, infinite existence and infinite destruction have been in existence from times immemorial. This creation, existence and destruction do not conflict with one another. Because each is complete in itself. In this exists whatever is illusion, delusion, beautiful or ugly. In other words it cannot be understood what there is, and what there is not. This is what is called a complete state. But there can be a further question. From where does this complete state emanate ?

I : Ma, mere words cannot express what you mean to say.

Ma : Yes, it cannot be pinpointed. Different people call it by different names.

**Why is joy not experienced during the singing of Nama.**

After this, somebody asked a question about the glory of reciting the Name. He said, "Ma, if the One who is named is full of bliss, then why does this Name appear so joyless ?

Ma : This can never be so. The Name and He who is named are identical.



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Person : I have recited the name and received no joy from doing so. I have even felt that during the recitation of the Name, I have been thinking of my office work and papers, even to the extent of thinking about how to be revenged on somebody !

Ma : How many results of previous misdeeds and inherited instincts are still preserved within you ! That is why this happens. As and when these are worked off, so will you begin to enjoy the taking of the Name.

Person : I am not responsible for my previous deeds. Only God is responsible for them.

Ma : You cannot say this with any real conviction. Had you been able to do so, you would have been liberated — but you cannot do so. That is why it is repeated that even if you do not like reciting the Name, then the only good medicine for you is to persevere with taking the name. Hence arises the question of constant practice. Later, due to God's grace everything is successful. God's grace is bestowed in two ways — one is favourable to you the other is unfavourable. Those who proceed according to their own instincts, on them God's grace is showered unfavourably. God forces them to turn towards Himself by inflicting pain and sorrow on them. Otherwise people would not turn towards Him. And God's ways are so beneficial that those who advance towards Him, are gradually imbued with special gunas such as invisibility, covity etc. But if one abuses these gunas, he is again apt to fall from grace. But this happens as

God wishes. He lets His devotees understand through his Kripa that we should not play about with these gunas. They should be kept secret. But if in our attempts to keep them secret, they are automatically divulged of their own accord, then there is no harm involved. And again just feel the wonder of it, as God is complete in all respects, so when one adopts the path of enjoyment, this is experienced in its complete force. Whatever results are obtained from one action, are fully experienced.

Person : Is there any need of a Guru in pursuing a spiritual path ?

Ma : Of course.

Person : Why can we not imbibe all this from reading books or holy literature ?

Ma : Had this been so, then one would not need any teacher to study any subject. Who is the Guru ? The Guru is God Himself. One must never look upon his Guru as a human being.

Ma was taken away for her food. But on the way she went to the Name hall. Here the ladies were singing kirtan. Ma went and herself started singing in a sweet melodious voice.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna,  
 Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,  
 Hare Rama, Hare Rama,  
 Rama Rama Hare Hare.

The ladies accompanied her. All at once the kirtan hall became surcharged with the force of the Name. Ma sang this for sometime and then went along for her lunch. We returned home.

**Tuesday, 29th May, 1945**

Tomorrow Ma's birthday festival will be celebrated with a full puja for Ma at night. Gopal Dada had proposed that instead of reading the Gita that afternoon, we should discuss various aspects of Ma's life. The devotees would divulge their personal experiences with Ma. With this object the discussions started at 6 p.m. Many people were assembled together. Ma was seated on the verandah of the Smriti Mandir. Sri Bhabani Niyogi, Brahmachari Kamalakanta, Biren Dada, Sri Bhudeb Bose etc. spoke about Ma. Sriman Abhoy read out a paper he had written on Ma. Sri Ganesh Sen also read out a portion from his book on Ma. The president of the sitting was Gopal Dada. On his orders even I had to speak something. Thus our discussions ranged up to 9 p.m. Tonight men-folk would sing kirtan all night, so I returned home for some refreshment and then came back to the Ashram with Sriman Jatin. On arriving there, we learnt that Ma had left for Ananda Ashram. Ma returned about 10-30 p.m. and again she sat down on the verandah of the Smriti Mandir. We sat on the floor near her. Several topics were discussed.

**The shackles of Maya cannot be removed simply by human efforts**

During our discussions Ma said, "Nobody can escape from the net of Mahamaya solely by his own efforts. As an illustration, I am telling you the following story. There was a woman. Her husband

and she used to worship a Gopalji regularly. They would be busy day and night in performing Arati, bathing him, feeding him and putting him to bed.”

“Somedays later the husband died suddenly. The woman thought ‘I have served Gopalji with so much care, yet he rewarded me with widowhood.’ Saying this, she gave up entirely her daily worship of Gopalji, and started fasting herself and crying her heart out day and night. From time to time she of course remembered about Gopal and used to get information that no worship was done to Gopalji. But she could not forsake her deep inner pride, and again return to worship. After some days had elapsed in this way she heard that her Gopal had been stolen. Some other people informed her that they had actually observed Gopal jump out of his cot and run away.

As soon as she heard this, she forgot all about her previous grief for her husband, for whom she had so long refused to work and eat, and had spent her time crying. Instead of grieving for her husband she started grieving for her Gopal. There were no other words in her mouth save praise for her Gopalji. She stated repeatedly while crying incessantly, “Alas, I have neglected Gopalji, so he has seen it fit to leave me”. Nobody could comfort her in any way. Some days passed in this way. One day she suddenly heard the news that her Gopalji was again lying down on his cot as before. On obtaining her lost beloved all her grief disappeared. She started devoting herself to Gopalji’s seva as before. Not that she had com-

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pletely forgotten the sorrow caused by her husband's death, but the old intensity was no longer there.

### **This is that Insect**

After the telling of the above story, there was silence for a while. Sri Naren Choudhury then said to Biren Dada, "Today Biren Dada has spoken very briefly during his talk."

**Biren Dada :** What more can I say ? Ma herself deserted us.

This evening, when Biren Dada was giving a lecture concerning Ma, she had gone somewhere else for a short while. Biren Dada was pointing towards this incident.

**Ma :** I had gone to visit a certain widow. Formerly when I used to visit Dhaka, she used to spend 24 hours a day in the Ashram near me. When I arrived this time, I heard that half her limbs had become paralysed due to gout so she could no longer visit the Ashram. Today with great difficulty she was brought along to the Ashram in a carriage, and they were waiting outside the Ashram. How long could we let her stay like that, so I went outside to see her for a short while. There was a young wife of the widow's son with her. For many years she had had no issue. One day, several years ago, they came here and took this body to their house. They worshipped this body with flowers and prayed that their daughter-in-law would give birth to an issue. What could this body say ? While sitting there I beheld that from among the flowers with which they had

worshipped me in the Puja, a small insect had emerged, and was crawling towards this body. In a sudden kheyal this body held the insect between two fingers, and gave it to them. Soon after the daughter-in-law conceived, and gave birth to a son. Today when I went along to meet the widow, I saw a boy standing besides the carriage, and asked for his particulars. The widow said, "Ma, this is that insect." That is to say, when this body had presented them with the insect, from that day they had come to understand that this body had presented them with a child. That is why they mentioned their firm belief ( Everybody laughs ).

### **Gopal Dada's Durga Puja**

Ma recited the following story of the Durga Puja that was held at Allahabad last year. Ma's devotees had decided to celebrate Durga Puja that year at Allahabad. Gopal Dada's disciples also used to perform their annual Durga Puja at Allahabad. Of course the two Pujas were held in different places. Upto that time Ma had not met Gopal Dada. Since that year was an unlucky year, Gopal Dada's disciples were somewhat dubious about performing their Puja. But Gopal Dada had firmly declared and comforted them by saying, "This year Ma herself will come and be present at our Puja."

Whatever this may be, when the puja started they began with great pomp and ceremony at both places. At the request of the devotees, Ma went along to see Gopal Dada's Puja.

Ma said, "On the Saptami day they took me along to see their image. There was something novel about the image. Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartick and Ganesh were missing. There was only the goddess Bhagavati on the lion and the demon. The murti of the goddess was also novel. There was a profusion of matted hair on the Devi's head, which was bound at the top. I was there for a short time. Gopal Dada was very busy with his Pujas, and had not noticed me. After we came away, his disciples informed Gopal Baba, "Ma (i.e. this body) had come here", but Gopal Dada declared forcefully, "No, Ma did not come."

On the Navami day also, this body visited Gopal Dada's Puja. On arriving I saw that Babaji had sat down to worship the goddess. The speciality about Babaji's Puja was that his was a puja of full of emotion. In his deep feeling Babaji used to call out to Ma, show her his affection and even anger and at the same time he would recite the Puja mantras. His disciples used to copy whatever their Guru did and said. Once the puja started it used to continue the whole day. At that particular time Babaji never cared as to whether or not anybody else was around.

When we arrived, Babaji was bathing the Devi. He was pouring vessel after vessel of water over his own head. Sometimes he would sprinkle some water on the Devi. A barrier had been erected so that no body could enter the place of worship. This body looked at all this from a distance. Suddenly Babaji espied me. At that time, there

must have arrived such a feeling within this body as if I would run away. Babaji shouted out, "Catch her, catch hold of her". In the midst of this confusion, this body entered through a gap in the railing and appeared very near Babaji. Then there was a wonderful scene. We became sodden with mud and water surrounding the place. Having enjoyed ourselves in this way for some time, we came away.

Khukuni Didi : There was another incident that took place there. Why don't you mention it as well?

Ma started laughing. Then Khukuni Didi herself started reciting the incident while Ma tried to restrain her by talking of other subjects. We realised Ma was unwilling to recount the incident herself, nor did she wish even Didi to tell us about it. But in spite of the restrictions, Didi recounted the incident. Didi said, "That day (i.e. on the Navami day) when we went to see the puja, we took some fruits and sandesh with us. In the afternoon the sandesh was distributed to all. I heard that this distribution had been done to a lot of people, yet we had not taken with us such a large number of sweets as to feed 2 to 3 hundred people. The box containing the sandesh was kept covered, while one by one the sweets were taken out to be distributed to each devotee. When all had received their prasad, it was found that the box was quite empty.

After all the conversation Ma got up. We also got up to go inside the Kirtan hall and spend the night there.

(To be continued)



# Krishna as seen by F. S. Growse

Dr. Saroj Paliwal

As it is known, Krishna's legends have proved to be a source of perennial charm to the orientalist as well as to the people of the west. Western scholars have tried to go very deep into the realm of Krishna-cult and taken to the fancy of Krishna-in-three, historically-speaking, i. e., historically they have acquainted themselves with three Krishnas as Milton Singer, Prof. of Anthropology at the University of Chicago and a Fellow of the American Anthropological Association remarks :

“There are three aspects of one Krishna : The tribal chief, the god-incarnate ; and Krishna of Gokul — the divine herdsman, the mischievous child and the endearing lover, the eternal paradox of flesh and spirit.”

In the galaxy of Krishna scholars, F. S. Growse holds a paramount place for his undying and unalloyed love for Shri Krishna and his land *Braja*. This celestial love of his has beautifully been dramatized in his famous book “Mathura—a District Memoir”, hailed as a magnum opus of the century — the swansong of a British fan of *Brajbhumi*.

On looking into this work, one notices that Growse has tried to dramatize the entire world of Krishna as a whole on normal and supernormal

levels. That's why he, with his accomplished acumen, delineates all the three aspects of one Krishna i. e. the mischievous child, the divine herdsman and the endearing lover which go to the length of encompassing all the *Braj-lilas* of Krishna not beyond *Braj-bhumi*.

Gifted with an eye of historicity, Growse faithfully records Krishna's story on the best available mythological assertions. However, his realistic records are ever coloured with his untainted love for Krishna's birth-place Mathura. He, indeed, marvels at the huge amount of Cosmic festivities of *Braj-bhumi* and, thus taking a deep fancy to the colourful consciousness of Krishna's land of Mathura, he wilfully affirms that "for nine months in the year, festival follows upon festival in rapid succession and the ghats and temples are daily thronged with new troops of way-worn pilgrims." He further opined that the sanctity of Mathura is so great that its panegyrists do not hesitate to declare that a single day spent at Mathura is more meritorious than a lifetime passed at Banaras."

Curiously enough, Growse attributes the out-topping opulence and abundant affluence of Mathura to the fact of its being the reputed birth-place of the Divine God Krishna.

Growse thoughtfully meditates on the magical magnanimity of Mathura and tries his level best to extract the historical facts of flowering laurels bedecking Krishna's cap and boldly affirms that he has tried to depict Krishna as seen by him. Overall, Growse confesses that though Krishna is a

historically historic hero, yet beyond the dry, dreary historical limits. He also addresses Krishna by the title of 'Tutelary Divinity' of Mathura that reveals his impassioned love for Krishna. Yet he maintains that, to some, his Kernel of fact may be itself as imaginary as the accretions which envelope it.

It would be apt to remark here that as per Growse's version, *Bhagwat Puran* was written after the Muhammadan invasion and Krishna's early boyish pranks in Mathura and Vrindaban are noted in *Harivansh* and *Mahabharat Puranas*, both of which date no further back than the 10th after christ. However, Growse feels that the development of Krishna love has been so rapid that despite the absence of Radha's name in *Shrimad Bhagwat Purana*, etc., Radha now is jointly enthroned with Him in every shrine.

As a mastermind and Sanskrit scholar, Growse does not fail to note that the tenth book of *Shrimad Bhagwat* deals exclusively with Krishna's life and the same has been translated into every form of the modern vernacular. Premsagar is the Hindi version constructing the popular legend of Krishna in his popular character as the tutelary divinity of Mathura.

Musing upon the Krishna legend, Growse simplifies the whole story like this :—

"At a very remote period, a branch of the great jadav clan settled on the banks of the Jamuna and made Mathura their capital city. Here Krishna was born. At the time of his birth, Ugrasen, the

rightful occupant of the throne, has been deposed by his own son Kansa, who relying upon the support of Jarasandha, King of Magadh, whose daughter he had married, ruled the country with a rod of iron, outraging alike both gods and men. Krishna, who was a cousin of the usurper, but had been brought up in obscurity and employed in the tending of cattle, raised the standard of revolt, defeated and slew Kansa and restored Ugrasen to the throne of his ancestors."

Out of all the descriptions overflowing the pages of memoirs, it is noticed that Growse sees Krishna as a divine child with a devotee's eye and delineated all his pranks in utter faithfulness referring to *Purna-Moksha*, the salvation of Yamalarjuna, etc.

Thereafter Growse pens down Krishna's Vrindaban and affirms very honestly that Krishna-Balram remained in Vrindaban till they were seven years old. Growse drinks very deep at the muses cup and tastes relish of Krishna's pranks and His winsome beauty to his fullest. As an inspired author, Growse makes an all-embracing manifestation of Krishna's transcendental sport and beauty in the company of His brother Balram as he says, "Decking their heads with plumes of peacocks' feathers, stringing long wreathes of wild flowers round their necks and making sweet music with their rustic pipes, at evening tide they drove the cows home to the pens and joined, in frolicsome sports, with the herdsman's children under the shade of the great Bhandir tree.

Growse expresses his sense of wonder at the out-topping frolicsomeness of Boy Krishna as he mentions :—

“But who is so frolicsome as the Boy Krishna ?” He then gives vent to the interesting incident of stealing of *Braj-gopis*’ costumes i.e., *Chir-haran* and concludes by saying that no amount of *gopis*’ modesty could win Krishna the Lover’s heart. The problem was solved only after their total submission to the divine will. So the devotee Growse says that through this lila of *Chir-haran*, the boy-god Krishna teaches His votaries that submission to the divine will i. e. मामेक शरणं ब्रज as propounded in Gita, is a more excellent virtue even than modesty.

Growse goes further and pictorizing Krishna in all His *Braj-lilas* acknowledges the fact that any sketch of Krishna’s adventures would be greatly defective which contained no allusion to his celebrated amours with *gopis*. It appears as if Growse is all one with the hearts of *gopis* and even tasted the total sweetness of ‘*Madhurya Bhava*’ of Vallabhacharya ; that is why he fully affirms that drawn from their lovely homes at the sweet notes of Krishna’s flute, *gopis* floated around him in rapturous love and joined with Him in the circling dance during the moonlit autumn nights. To quote his own words, “As *gopis* mingled in the mystic maze, with eyes closed in the intensity of voluptuous passion, each *gopi* was thrilled at Krishna’s divine and undivided affection.” It is a happy fact to note that Growse, the Great, affirms Radha’s existence, as Radha’s to him, is the fairest of the fair, reigned

queen of the revels and so languished in the heavenly delights of His embraces that all consciousness of the earth and self is obliterated.

The delineation of Gokul and Vrindaban *lilas* are followed by Mathura *lila* which comes to a very quick close within a few lines saying Krishna reigned nobly at Dwarka, got wedded to Rukmani and aligned Himself with other sixteen thousand and one hundred beautiful damsels and became the father of a hundred and a thousand sons ; in the great war of Mahabharat, Krishna raised arms with His five cousins and put Jarasandha to death. His numerous other achievements are recorded in the chronicles of Dwarka.

However, Growse sadly and very briefly ends by saying that Mathura saw Krishna no more and thus the Mathura legends of Krishna come to an end and also 'Krishna as seen by Growse' cheers all its readers up.

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## CORRECTION

In the article "The way to fulfil desires" published in July 1988 Ananda Varta, please read for authorship not "Swami Ramtirth" but "Translation of an article in Gujrati by Swami Ramtirth, through the courtsey of Akhandananda Magazine issued by Mrs. Jaya Kania."

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*The life and presence of a Hindu saint*

## Embodied Truth

Lisa Lassell Marlin

( *With compliments to the Harvard Divinity Bulletin* )

On August 28, 1982, in the foothills of the Himalayas, a funeral procession made its way between the Indian towns of Dehradun and Kankhal. It took longer than usual to make the 27-mile trip because the procession had to stop every few minutes to allow crowds of mourners to have their last *darshan*, or glimpse of the divine, of the saint whom they simply called Ma, or Mother.

By the time the body of Anandamayi Ma (or the "Bliss-Permeated Mother") reached its final destination at her ashram in Kankhal, on the banks of the Ganges, thousands of devotees had begun to gather to pay their respects. While some kept up the 24-hour chanting of the divine name, mourners continued hour after hour, to *pranam*, or bow, in front of Ma's body, many weeping profusely. Among them was Indira Gandhi, who had flown in by helicopter and who considered Ma a spiritual mother.

On that day Mrs. Gandhi, like hundreds of others, left a message of condolence at the Kankhal ashram.

Anandamayi Ma was the living image of devotion and love. Just with a glimpse of her, count-

less problems are solved. She considered service of suffering humanity her true religion. Her spiritually powerful personality was a source of great guidance for human beings.

I offer my homage to her !

The next day, although Anandamayi Ma was not a *sannyasi*, or initiated monk, her burial was performed according to strict scriptural injunctions, persided over by India's highest religious officials. She was buried as a realized being and her shrine became, from that day, a place of worship and pilgrimage renowned for its spiritual power. Her 28 ashrams, a charitable hospital, school, and dispensaries continued to be administered by the non-profit society established in her name in 1950.

Yet Anandamayi Ma at age 86 had still called herself "an unlettered child," was nearly illiterate, and signed her name with a mere dot, maintaining that "in it everything is contained." She wrote no books nor delivered any lectures. She never sought devotees or called herself a guru. She rarely initiated people, and she encouraged people when they returned home to practice their own religion. She left no instructions for running her ashrams, since she never had anything to do with their organization. She traveled around India for the last 50 years of her life, calling no place home.

How is it that a simple, uneducated Bengali woman became venerated by statesmen and common people alike as a living saint, and even as the Divine Mother? The Andover-Harvard Library has recently acquired archives of this remarkable



woman saint. The Anandamayi Ma Collection was donated to the library by the family and friends of a young American devotee of Ma who died in India seven months prior to her death. Through examining the books, tapes, films, photos, videos, and transcriptions in the collection, we can come to some understanding of who Anandamayi Ma was, how she lived, and what made her unique.

Anandamayi Ma's teaching was simple and traditional: "The destiny of every human being is to destroy the veil that hides his own Self. To realize this Self means to realize God and to realize God is to realize one's Self. God alone is." Yet her life was extraordinary, both in her complete absorption in God and in the profound impact of her magnetic personality on the lives of those who came in contact with her.

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### **Enlightened from Birth**

Born on April 30, 1896, in the out-of-the-way Bengali village of Kheora, Ma was the second child of devout Hindu parents. She was named Nirmala Sundari, or Immaculate Beauty. Her mother reported seeing many divine visions just before Nirmala's birth and related stories of the infant girl's powers. It is said that Nirmala was fully

conscious from the first day. One of her mother's stories tells of a lustrous, spiritual figure, a *mahatma*, who appeared one day outside their thatched hut. As Nirmala played near him, he became absorbed in meditation. He then performed *puja*, or worship, to her and said to her mother :

This child whom you are seeing before you, this is Ma, and is so not only among men and women, but also as permeating and transcending the universe. You will certainly not be able to keep her bound in family ties. She will definitely not remain here.

Because of her family's meager income, Nirmala attended only two years of school. But she soon drew the attention scholars and *mahatmas* from around the area. They were drawn to her to discuss spiritual matters and to listen to her sing. Increasingly, people in her village also were drawn to her for spiritual advice and comfort, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians alike. Her mother and her grandmother began to think of her as an exceptional yogini.

At the age of 12, Nirmala was married to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti and went to live with her husband's family, although he was working elsewhere. She was remembered as the model daughter-in-law. It was five years before she lived together with Bholanath, as she called her husband. The year 1914 marked the beginning of a remarkable relationship. In later years Ma related the story of Bholanath's approaching her for the first time with desire and being suddenly repelled, as if

hit by an electric shock. From that day, said Ma, her husband took a solemn vow to be her spiritual disciple, her celibate follower, begging her forgiveness for "not knowing that within [your bodily temple] dwelt not my wife but the Divine Mother."

Soon thereafter, Nirmala began to attract devotees, as increasing numbers of well-educated, professional seekers heard of her god-intoxicated state and sought her *darshan*. One of Ma's first devotees gave her the name of Anandamayi Ma, while many simply call her Devi, or Goddess. One devotee, Jyotish Ray, known as Bhaiji, says of this period, "At that time devotees began to flock to her. It is difficult to describe how their souls became steeped in tranquil bliss in her presence."

The years 1918-1924 Ma referred to as the Lila of Sadhana, or the Divine Play of Spiritual Practice. At lightning speed, it is reported, Ma, progressed through countless spiritual paths, guided by her own inner voice. Unlike most Indian saints, she had no guru, or master. One day she received an inner command, "From today, you are not to bow down to anybody." Later the inner voice continued, "Whom do you want to make obeisance to? You are everything." Ma said of the moment, "All at once I realized that the Universe was all my own manifestation ... It was then that I understood why I had been forbidden for so long to bow to anybody." In 1922 she gave herself initiation, playing both the role of the master and the disciple. Soon thereafter she formally initiated Bholanath as

her disciple and went into a three-year period of silence.

The young Anandamayi Ma's reputation grew and more people gathered to experience her God-realized state, to receive spiritual guidance and cures for their illnesses. In 1929 her devotees built her first *ashram*, or spiritual community. By this time, Ma needed almost constant physical care. As of 1924 her hands would no longer grasp food and she had to be fed. She was so merged with the Absolute that she had little or no interest in "this body," as she called herself. She said, "Look, I cannot properly distinguish between fire and water so, if you are able to take good care of this body, it will remain alive; otherwise, it will be destroyed."

Much of the time during these early years Ma would withdraw completely from the world for long periods of time into a state that her devotees called "breathless *samadhi*," or concentration on the divine. On the other hand, she was often moved by what she called her *kheyala*, or spontaneous divine will, to travel, and as of 1928 she never again stayed in one place. For over 50 years, until her death in 1982, Ma traveled around India, from ashram to ashram, festival to festival, giving millions her *darshan* and spreading her message. She never discriminated between Muslims, Christians or Hindus, between Indians or foreigners. She said "I find a vast garden out over the Universe ... Every one of you adds with His special feature to the glory of the garden."

### Ma's State of Being

In the hagiology of India, as in the West, a saint's biography is usually marked by miracles and testimonials to his or her extraordinary powers. Certainly the literature on Anandamayi Ma's life is no exception. It is filled with accounts of her supernormal powers and descriptions of her state of God-intoxication.

Many devotees recount the experience of seeing Ma appear to them as the Divine Mother. Jyotish Ray tells of going to visit Ma in the Shahbag gardens one morning, having asked her a few days before, "Ma, who are you?" He found her bedroom door closed and sat down outside :

The door opened all at once. I found to my bewilderment the figure of a divinely beautiful goddess, as genuinely bright as the sun at dawn, illuminating the whole interior of the room. In the twinkling of an eye, she withdrew all the radiance within her body and Mataji was there, standing and smiling in her usual manner.

Others recounted stories of her miraculous yogic powers of mind-reading, astral travel, and expansion and contraction of her body :

One day Sri Ma went to Siddesvari Ashram with all who were present. That place was then in a very neglected condition. An altar was there ... and Mother sat upon it. All the devotees sat around silently, absorbed in their own thoughts. Her body shrank so much in size that everybody had the impression that only her sari was left on the altar. Nobody could see her. All were

wondering what would happen next. Gradually there was a stir under the cloth and very slowly and gently a body took shape. She appeared, sitting straight up. For nearly half an hour she looked towards the sky with a steadfast gaze and then said, "For your life's work, you have brought down this body."

Ma's state was understood as one of complete identification with the Absolute. There seems to be agreement that she did not exhibit what is normally considered ego consciousness. Swami Yogananda Paramahansa, Hindu emissary to the West and author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*, wrote in the chapter in which he describes his meeting Ma, "I had instantly seen that the saint was in a high state of *samadhi*. Oblivious to her outward garb as a woman, she knew herself as the changeless soul ... I have found many men of God-realization in India, but never before had I met such an exalted woman saint." At times Ma would withdraw into an immobile, silent state in which her body would become very cold and she seemed to stop breathing, as Yogananda said, "fleeing to her ever-calling kingdom." At other times, especially during the early years, her *samadhi* would take the form of a spontaneous, ecstatic dancing, where her body was described as whirling like a dry leaf to divine inner music. At still other times, she would converse with her devotees in simple, spontaneous phrases, full of laughter and teasing.

The essence of Ma's personality was her absorption in the One. "She has no 'personal life' of

her own and has been completely free from desire of any kind. God's will has been her will," said B. Sanjiva Rao. Furthermore, he says, "She contacts the world around her, the world of people and things, without the mediation or interpretation of the mind. The mind carries on no independent activity of its own, but is the clear mirror for the reflection of Truth."

### Ma's Teaching

We have the picture of an extraordinary being, a true renunciant who embodied the ancient Truth of philosophical Hinduism that one is truly not this body. Rather, one is the *atman*, the changeless soul that is the only One. This is Anandamayi Ma's central teaching: "The One who is the Eternal, the True Self, He is the traveler on the path of Immortality. He alone is." God alone exists, disguised as the universe, the world of form, and the individual human being. The aim of religion is to penetrate the illusion of duality to uncover this underlying Oneness. Ultimately, one is destined to merge with the Absolute.

Anandamayi Ma's diagnosis of the human condition is that human beings are suffering from the delusion that they are separate from each other and from God. One's essential nature is spirit, and spirit cannot be satisfied with material food. Happiness cannot come from material accumulation and worldly attainment, but only from understanding one's true nature as divine. Her diagnosis certainly

brings nothing new to Hinduism. What is unique about Ma is her prescription and the effect that the medicine she dispensed had on those who sought her help.

Ma's prescription for the disease of worldliness was not, as one might expect, renunciation of the world. Although she herself was a supreme renunciant, Ma asked her devotees not to renounce the world, but to renounce their misconceptions. She asked people only to remember who they really are. She said, "God is not outside the world and the world is not outside God. You don't have to go anywhere. God is where you are." Her prescription, then, called for spiritualizing the very lives that people were already living.

No matter who came to Ma for spiritual advice, she tailored this prescription to the situation. One day a young married woman came to Ma complaining that no one in her family approved of her spiritual practice. Rather than encouraging her to renounce family life, Ma replied :

Will you try to take up the following practice, Mother? One day a month from morning until night, regard everyone as a manifestation of God. Your husband, your father-in-law, your brother-in-law — consider them to be God in different guises. That day look upon your children as child Krishna and Kumari Devi. If, on that day, you are visited by any sorrow or trouble, welcome them as messengers of the Lord ... First of all do this once a month, then once a week, and you will observe



that the happiness you feel on that day will influence all the rest of the week.

Thus Ma maintained that life and religion are one. "All that you do to maintain your life, your everyday work and play, all your attempts to make a living, should be done with sincerity, love and devotion, and with a firm conviction that true living means virtually perfecting one's spiritual existence [to be] in tune with the universe." She maintained if one could do one's worldly duties always bearing in mind that the worker, the work, and the recipient of the work are One, one's life would be transformed.

About spirituality, Ma was practical. She would ask people to begin incorporating God into their lives by devoting ten minutes a day to God and then building the practice from there. To the devotee with an inclination towards solitary contemplation, she prescribed ten minutes of meditation. To one comfortable with devotion, she would suggest ten minutes of singing the divine name. And to the devotee inclined towards physical work, she would suggest ten minutes of work envisioning God as the sower and the reaper.

### **Ma's Transforming Influence**

Anandamayi Ma's message and methods, however, must be seen as somewhat separate from, while certainly enlightened by, her presence and impact on those who came in contact with her. Her biographies are filled with personal testimonials

to the "real miracle" of her life — her ability to make these teachings come alive in a devotee. As she herself embodied the Truth of which she spoke, so her devotees came to have an *experience* of her state and her message. Dr Adolphe Weintrob, a prominent French physician, describes his first meeting with Ma in Benaras :

She was supposed to answer my questions, but I had nothing to ask ... It was she who put the questions, clear, precise, going straight to the heart of things ... But her words were only a ploy on the surface. In those 20 minutes she had infused something into me, which was to last for a long time and which still continues. I returned to Clark's Hotel ... I was in a strange state — my heart swelled with jubilation, with joyful exultation — the state of one who has found what he has always yearned for in the innermost recesses of his heart.

He goes on to describe how, in the months to come, he experienced a spiritualization of his life :

I tried to fight her Love, but all worldly attachment lost its attraction and the spiritual ascent became easier, since she had donned me with the wings of Love. ... It has been for me as if I were guided on a path beset with obstacles by the hand of the most loving mother and all-powerful mother. As you advance, she removes all the thorns, all the stones from your path and when it is necessary, even lifts you across in her arms.

The sense, then, of Anandamayi Ma's impact on those who came in contact with her is one of

transformation, challenge, and turning toward the divine. Ram Alexander, an American devotee, writes, "to be with her was to spontaneously become aware of God, of one's highest ideal, more constantly and more intensely than ever before." Arnaud Desjardins, a French film-maker and author, says, "What I received from Ma is myself. I was dead and I have come to life. I was born of flesh and now I am born of spirit ... " Ganga Charan Das Gupta explains it this way: "Like the life-forces of Nature, her influence penetrates the supra-physical plane of existence, in the region of man's motives, purposes and principles. It transforms his being, all invisible, like the cosmic radiations from above."

However it can be explained, clearly the universally attested characteristic of Anandamayi Ma was that her state was in some way contagious. Those who approached her seemed to experience an awakening or intensification of a keen desire for the spiritual life. She believed that the supreme calling of every human being is to aspire to self-realization, and her mission was to awaken people to that calling. She did so by example, by living a life that embodied her ideals, and by guiding each aspirant according to his or her own nature. She stood by no sectarian doctrines, no hard-and-fast rules or practices. Yet she was untiring in her work of transforming and spiritualizing the lives of those who came to her for guidance.

Ma was not an unrealistic dreamer. She would ask, "Just a day, an hour, ten or five minutes. But

begin now to set aside time for divine contemplation.” And apparently, regardless of the word she used, and even in the presence of her silence, countless people reported a turning point in their lives from materialism to spirituality, from discord to harmony, from self-centeredness to God-centeredness, from outer to inner, and from the many to the One.

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### **PURNA KUMBHA AT ALLAHABAD (PRAYAG)**

Lasting from 14. 1. 89 (Makar Sankranti) to 12. 2. 89 (Kumbha Sankranti).

There will be a long Satsang Mandap under the supervision of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha.

Ma said, “To know yourself, to realise yourself, one must observe Truth, Brahmacharya, and Satsang and Samyam in a suitable atmosphere. To be a traveller on the road to realise one’s own self. In search of the vessel of Amrita and to attain this Amrita one must live over a month on the banks of the purifying waters of the Ganga. This is called Kalpabas.

The dates of the special bathing are :—

1st —	14.1.89	Makar Sankranti
2nd —	6.2.89	Mauni Amabasya
Last—	10.2.89	Basant Panchami

Living on the banks or Kalpabas will terminate on 12.2.89 Kumbha Sankranti.

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# Brahmavidya — Paravidya and Apara Vidya

Nirmal Chandra Ghosh

(1)

Brahmavidya is the topic of Mundaka Upanishad which is included in Shaunaka branch of Atharva Veda. Brahmavidya, means "Knowledge of Brahman" ; it also means teachings and learning that lead to the knowledge of Brahman, the supreme goal of mankind. By realising Brahman the wise get rid of all sorrows and pains and live in eternal bliss. Brahmavidya, Brahmajnan, Atmajnan, Paravidya and Tattwajnan are all synonymous. In fact Brahmajnan or Brahmavidya is the main topic of all the Upanishads, which are also called Vedanta.

First of all the gods, Brahma, the head of all beings, was created by the Supreme Person. HE (Brahma) is the Creator and Protector of the world. The Supreme GOD Almighty infused in him at the very onset of creation the knowledge of Brahman, i. e, Brahmavidya, which is the basis of all knowledge. LORD BRAHMA taught Brahmavidya to his eldest son Atharva. What Atharva learnt from Lord Brahma, he taught that to the Sage ANGI who passed on this Knowledge to Satyavaha, a sage of the line of Bharadwaja. There after Satyavaha passed on this knowledge to the sage Angira. In

this way Brahmavidya was passed on from one generation to another.

## (2)

During the time of the great sage Angira there was a sage named Shaunaka who ran a big Vedic School. Being eager to acquire Brahmavidya, he with humility and faggots in hand, as was the custom in those days according to the injunctions of the scriptures, approached the great sage Angira and said him, "O Revered Sir! What is that by learning which a man can know everything?"

Shaunaka possessed all the essential qualities, viz. Knowledge of the Vedas, serenity of mind, control of the senses, power of renunciation, celibacy and strong desire to acquire the knowledge of the Supreme. The great sage Angira thought him to be a fit student for receiving Brahmavidya. He therefore accepted Shaunaka as his disciple and began to teach him what Brahmavidya is.

At first Angira defined and explained in brief what is Knowledge; what is to be learnt and what is to be performed. He said to Shaunaka "Those, who acquired the knowledge of Brahman, said with certainty that there are two branches of knowledge, viz. Para (the Supreme) and Aparā (other than the Supreme), which are to be learnt by men.

Aparā Vidya includes knowledge of the four Vedas (Viz. RIKVEDA, YAJUR VEDA, SAMA VEDA and ATHARVA VEDA)\*, Phonetics, the

\* Excluding the Upanishad portions in each Veda. They are under Para Vidya.

code of rituals for performing sacrifices etc., grammar, etymology, metre and rythm, Astronomy and Astrology.\*

Paravidya is that by learning which Brahman is realised. (If one realises Brahman to him every thing is known). The wise realise every where that one (Brahman) who cannot be perceived or known and grasped by the mortal senses, who has no eyes and ears and other senses such as smelling sense etc, who has no hands and feet and other organs, who has no origin or source, who has got no caste, who is eternal, all pervading and existing in all, who is very subtle, undecaying and the root cause and source of everything that exists.

At first only Brahman existed. HE desired to be many. HE thought, I am one, I shall be many : and He expanded through HIS knowledge of creation. From HIM this universe came into existence. From Him were manifested LORD BRAHMA and food. From food were manifested vital force, mind, five elements, and then the worlds, and then actions and deeds of which the fruits are sure to be reaped i. e., enjoyed and suffered. From Brahman everything and every being having name and form came into existence. HE knows everything and all aspects of each and every being. HIS austerity is full of knowledge.

As a spider spreads out and withdraws its webs in itself, as on the earth grow herbs, trees and plants and as from the living man issues out hair on the

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\* These six items are called Vedangas.

head and the body, so out of the Immutable Brahman emerges the Universe here in this creation.

## (3)

The great sage now tells about the results of Aparā Vidya. It is true that the wise sages, who visualised the sacred words in the Vedas telling about the actions for getting the good results according to the wishes, recommended them (actions) to be performed by men with faith, devotion and perfection for achieving sure results, and this is the way leading to the fruits of good deeds by men who have desires and want to get them fulfilled. Those people desiring material gains and enjoyments in heaven hereafter therefore perform the actions, sacrifices etc. mentioned in the Vedas such as Agnihotra\* etc. without any flaw; and get their desired objectives e.g. worldly gain in this world and enjoyments in heaven after death. If there is any flaw in their performance of the sacrifices etc, then they cannot achieve their objectives but go to the inferior worlds and subsequently may even be born in this world in a lower state.

If one's performance of Agnihotra is without the special additional sacrifices recommended by the Vedas to be performed in every FULL MOON and NEW MOON day during the four months covering the rainy period every year, during the harvesting

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\* Agnihotra is offering of oblations to the same fire preserved by the house-holder daily according to the rules mentioned in the Vedas.



period with new foodgrains in autumn and spring, and if guests are not invited during the sacrificial ceremony by him, and if does not offer oblations to the fire daily in time, and does not perform the action called Vaishwadeva, and if he does not strictly adhere to the rules neglecting the injunctions of the scriptures, then his expectation of happiness and pleasures and all good things which are to be enjoyed and achieved by him in the seven worlds\* beginning from this earth and ending in "Satya Loka", are destroyed.

Even those people, who perform the Agnihotra and other sacrifices etc., perfectly without any flaw, but with desires such as for worldly gains and heavenly enjoyments in Indraloka, are born again and again in this world ; after they exhaust the fruits of their good deeds due to them done in each life in this world.\*\*

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\* The seven worlds are - BHUH, BHUVAH, SWAH, MAHAH, JANAHA, TAPAH and SATYAM.

\*\* The knowers of the three Vedas who drink the Soma-juice and are cleaned of sin, worshipping me with sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven. They reach the holy world of Indra (the lord of heaven) and enjoy in heaven the pleasures of the GODS.

Having enjoyed the spacious world of heaven, they enter (return to) the world of mortals, when their merit is exhausted ; thus conforming to the doctrine enjoyed in the three Vedas and desirous of enjoyments, they obtain the changeable (what is subject to birth and death).

From Bhagavada Gita, Chapter 9, Verses 20-21. Translation by S. Radhakrishnan.

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# Matri bhakta Shankar

Akhandananda

( Translated from Gujarati )

“Mother, Oh Mother, where are you ? Why can't I see you ?” Saying this again and again, Shankar entered the house, and looked every where, but could not see his mother.

“Where could mother have gone ? The Sun is very strong. She does not seem to have come back from her bath in the river. Why is she so late today ? Could some thing have happened to her on the way ?” So thinking and not finding his mother in the house, Shankar ran to the river. He found his mother sitting on the road, while returning from the river. Due to old age, she could not walk. The soles of her feet were scalded due to the heat. Seeing his mother in this state, Shankar's heart was heavy. Oh ! mother has to undergo so much hardship to go to the river for her bath every day ? But this was mother's regular routine since years and she stuck to it at any cost. But now will she be able to go to the river every day at her age ? Shankar wondered. He caught hold of his mother's hand and brought her home and started praying to the divine river.

Shankar prayed to the divine river with great devotion and faith. He composed a hymn for the prayer. Each line of the hymn, like a ripple of the

continuous flow of the Stotra Lahari pleased the river enormously. When the prayer was over the extremely pleased river said to Shankar, "Tomorrow morning at dawn, I shall flow nearby your house." Next day the fast flowing waters of Purna started flowing past Shankar's house. When the mother saw the river at her door-step, she remembered something her departed husband had told her.

"Sati ! The Lord Shiva has been propitiated by our worship. Now our life will not end without a son. Last night I saw Bhagwan Shiva in my dream. He said, "You have been meditating on me day and night with single minded devotion. I am very satisfied with your devotion. Ask and I will grant your request.

"Lord ! You are Lord Shiva incarnate. You have been very kind to this humble person. It is my good fortune that you are gratified by me. What is unknown to you ? We are worshipping you in order to have a son."

"Alright, do you wish for many sons who are all long-lived but of few merits, or only one son who is short-lived but meritorious ?"

"Lord ! It is considered bad luck to be the father of many sons, who are not meritorious. Instead, give me only one short-lived, but very meritorious and radiant son."

"Very well then, I will be born to you as a part of my Being." My eyes opened — "Sati, now Lord Shiva will come to us in his "अंशरूप". In course of time, when the son was born, as he

was the result of Lord Shiva's grace, he was named Shankar. "Oh, if his father were alive, to day, how happy and satisfied he would have been on seeing Shankar's supernatural powers." Sati was thinking to herself.

Some time back, some ascetic brahmins had come to have darshan of Shankar. They had told Sati, "Mother, you are very fortunate. Nobody in this world is as fortunate as you. We are ascetics and have come in the guise of Brahmins to have Shankar's darshan. We shall have his darshan for a few moments only, while you are with him every moment. Mother, you know that Shankar is the very incarnation of Lord Shiva. Pleased by your penance, Lord Shiva has come to you. You perhaps also know that Shivguru had asked for one bright and meritorious son instead of many long-lived but unmeritorious sons — Shankar's life-span is only 16 years. But the Devtas will grant him sixteen more years, so that he can perform God's mission." On hearing this from the ascetic, the mother became very restless and her heart was filled with sorrow, and misery. When Shankar was four years old, his father passed away. Seeing her son's face, the mother endured her husband's bereavement. "Shankar will be eight years old and then only eight more years?" The mother was very unhappy. Seeing his mother so anxious, Shankar said "Mother! mother! look, I said to the divine river: 'My mother has to suffer a lot of privation in order to come to you for her bath, then can you not bestow your grace on us

so that my mother does not have to walk so far." And mother, the propitiated divine river has come to your feet, so that you can have your bath. Come, let us bow to Purna and go and bathe in cool waters. Mother are you happy?"

"Yes, son, having a son like you why I would not be happy? but son, after knowing you have a short life-span I am very worried. I find no peace anywhere. I can think of nothing else."

"Oh mother! you have knowledge; and you are understanding. How you have worshipped God! You also know that this life is uncertain. All these worldly relationships are momentary. All that we see, is unreal. Brahma alone is real. He alone controls our short-lived being. His relationship alone is true; the body comes and goes. See, I and you must have had so many births in this world so far, but has any life been immortal? Nothing is permanent in this world. Everything is unstable, ever-changing and going in circles. I have no desire to be attached to such a world. I want to become a Sannyasi, and I want to have a true relationship with That which is permanent among all these impermanent things."

The mother felt like listening to her son's word for ever. However as soon as the son spoke about becoming a Sannyasi, she cried:—

"You wish to be a Sannyasi? No son, no. Do not even dream of anything like this. You are my life. You are my only support. Don't leave me and go anywhere. Live here and do whatever you wish. I will not stop you, but you remain in my

sight, I will never allow you to go away from me.” Saying this, tears ran down the mother’s eyes. Matri Bhakta Shankar realized that his mother will not allow him to embrace Sannyas easily. The time was not ripe for it. He decided to take her permission when the opportunity arose and in order to bring an end to this talk and to please her, said “Mother, you know I will never step out of this house without your permission ; unless you give me permission for anything willingly, I will not do that, so do not worry.”

“Yes son, I know this and that is why I am sure you will not leave me and go anywhere, when I am fast asleep.” Thinking that she will never give Shankar permission to take Sannyas and so he could never become a Sannyasi, the mother became truly care-free and went for a bath with her son.

One day Shankar said “Mother today is Ekadashi day. It is noon. I will go for a bath in the river”.

“No son, have your bath at home ; you go to the river daily. Today it had got late, so you have a quick bath and then we can have our food.”

“Mother, I will come back soon. Look I’ll just have a dip and come running back.” “Alright, go but come back soon. If you take more time, I will never again allow you to go the river for a bath.”

“Alright”, saying Shankar went to the river for a bath. While bathing, he entered a slightly deeper waters. A Crocodile caught hold of his leg. If he had wished, he could at that time, have used a lot of strength and saved himself from the clutches of

the Crocodile, and come to the bank. But something like an electric current flashed across his mind. From the water, he shouted to his mother "Mother! Oh mother! come quickly. A Crocodile has caught my foot, and is pulling me away". The mother, hearing this came running. Seeing Shankar being dragged away in deep water, she gave a heart-rending cry, and started shouting too "Run, Run! my Shankar is being dragged away by a Crocodile. Some body come quickly and save him". But at high noon, all were in their houses and so nobody heard her cries. Nobody was seen outside in time. Consequently the mother's restlessness increased. She started praying to Lord Shiva in a very emotional voice, "Oh Lord Sadashiv, you have given me this son. Shankar is your son. You are his real protector. Save him. Take my whole life-span in exchange, but save him. Oh Lord, I will do whatever you say, but save him". The mother's prayer and request were heart-rending. Her cry was piercing.

At any cost, even at the cost of her life, she wished to get her son back. Seeing her state, Shankar said to his mother, "Mother, death has certainly caught me but if I should live for God, and become a Sannyasi, perhaps I might escape the hold of this Crocodile. If you give me permission to become a Sannyasi, I may perhaps be saved". "Then let it be whatever will be. It is enough for me if you are alive even as a Sannyasi. I don't wish for anything more than that you should remain alive. You may be in any form, in the form of a Sannyasi

or a householder, but alive, I don't wish for anything more". Afraid that the Crocodile may drag him away in deeper waters, the mother said hurriedly, "My son, I have given my permission. Take Sannyasa but come out soon." "He Sadashiv! protect my son. Let him embrace Sannyasa, but release him from the clutches of this deadly Crocodile". On hearing mother's words, Shankar kicked with all his strength, pulled his foot out of the Crocodile's mouth, and came out quickly. On coming to the bank, he bowed to his restless mother.

"My son, may Lord Sadashiv give you a life of 100 years" so saying, the mother pressed him to her heart. "Oh, while I am alive, if the Crocodile drags you away, I will also jump into the water, why should I live without you?" Mother stroked the beloved son's head. "Mother, I have your permission. My road is absolutely clear. Now I shall embrace Sannyasa, without any obstruction, in the correct ritualistic manner." Shankar told his mother.

"Son, my heart alone knows under what circumstances, I have permitted you to embrace Sannyasa. I gave you permission in order to save your life. Even though a Sannyasi, you will be alive on this earth; you will be living far from me, but you will be alive — this much is enough for me to continue living. My son, even then, to be away from you, will cause me great misery. I only know what my state will be after you have gone, you will not know about it. But God Sadashiv has



saved your life, and you are offering your life for His mission and I have given permission. So I will not stop you — Go my son. You have my blessings, that may you realise, whatever is good, auspicious, and Brahma, on the path you have chosen to traverse. My Lord Sadashiv ever protect you.”

Shankar knew of the over-whelming love of his mother for himself. He also knew that he was the only support of his mother. As her son, it was his duty to serve her, but he had heard the call of other duties — greater than this. He had received clear directions for performing God’s mission. It was necessary to embrace Sannyasa in order to perform this ; however, that did not entail cutting off the inner relationship with his mother. On the contrary it was certain that what he could not achieve by remaining with his mother, namely the mother receiving the great blessing of God’s grace — he could fill his mother’s life with divinity even by remaining away from her. But the mother could not visualise the bright future, and so she was deeply unhappy, at the prospect of separation from her son.

Finally, what was to happen, happened. Shankar obtained his mother’s permission and was ready to set out in search of a Guru.

“See mother, don’t worry about me. You are sure that Lord Sadashiv is always protecting me, aren’t you ? Do not be unhappy thinking about what will happen to me, or how I will live. Be sure that I will be able to do hundred times more of your work, staying away from you, than what

I can do living with you. I am not leaving you and going anywhere. I am always with you.”

“Yes, my son, you are not away from my heart merely by being away from me. I will always remember you. I only want one thing from you — that you will be near me in my last moments and that you alone will perform my cremation rites. You are still my son. Will you accede to my request ?”

“Yes, mother, wherever I may be, I shall always be your son. This Shankar is always your son. At the last moment, wherever I may be, when you remember me, I will be near your feet and I alone will perform your cremation rites. Mother, I promise you.”

“Son, I am not carefree. I could not bear the thought that with a son like you, some other persons may perform my cremation rites. But now you have promised me, I am not worried. Can any one stop a person who is determined to forsake this world ? Go son, go to the right Guru, take diksha and ennoble the concept of Sannyasa. My blessings are ever with you.

Having thus satisfied his mother, Shankar summoned all his near relatives, gave them all his wealth, and having requested them to look after his mother, he left in search of a Guru. After wandering, he came to Govind Guru, and took Sannyasa Diksha from him ; studied the Vedas and obtained knowledge of the Eternal ; on his Guru's direction he went to Kashi. There he made many disciples. From Kashi he went to Badrivan. Then he wrote

numerous commentaries on Bramhasutra, the few Upanishads, Bhagwad Gita, Vishnu Sahasra Naam, Sanat Sujaliya Samvad etc. Then he toured the whole country for spreading the Advaita Doctrine. Defeated Mandan Mishra, and gave him Diksha. Shankar discussed the Shastras with countless Pundits, and learned men, and defeated them all, and proved the Greatness of the Advaita Doctrine. Thus Shankar worked continuously.

Once, when Shankar was deeply immersed in thought, suddenly, he remembered his mother. Mother's loving face was hovering in front of his vision. When he concentrated deeply in his heart, he felt that his mother was calling him. Shankar, feeling that he should go soon, he gave the responsibility of his work to his pupils, and finished all his work soon. None of the pupils had ever seen their great Yogeshwar Brahmagnani Guru in such a hurry. So they were surprised. But in the case of their Guru everything was becoming mysterious, unknowable, and unimaginable. That is why the pupils could never understand the actions of their Guru. Only when Shankaracharya told his pupils that he had to go to his mother soon, as her end had come, did the pupils realize that one part of their great Brahmagyani Guru's heart was ever connected with his mother.

“Mother ! Mother ! I have come ; look I am your Shankar. I have come as soon as you ordered me to come. Open your eyes.”

Mother, lying in bed with her eyes closed was deep in her son's memory. She felt as if she was

hearing somebody's sound from deep in the bowels of the earth. She felt as if Shankar was speaking to her. No, No, where can Shankar come from? If on opening her eyes, she did not behold Shankar, she would not be able to endure such a state. Even so often she had imagined hearing such voices. So having decided that, she would open her eyes only if Shankar came himself and made her open her eyes. So she did not open her closed eyes.

Shankar saw his mother's old and disease-ridden body lying on a torn blanket. Mother was sick, lying alone, helpless, and without any succour. Seeing his mother's awful state, Shankar's heart was torn with grief, but he immediately discarded the grief. Now that he had come near her, whatever moments he could spend with her, he decided to fill them with joy and love. He vowed to fulfil all his mother's desires. At this moment, Shankar was neither a great teacher, nor a knower of Brahma, nor a learned professor of reality who had defeated other pundits and who was a recipient of true knowledge, and who had conquered all the four directions. Now he was his mother's beloved son.

“Mother, mother, see. Your Shankar has come. Open your eyes, mother !”

Mother again heard the voice. On hearing such a clear voice, mother was sure that this was no dream. When she awakened from drowsiness, she felt as if really her Shankar had arrived. On opening her eyes, and looking, she saw, her son Sannyasi Shankar smiling, shining with a divine light. Mother had neither the strength to get up nor

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speaking, but on seeing her son, she felt as though a trickle of strength had spread into her life, had entered her. Happily she said "Son you have really come ; it is my good luck that I could behold you. I am very happy that even in such a state, I am able to see you, talk to you. If you had come after I was unconscious, what would have been the use ? The relatives whom you appointed to look after me, have run away with all the money and never came back. Never mind all that son, you are well, aren't you ?"

"That which never perishes is always well. Mother tell me, how can I serve you."

"Son, I don't have much time, at last as you are in front of me, I shall die peacefully. You have uplifted the whole world. I have heard a lot about your achievements. Now you must lift me up, and then perform my funeral rites. That is all. I don't want anything else." Shankar realised that after so many years of penance, renunciation and difficult sadhana, mother had reached a very high stage of spiritual consciousness. There were no attachments to anything in her mind and her mind had become pure ; but still she had not attained God realization, so Shankar started imparting divine knowledge to her. Shankar felt that after hearing about Advaita bhava, her sense of duality would disappear. She will attain God. But at these critical moments, mother's mind could not concentrate on the difficult subject of divine knowledge. The mother felt that the teachings of divine knowledge were uninteresting. "Son, at the end of my life,

your words cannot enter my heart. Instead of talking of the formless God, help me to behold the God who has form. I wish to behold God himself!"

"Alright mother. Now I shall sing the hymn to Shiva. Listen."

Shankar started Lord Shiva's hymn. As he sang fourteen stanzas of Shiva Stotra in the Bhujangi Chchanda, it seemed as though Lord Shiva appeared at every stanza. The snow-capped Himalaya seemed to come in view. The sound of the Ganga, twined in the locks of Shiva's jata, was heard. Shiva seemed to have appeared with Gouri. The Great Sound of the thousand ganas of Shiva seemed to be heard. Yet the mother could not become one with Lord Shiva's form.

"No son, not this form. This is the form of Rudra. I feel frightened by this form. There is very little time left now. Son, I wish to see the form of Lord Krishna playing the flute. I wish to see the Jamuna flowing, hear the sound of Kanhaiya's flute, see the Gopi's dancing."

It seemed as though the mother was testing her son. She seemed to be suggesting to her son, that neither in the dry knowledge of Brahma, nor in the terrifying form of God, can a man's mind be concentrated in the last moments of life, but only in the sweet child like Lord Krishna's form, playing the sweet flute, from whom ever flows the river of love.

He who had spent his entire life in the establishment of Advaita bhava, who had twinned Vedanta

and knowledge of Brahma in his own life ; such a Shankaracharya started singing a hymn to Lord Krishna. The hymn to Lord Krishna started flowing from Shankar's heart, as though he was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Today Shankar's entire achievements, his knowledge, all his penance were devoted to the praise of Lord Krishna. With every line of the hymn, the fascinating beauty of Lord Shri Krishna took shape in his mother's heart. The child Shri Krishna, with his crown of peacock feathers, with the flute in his hand, and producing sweet music from the flute, started dancing in front of the mother's eyes.

"Ha, Wonderful ! How beautiful is this form of God !" How Captivating ! One can never be satisfied looking at this form. Son you go on singing. See, the child Krishna is calling me. You can hear the sound of his payals, can't you ? How sweetly he is playing the flute ! Son his tune is dragging away my heart.

As Shankar's hymn praising Lord Krishna flowed on, the mother became one with the beautiful form of Ghanshyam.

To-day entire universe\* seemed to have become one with Krishna. The waters of Jamuna were flowing. The atmosphere was filled with the sound of Krishna's flute. Gopis were seen dancing in the Brajabhoomi of Nandkuvar who was ever assuming new forms. And the leader of all this, the child Krishna enveloped the entire existence of the mother. Now, mother's speech had stopped. Mother became engrossed in the other-worldly scene, from

which all speech comes back. This experience was beyond words.

A wonderful smile played on her lips. Mother went on dissolving in that form of Krishna which steals the mind. Mother had become one with Krishna even before the hymn was over. Only her lifeless body remained.

“Mother shall I sing another hymn ?”

But mother did not need to hear another hymn. When no reply came from mother, then Shankar also awakened from the divine experience of Lord Krishna and saw that mother had reached a place from which no direct answer comes.

Seeing mother's lifeless body, even Shankar's heart was torn.

The mother, who gave him birth, who gave nutrition to his body with her milk, who while walking, sleeping, during every moment of her life, always wished only for the welfare of her son, this mother's life today had travelled on the eternal great path. Now in accordance with his promise to her, he had to perform the cremation rites of the lifeless body.

Shankar informed all the people of his community. When they arrived and started preparations for the cremation, Shankar said “I have promised my mother and I alone will perform her cremation rites. You all help me in these religious rites.”

“What did you say ? You will perform the cremation rites ? You are a Sannyasi. Shastras have enjoined that you cannot perform the cremation rites of any relatives of your earlier Ashramas.”



“Yes, I know that, but I only will perform the cremation rites of my mother” Shankar spoke in a humble yet firm voice. Hearing this, his community people were very angry and said “You are putting your Sannyasa duties to shame. We will not be a party to such a sin.”

“But how has such a black sheep been born in our Kula? He has taken up Sannyasa and is now about to fall from Sannyasa.”

“We will never allow this. You cannot perform the cremation rites yourself. It is an insult to our community.”

“Yes, Yes, we will never suffer such an insult. In the presence of the community how can a Sannyasi perform cremation rites?”

“We will perform the cremation. You have left this world. What have you to do with all this?”

The community people were excitedly talking like this, when Shankar spoke to them humbly.

“Why? Because she is my mother. Because I have become a Sannyasi, it does not mean that I am not her son?”

“Yes but a Sannyasi cannot have any relationships. How can you forget that.”

“Will you yourself break the rules of Sannyasa?”

“Will Shankar, the Victor of Mandan Mishra, behave thus?”

“My near ones, I am not here to discuss the meaning of the Shastras. I am not here for discussions and arguments. I ask for your co-operation in trying to fulfil the promise given to my mother and to satisfy her last wishes. Please give

your permission, and I will perform the cremation rites of her Gross body.

“Are we here to cause our own downfall that we will give you such a permission? We do not wish to go to hell by being a party to such a sin. We will not destroy religion. None of us will co-operate with you.”

“Oh brothers! Religion consists in the achievement of God realization. The rules and regulations of behaviour are created by men — which can be changed as time passes. Now my duty as a son is to respect her last wishes and perform her cremation rites and in doing this I am not committing any sins.”

The great author of Advaita-Vada was today performing his duties as a son with great dignity. He was not sorry about this.

“We don't wish to hear anything from you. We tell you all this as we feel that the corpse should not be neglected. If you move away, we will perform the cremation now; otherwise we will go away.”

On one side, the community members were firm in their decision. Their faith in the deep-rooted religious beliefs had destroyed their sense of discrimination; on the other side was Shankar, alone, but firm in keeping promise and in his ideas.

“Whatever happens, I only will perform the cremation rites of my mother. If you help it will be best, otherwise I will perform this meritorious deed alone.”

“Then we will also see how you will perform the cremation rites. Nobody will give you the fire

necessary for the cremation. No one will do such a sinful deed."

Shankaracharya, who had enlightened the entire Bharat Varsha with the power of his knowledge, was standing alone beside the dead body of his mother, his head bowed, and hands joined. For a few moments, he stood quiet, motionless beside the mother's dead body ; then alone, he prepared the pyre in front of his house, lovingly picked up mother's body in his strong arms and gently lay down the body on the pyre. The community members were watching from a distance, and thinking mockingly how he would light the funeral pyre without fire. They thought finally Shankar will have to come begging to them for the fire. But their thinking was wrong. Shankar, to relieve his mother's misery had pleased the river Ganga and made her flow near his home, the same Shankar sang a hymn to the God Agni in order to deliver his mother's body to the five elements. He invoked the Fire God in his mother's right thumb. The Fire God appeared there. In no time the powerful flames surrounded the mother's body. Going round the pyre, and bowing to the pyre Shankar sang a hymn in praise of his mother.

Gradually the Fire God swallowed up mother's Gross body. Happy that he had satisfied his mother's last wishes, Shankaracharya departed from there.

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In wealth and property there is certainly no peace. What then does give peace? My own true nature is peace, knowledge, divine consciousness — unless and until this is realized, how can there be peace? In order to find your Self you must become revealed to yourself. How beautiful!

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# The Uniqueness of Sufism

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

At a time when spiritual liberation has become a forgotten value, Sufism explains that the agony of unsatisfactoriness in life is mainly due to uncontrolled attachment to sensual objects. Modern man is looking for liberation from a deeper disease than just the eradication of ignorance, sickness or poverty. It can be seen clearly that there are many who are not happy inspite of the fact that they are educated, healthy and rich. Therefore, there is a more radical sickness in the heart of man and this internal disorder is a greater barrier to happiness and peace of mind than any external form of misery. It is this mental sickness from which man is earnestly yearning to be liberated from. Sufism states that instead of living in suffering or sadness man can experience undying joy if only the craving of attachments could be eliminated. In a nutshell Sufism is basically as piritual technique of mental detachment from the objects of the senses which could be practised by all.

Sufism emphasises that to attain the perfect state of calmness we must understand ourselves as we are from moment to moment without the process of psychological accumulation. In approaching the problem of life we should not be conditioned by any preconceived ideas or theories. If our minds

are conditioned by various concepts and views we will not be able to perceive the Reality. Since life presents to us every moment a new challenge, to respond rightly we must be free from all patterns of past thinking. We should not aim at anything other than to live in the present without creating confusions and complications, because by dwelling on the past we fail to live in the present and by thinking of the future we escape from present problems. Hence, to live in the present in perfect peace we need a new method of self-discipline by which to use our minds in a different way so that it frees us from all the conditioning to which we have been psychologically subjected. We must learn the art of relinquishing every experience effortlessly because clinging to a past experience even lightly is a bondage. Only by living in the timeless present can we make a fresh beginning every moment.

Sufism states that we should not blame others for our sufferings since problems exist in our minds. Until and unless we understand the mind we will not be able to solve or face any problem that life brings. What is the mind? Mind is a bundle of thoughts. We see many objects in the physical world. After seeing them our desire is to possess them, because through the contact of these objects or things our minds derive certain sensations and pleasure. In life we come across many people, ideas and things. Among them we like some and dislike others. So in our contacts our minds operate with these previous impressions of attractions and repulsions which we have gathered in day-to-

day affairs. Thereby the mind has lost its capacity to see anything as it is without the projections of the likes and dislikes into it. To understand our minds we must have the ability to observe how the mind operates in direct relationship to any incident in life. If we can see anything that occurs in daily life without the screens of likes and dislikes then we may be able to solve many problems. It is an interesting question to ask ourselves or rather to find out the source from which our minds originate. In deep meditation alone we can discover how the mind comes into existence. The mind is nothing but a collection of accumulated desires that function by the association of the physical world through the senses. The conscious mind is what we use in our everyday waking life which includes perception, imagination, memories and concepts. The unconscious mind contains not only the memories of everything that has ever happened to us but also includes our biological, racial and family heritage as well as the painful experiences of the past, mostly those of our early childhood.

Sufism insists that we must understand the mystery of death and in discovering the secret of death what is important is not the manifestation of the physical body or the dissolution of it, but the experience of death while we are living. In other words if our minds can be put into a state of death with full awareness then only we can experience the inner meaning of death and this experience of death while living with the physical body will open the door to the eternal state of spiritual liberation.

Self-realisation consists in discovering the bliss that comes after the cessation of our mental activities. Therefore, we must die every minute not only to enjoy life but also to understand the entire layers of our mind. At death we discover divinity and realise Reality.

The purpose of Sufism is not a mere search for the Truth but its uniqueness lies in the realisation of Reality as an immediate experience in the midst of our day-to-day activities. The practices and disciplines that are advocated in Sufism are intended to bring the mind of the seeker to a state of poise and steadiness because without having attained the state of mental steadiness and calmness the seeker will find it difficult to follow the art of meditation. Needless to say, that an uncontrolled mind is spiritually a liability, never an asset, it is important for the spiritual seeker to have a refined and calm state of mind. Discipline in all phases of life is absolutely essential. What we need is a philosophy of right action and right living. Sufism does not encourage the attitude of running away from the family and business responsibilities to achieve the goal of God-Realisation. It is to be thoroughly understood that mere physical isolation from anything will never bring mental liberation. Our minds are the major cause of creating various conflicts and confusions. Further, it is impossible to run away from our own mental problems because to whatever place we may go we carry them with us. Detachment is purely an internal state of mind when we do not cling to anything. In order to achieve



the state of meditation we need not renounce the world but we must understand the mind and go beyond it to attain the Reality. The most fundamental fact that we must realise that nothing in the world can give us real happiness other than the profound state of perfect peace.

Sufism declares the highest goal of man as realization of the Truth. Since most of the time we are just drifting, tossed around by the feelings of past or future, by anxieties, hopes, fears, hate and anger, our thoughts and actions are not in harmony and they produce mental conflicts of various sorts. All spiritual efforts aim at stilling the mind so as to overcome the illusion of our own psychic individuality. When the mind is still, we rise beyond sense perception and enter into a transcendental state of consciousness where thoughts cannot penetrate — a free state of choiceless and blissful awareness. Meditation actually means that we have transcended thoughts or conquered the mind and in such a meditative state there is no need to seek more. Through self discipline, devotion and perseverance alone can self-slavery be transmuted into self mastery leading to effortlessness in meditation.

Sufism says that ~~the~~ more inwardly silent we can be the more dynamic and effective action is possible in the society in which we live. When the mind is silent it has a tremendous impact not only on our environment, but also it transforms in the divine direction of unconditioning one's mind. When the illusory veil of ignorance is removed, the ever present truth is revealed as it is. It is to

be realised that this ignorance consists in the false identification of the Truth with the body and the mind. Throughout the ages the indispensibility of spiritual discipline has been greatly stressed because we are ignorant of our blissful state of Truth. Attempts are always directed only to eradicate the ignorance which veils the purity of bliss.

From the mystical stand-point of Sufism we have never ceased to be the Divinity, but it is not enough to understand and assert this state intellectually or verbally. It is very essential that such self-realization must stand the test of experience under all circumstances. One must retain one's equanimity under the greatest pressure and danger even in the face of death. Sufism says that the grace of Allah always is. The problem is whether we are receiving it. The moment we see how transient, everchanging and irrelevant our thoughts and feelings are, we start dissociating ourselves from our mental mechanism, and then we turn to meditative awareness by which we experience or contact the ever-present grace of Allah.

Sufism insists that what we must change is not the externals in which we ourselves are immersed or even the people around us, but we ourselves, which means our mental make-up and consciousness. We must shift the centre of gravity from the outside world to within ourselves. Whatever pain may be involved in the shape of ups and downs in the process of gaining control over the mind must be accepted happily. It is very necessary that we maintain mental equilibrium under

all circumstances without which we cannot expect substantial progress in our spiritual life. When a seeker achieves atonement with Allah he attains liberation. In other words Sufism says that life under the guidance of divine understanding of Reality is freedom, and the disharmony with Divinity owing to failure of insight into it is bondage. Liberation is therefore no escape or flight from Reality, but an actual *incorporation of oneself into Reality*.

It is futile to expect any spiritual progress before having purified the mind and thus make oneself fit for the arduous journey to the Truth. A seeker is he to whom the spiritual urge is very powerful and he does not worry over anything but simply strives because he is drawn to the higher life. For the seeker effort is very necessary, but one must remember that effort alone can never secure the final goal of self realization because he who makes the effort must dissolve in the divine process leaving all to the grace of Allah. The essence of man is pure being, but the mind creates an ego which although illusory seems to be real. This state of ignorance has to be removed, because this false ego is the main obstruction to the realization of Reality. The ego is a seat of emotions and lower animal passions like greed, anger, lust and jealousies.

Sufism stresses that no spiritual development is possible if the mind is coloured by previous ideas or motivated in a particular desire. Therefore, an aspirant must have a well disciplined mind which observes facts objectively without

prejudices as the mind which turns to look upon anything with preconceived ideas cannot see properly. We are unable to find out the truth about life because our minds are blinded by the bundle of wrong notions and fixed conclusions we have about ourselves and other people and things. In meditation we try to put aside everything including our names and forms, memories and psychological reactions. Then we realise there is a self which is unidentifiable. It has no characteristic or label on which we can place our finger. It is to be realised that self-discovery is neither idle reverie nor vacant in-action, but an intense inner ecstasy and liberation with enlightenment. Self-realization is not something new to be achieved, but an eternally existent state to be discovered by throwing our whole life into spiritual practice.

The technique of Sufistic disciplines cannot be understood until they are lived and have become a part of us and we acquire the ability to use them rightly in our daily activities. The Sufistic method of realizing Reality is purely an internal experience, in which one would detach from one's own mind, because the mind is the real cause of all the worries and tribulations. Hence, Sufism emphasises more and more the way of eradicating the impressions that are rooted in the mind, by means of silent meditation. The chief aim of a Sufi is not only to liberate his mind from the worldly entanglement but also to transcend it and thus attune himself to Allah-awareness of the Divine presence.

The present day is a time of extraordinary achievement of fantastic discoveries in every field. All the knowledge in the world will not make us wise unless we learn the divine art of meditation. The state of meditation cannot be described by the mind because it takes place in a realm which is beyond the mind. For a person who has not experienced the highest state of meditation doubt may arise with regard to the state which is beyond the mind, and one may wonder what there is to accomplish in the absence of mind. Here it is to be realised that we are not mere mental instruments in the blind activities of our minds. The Sufi is a person who is thoroughly established in Allah who has no trace of ignorance, who is completely illumined and one who has direct wisdom of Divinity and consequent understanding of the world process. He appears in the world of ignorance as a beacon of light dispelling the darkness. He is fully integrated in the perfect realization of the fundamental unity which sustains the whole of Reality.

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### AN APPEAL

Please send your Ashram Function and news in detail for publishing in Ananda Varta, before 30th November, 28th February, 31st May and 31st August to :—

Dr. Baren Guha Roy, Secretary  
Publications Division  
Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society.

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# The Light That Shines for You

( With the compliments of Unity School of Christianity )

( Missouri—USA )

If some night you come to Unity Village, the lights would be like blazing pools. There are lights at the entrance, on the Tower, on the Administration building, on the bridge across the mirror pool, around the patio outside the Inn. All these you could not help but see. But there is one light that you might easily overlook.

This is a light that shines from a window in the Silent Unity building. In terms of candlepower this light is very small; it casts a faint golden glow on the tiles of the cloister roof on which it falls.

It is only in terms of spiritual power that this light has significance, for this is the light in the room where Silent Unity keeps the vigil of prayer.

Probably the gaslight shed but feeble illumination on the upstairs room of the house in Kansas City where Charles and Myrtle Fillmore and a few friends met over ninety years ago "in silent soul communion ... all those who are in trouble, sickness, or poverty, and who sincerely desire the help of the Good Father."

But a light was lighted far brighter than eyes have power to see, a light for minds to follow and for hearts to be warmed by. This is the light of

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Silent Unity's prayer. This light has never gone out.

For over ninety years someone in Silent Unity has been in prayer. In the early morning, throughout the day, through the dark hours of the night, week in, week out, month following month, through years of war and peace, through depression and prosperity, for over ninety years — prayer !

Today, in the room at Unity Village where the light is kept burning, this vigil of prayer goes on.

From the moment a message is received, it is enfolded in an atmosphere of prayer. Members of Silent Unity join in prayer at 8 a.m. every working day, using the *DAILY WORD* lesson for the day. At 11 a.m. certain workers meet in the prayer room for what is known in Silent Unity as the "healing service," where the needs of individuals are taken up in prayer. Members of Silent Unity join again in consecrated prayer at noon or shortly thereafter.

Yet, these meetings are but a small part of the sum of prayer in Silent Unity. As letters, telegrams, and telephone calls flow across the desks, every worker — the person who came to work yesterday and the one who has been in Silent Unity for many years — blesses each request as it is handled. The one who first receives a message from a correspondent, the one who checks the address, the one who writes the letter and chooses the prayer and pamphlet to send, the one who puts the answer in the mail — each and every person — does the work with love, with faith, with the joy of

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serving. Then every half hour throughout the day the workers, one after another, go into the prayer room to pray alone. With night, the spiritual vigil goes on in the room where the light is kept shining.

Yet, even this does not complete the sum of prayers of which Silent Unity is the radiating center. All over the Earth, constantly, there are hearts attuned to ours in Silent Unity, voices joined with ours in declaring the Unity affirmations of faith, hundreds of thousands speaking words of blessing, breathing prayers of love, adding to the spiritual force, the prayer force that is Silent Unity.

This is why the light that shines from the window, though to the eye it seems only a little light, lights the farthest corners of the Earth. This is why, "down under" in Australia, deep in Africa, beyond the Arctic circle, this light is shining. In these and other faraway places, hearts are warmed by it, minds are illumined by it.

This is a spiritual light. It is the spiritual light generated by years and years of constant prayer, generated by the prayers that are continually going forth in Silent Unity today, going forth at the very moment you read these words, generated by prayers going forth all over the world.

*"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* (Matt. 18:20) This is the ministry of Jesus Christ, who said: *"I am the light of the world."* (John 8:12) *"You are the light of the world."* (Matt. 5:14) It is the light of His Spirit that radiates from our window, radiates through our prayers, the Christ light lit by



many years of faith in Him, by many thoughts of love for Him, by many hearts and minds consecrated to serving Him.

The light of His Truth, like the light in the window, may seem only a little light ; but if you are lost, you may find your way by it.

Are you in need of help ? Sit down and begin to write, "Dear Silent Unity..." Even as you write the words, you will feel the silent unity of love, the silent unity of those who pray together, the silent unity of God and man, the silent unity of Spirit that is Silent Unity. Even as you write the words, in your heart and mind the light begin to glow.

Go to a telephone, wherever you may be, at any moment of the day or night, and call 816-251-2100, Unity Village, Missouri. From the room where the light shines a voice will ring out for your heart to hear, "Silent Unity !" and the light that shines in this window will begin to shine for you.

If you cannot write a letter, if you cannot reach a telephone, heart speaks to heart across the silence of prayer. Let your heart call out in faith and hope and love ; turn in your mind to Silent Unity and utter a silent prayer for help. Even as you turn, you step within the circle of the light.

Silent Unity is as a pool of light, an ever-widening pool of trust in God, forever being fed by continual affirmations of faith. Every word of prayer is as a loving hand stretched forth to help into the pool someone in need.

Though the world may fall asleep to spiritual truth, the faith of Silent Unity never sleeps. Here

always there are hearts outreached in prayer. Here constantly we keep the vigil of faith, the watch of prayer. This is a spiritual trust we keep, a spiritual tryst, a trust we keep in God, a tryst we keep with anyone who may be in need.

All those who are in need we embrace with our prayers and draw them close to God, draw them into closer awareness of the good that is theirs in Him. We embrace them with our hearts and draw them into the light of Truth.

Are you in need of help?

There is a light that shines for you. Wherever you are, whatever your need, you can step into this light.

Do you need peace for your mind? The light floods your mind, the light of the Christ Mind. It penetrates into cob-webby corners; it unravels knotty tangles; it shows the way to go; it brings order and wisdom.

Do you need health for your body? The light shines in your body, the warm light of life, the vitalizing light of Spirit. It suffuses the cells, it bathes the tissues. In its life-giving glow your body is revealed as a temple of light, a temple of the living God.

Do you need prosperity for your affairs? The light illumines your affairs. It reveals new opportunities, invisible avenues of supply. It discloses rich ideas that you can use, it gives you a sense of security in which you have the courage to step forward; it lights the steps for you to take.

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Do you need harmony in your life? The light radiates through every department of your life. It shines on misunderstandings, and they are dissolved. It shines on complications, and they are straightened out. It shines on seeming emptiness, which is filled with beauty and joy. This is the light of understanding, the light of "silent soul communion," the light of Christ compassion.

Do you have dear ones who need help? Your love lifts them into the light. Your prayers lift them into the light. In the light of the omnipresence of God, needs are met.

Are you in need of help?

There is a light that shines for you.

You need never be alone — not even on the darkest night. Silent Unity is no farther from you than a prayer's length.

In a room of a building in Unity Village where a light is shining from a window, someone is praying, someone with a spirit kindred to your own, someone whose thoughts reach out to you in faith, someone whose heart reaches out to you in love. The light in this window shines for you. The light in this heart shines for you.

Silent Unity is as the Christ light lit in the window of the world. If you are a traveler on the road of prayer, this light shines for you.

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## Ashram News

On Friday, the 29th July, Guru purnima was celebrated at Kankhal through the munificence of Sri Sailen and Smt. Ranu Ghosh of Calcutta by pujas at Sri Sri Ma's Samadhi, at Swami 1008 Muktananda Giriji's Samadhi and worship of Sri Padmanabhaji and Sri Vyasdev with great pomp and ceremony. The recitation of Stutras, kirtans preceded a huge Bhandara. Many devotees were blessed with getting an opportunity of worshipping their Guru and of enjoying a sumptuous Bhog.

The Tirodhan Tithi of Sri 1008 Muktananda Giri Maharaj was celebrated by a full scale puja and Abhiseka and Sadhu Bhandara.

From the 23rd August to 27th August, Sri Krishna Jhulan festival was performed beautifully. As in previous years, at midnight of the full moon Sri Sri Ma's Diksha Leela was celebrated with combined dhyana, japa and kirtan.

On the 3rd September — all the Gopalji's were specially worshipped on the occasion of Janmastami and on the 4th September Nandotsab was celebrated with great pomp.

On the Dwadashi Tithi of Jhulan was the Tirodhan Tithi of Swami Maunananda Parbat (Bhaiji) and this was celebrated with special puja and sadhu bhandara.

**Vrindaban :** From Jhulan Ekadasi to the Full moon, special puja arati and bhajan and kirtan were performed at the Sri Krishna Chhalla Mandir. On Jhulan Purnima a 24 hours Nam Yagna was performed. For this function the kirtan devotees of Delhi assembled at the Ashram to crown the function with success. Local Mahatmas were invited and specially entertained from the 15th August to 27th August.

Arrangements were made for RASH-LEELA to be performed at the temples. At midnight on the occasion of Janmastami Sri Krishna's Abhiseka and special puja were observed with full scale ceremony and bhajan and kirtan. The next day the Nandotsab was celebrated amidst great enjoyment.

At Agarpara and other Ashrams like Kashi, Ranchi, Poona, Dehradun the Guru Purnima, Jhulan and Janmastami festivals were duly celebrated as usual.

### **Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Bhagavath Bhavan ( Bangalore )**

During January to June, 1988 many religious activities like classes of VISHNU and LALITHA SAHASRANAMA, Sanskrit classes, pravachana, lectures, discourses were conducted. Special programme like Bhajan, devotional songs were carried out throughout every month. MAHA SHIVA RATRI, RAM NAVAMI, SRI SANKARA-JAYANTI were observed.

From 24th April to 5th May, BHAGAVATH SAPTHAHA and MA's 93rd BIRTHDAY were

celebrated. The portrait of MA was taken in procession in the corridor of the Bhavan. A very large number of devotees and 500 poor people were fed.

MA's devotee Swami Nirvananandaji of Kankhal paid visit to the Bhavan and stayed 8 days. H. H. Gondal Rani and Maharaja visited the Bhavan with their family Members.

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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

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