

Man must go out in search of That which is concealed behind the world. He should choose an abode that will make it easy for him to proceed to his true Home.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

By Courtesy of :

The Asiatic Oxygen & Acetylene Co. Ltd.

Regd. Office : 8, B. B. D. Bag (East)

Calcutta-700 001

Phone : 204241/204247/204259/205115



ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

*

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

Vol. XXXIX

● JULY, 1992 ●

No. 3

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|---|------|----------|
| 1. Sri Sri Ma's Utterances | ... | 153-156 |
| 2. Samyam Vrata : Its Observance in
Calcutta in 1953 and 1959—Anil Ganguli | ... | 157-163+ |
| 3. Sai Ram Sahay—M. Rama Rao | ... | 164-175 |
| 4. Botanic Terms and Expressions in the
Vedas and Ramayana (Balmiki) and
their Significance—R. L. Sinha | ... | 176-184 |
| 5. Reminiscences of Anandamayee Ma
—Professor Bireswar Ganguly | ... | 185-195 |
| 6. The Lady all in White (An Allegorical
Tale)—Richard Lannoy | ... | 196-206 |
| 7. Ma Touches Us : 10. On the question
of learning Western Science
—P. C. Datta | ... | 207-215 |
| 8. Ashram News | | 217-226 |
| 9. Obituary | ... | 227-228 |
-

AN APPEAL

SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE CHARITABLE SOCIETY, established in 1973, through the divine direction of **JAGANMATA SRI SRI ANANDAMAYEE MA**, is engaged in managing the institutions like "KANYAPITH" at Varanasi, "STIPEND FUND" at Varanasi, "VIDYAPEETH" at Kankhal, "KARUNA" at Varanasi, "MATA ANANDAMAYEE HOSPITAL" at Varanasi, "PUBLICATIONS DIVISION" at Calcutta, with its Head Office at Matri Mandir, 57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700 019. To run the activities of these institutions an amount of Rs. 12.00 lakhs is needed yearly.

We appeal to all Devotees of **SRI SRI ANANDAMAYEE MA** and generous public and Institutions to send their donations for continuing the works of these institutions. All such donations will enjoy the benefit of deductions under section 80G of the Income Tax Act which is Valid up to 31st March, 1993. All donations either by Cash, Cheque or Draft may kindly be sent to "SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE CHARITABLE SOCIETY", Matri Mandir, 57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700 019.

Debabrata Pal
General Secretary

Prof. Gopal Mitra
President

Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

The Second World War was going on. A devotee of Ma had written the following words in a letter to Her : “Ma, we are mortified by the horror of the war. Now please stop your *lila* of destruction.”

Ma dictated the following in reply : “Write to Baba,” She said, “Lord, you have manifested yourself unto yourself in the form of prayers and wails ; in response to your own prayers, you yourself will stop your destruction — *lila* manifested in the form of mortification in fear of unknown death. Verily, everything is present in oneself. One has to realize just oneself. Say ‘oneself’ or ‘one’s self’. One has to be released from the state of being bound within a particular boundary. Wherever you are, in whichever circumstances, you should concentrate on the lotus feet of the Guru. Just rely on Him. Just try to carry out, with uninterrupted attention, the instructions given by the Guru. Do not damage the power of your brain by turning chicken-hearted, falling into the grip of weakness, getting lost in talks about such states, developing a weak heart, palpitation, etc., and giving up food and sleep. Be heroic, and in whatever form He appears, it is a manifestation of Him alone : to sustain this idea without a break, you should take shelter of the Mother Maha Shakti.”

*

*

*

A lady had written from a distant place, "My husband is aged and almost bedridden I myself am looking after him like a child."

Ma in Her reply dictated the following: "Ma, only service — only relying upon His Holy Feet. Tell Baba that he should devote his time only to the remembrance of God, taking refuge in His Name, studying holy scriptures, talking about noble themes, meditating on the Ishta, doing japa and so on."

* * *

One day, Ma was heard singing a lyric composed and set to tune extempore by Herself. She was singing with a smile:

"Where else will you go ?

All is His ; all belongs to Him alone, in truth.

He is the Essence of all essences,

He alone ferries all to the shore."

Ma in those days showed a great indulgence towards Mukti Baba*, by calling him "Baba, Baba," every now and then. Whatever Baba said, Ma would agree with it. She behaved as if she were a very obedient daughter to Baba.

One day, Mukti Baba and a few of us were sitting near Ma. Suddenly, Ma said to Mukti Baba, "Baba, today you alone were sitting as three persons!"

Mukti Baba: When?

*Mukti Baba—An aged *sannyasi* of Sri Ramakrishna Mission. Later he became a permanent resident of Sri Sri Ma's ashram.

Ma : Just at that time when you were sitting alone in this room. I saw three persons sitting in a row. Also in the past, Baba was a *sadhu* ; he is not a *sadhu* for the first time in this birth. One of them had a loin-cloth, not saffron-red. Another one had put on saffron clothes, like the ones he wears now. That other form, clad in *gerua*, had a little child seated near him. The *sadhu* was fondling the child with great affection. Akhandanandaji was also sitting there.

Mukti Baba : Who was that little child ?

Ma : Myself. You know what the matter is ? The affection you were showing to the child, that too, was with an attitude of reverence. You were taking power from the child in that manner. In fact it was not fondling, you were actually receiving power.

*

*

*

One day, Ma was talking about Her illness during Her stay in Dhaka. In that context, Ma said, "Look, someone had said that at that time this body would meet the end. And a rumour had also spread that Anandamayee Ma was about to quit Her body. For they had seen that I had been taken out of the room and lain in the verandah.

I myself had said, 'Take me to the verandah'. After that, I told them to set my body and limbs in different postures, sometimes in the form of various *asanas*, sometimes I asked them to twist the hands and feet in such a way that the body took a ball-like shape. And you know what I saw happening ?

The middle of the head* was splitting open under the skin like a door. After such *kriyas*, there was a change in that state. This body, too, somehow stayed on."

Mauni Ma was a saint of a quite high spiritual level. She had Ma's vision in various forms. Once when a devotee queried Ma about a particular yogic kriya, Ma said, "Go to Mauni Ma. If you go to Mauni Ma, it will be coming to me. Is Ma separate from this body?"

In one form or another the grace of the Guru must be obtained. Until the Guru is found it is man's duty to invoke and try to realize God by looking upon all forms as His Form, all names as His Name, and all modes of being as His.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

*The middle joint of the skull, called Brahma-randhra, is said to be the door through which the soul of a realized person escapes at the time of death.

Samyama Vrata : Its Observance in Calcutta in 1953 and 1959

Anil Ganguli

(*Continued from previous issue*)

The next *Samyama Mahavrata* to be observed in Calcutta in Ma's presence was fixed for the second week of November, 1959 at the newly founded Ashram at Agarpara. By that time this annual ritual had gained all-India recognition and celebrity. The regular *Vratīs* hailing from different parts of this sub-continent had ceased to be mere beginners in the practice of austerity and meditation ; they could be regarded as veterans in this spiritual discipline. There were also additional recruits from year to year. Our guests included a large number of men of light and leading who were enthusiastic supporters of the *Vrata* and sincere devotees of Ma. Besides, there were some great Mahatmas who added to the value of the function by their presence and by their eloquent discourses.

Ma arrived in Calcutta on the 5th of November, 1959 and straightway started supervising the arrangements made for the occasion. Not a single item of importance escaped Her attention — the pandal, the dais, the space to be reserved for different classes of participants, the pictures and the

placards with mottoes to be hung on the walls, accommodation for guests, arrangements for the preparation and distribution of *prasad* and even for the availability of the waters of holy Ganga.

A spacious pandal had been erected on the extensive lawn of the Ashram, overlooking the Ganga, the sacred river being visible from every seat assigned to the *Vratīs*. The decoration, in Santiniketan style, was simple, graceful and dignified, the atmosphere serene and congenial to meditation.

The usual programme of the *Varta* was strictly followed day after day. Swami Vishnu Ashramji, a well-known *Mahatma* of Northern India, delivered a series of lectures on the meaning and effect of *Samyama Vrata*. Swami Sharananandaji of Vrindaban, a blind *Mahatma*, who had accepted his physical handicap as a gift of God, talked with conviction on the supreme value of self-surrender and unshakable faith in God. Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma made a deep impression on the audience by his piteous appeal to the Divine Mother on behalf of the suffering millions of India heading towards a catastrophic end. It was time, he said, that the demons, out to crush righteousness, should be subdued. There was a ring of sincerity in his invocation which brought tears to the eyes of many of the listeners. Then Professor Tripurari Chakravarti spoke of the lofty ideals of the *Mahabharata*, Dr. Roma Chowdhury on the message of *Ananda*, as explained in the Upanishads and Professor Gauri Nath Sastri on Sri Krishna's lila and on the *Bhagawata*. Sri Jogesh Brahmachari, a senior

Mahatma, who had been in close touch with Ma since the twenties of this century, narrated interesting episodes of Her early life and extracted from Ma witty answers in reply to his challenging questions. Professor Arun Prakash Banerjee, a worthy disciple of Rabindra Nath Tagore, asserted with confidence that he did not believe in book learning and that the Mother cult was the most suitable *sadhana* for man to pursue. And then, there was Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, a giant in the field of scholarship and spirituality who spoke little and proved Carlyle's observation : "Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves." Thus, the *vrata* provided a forum for speakers representing different schools of thought. It was a grand success from intellectual, cultural, religious and spiritual points of view. Each speaker made his contribution in his own way, and with consummate skill. Ma was, as it were, the limitless ocean into which flowed from different directions so many rivers originating from different sources and carrying messages from different angles of vision. Ma, the common object of adoration for all, was available in the pandal practically throughout the week.

We had the good fortune of having Ma's *darsana* during the periods of silence every day. "The present state of the world and the whole of life", observed Soren Kierkegaard, "is diseased. If I were a doctor and were asked for my advice, I should reply : Create silence" (N. Y. Times Magazine, April 6, 1954). Indeed, silence is more eloquent

than words. The profoundest item of the *Vrata* was the period of silence observed in Ma's presence four times daily. Many of the *vratis* who practised meditation with closed eyes felt that they got more out of this silence than from all the other items of the programme combined. Some specialised in making the best of the unique opportunity for Ma's *darsana* during the whole period and the communion thus established was more valuable to them than anything else. One devotee tried both—*darsana* with his open eyes and *japa* with closed eyes. His experience was that each was better than the other and it was difficult to choose between the two.

The foregoing pages give some idea of the wonderful *Vratas* observed in Calcutta in 1953 and 1959. Let me now place before the reader the gist of certain memorable utterances that emanated from Ma in certain sessions elsewhere.

At Naimisaranya I ventured to ask Ma whether the seclusion of one's *puja* room at home was not more helpful for concentration than the uncertain surroundings of a crowded pandal. From practical experience, I knew of two potential sources of distraction in congregational *dhyana* : *Vratis* with bad throats, trying in vain to suppress frequent fits of cough and secondly, those with aching joints, pressing (or pushing) neighbours on either side for extra space in addition to what is enough for an owner of a pair of normal knees. Ma said, in reply to my question, that much depended on the mental state of every individual *sadhaka*, adding that, as a general rule !

“By meditating in a group, especially in the presence of Mahatmas, the less advanced are helped by those who reach greater depths in their meditation since the *prana* (life force) is the same in all beings.”

The seventh *Samyama Vrata*, observed in New Delhi, was one of the most wonderful and harmonious gatherings. On the last day Ma made certain observations somewhat to the following effect :—

“While *Samyama* (self-discipline) does not actually bring about Self-realisation, since He is Self-effulgent and no effort can take us to Him, yet for the purification of body and mind, self-restraint, *satsanga* and the activities practised during *Samyama Varta* are imperative. All these combine to harmonize a human being so as to attune him to the Divine. If you are observant you will notice that everyone here looks different from what he looked a week ago and you will also find that every *Samyama Varta* seems easier than the one before and takes you a step further. The restricted diet and sleep, the life that you lead during these gatherings are an aid to meditation and self-discovery”.*

In 1973, I had the good fortune of participating in the *Samyama Mahavrata* observed in Vrindaban. This sacred place is wonderful. It has a tradition of complete self-surrender. Its sacred temples, holy men and drooping trees seem to invite the visitor to accompany them to the Lord. In its serene atmosphere one breathes, as it were, vibra-

* *Ananda Varta*, Vol. V/4/296

tions of self-less love for God. The Anandamayi Ashram at Vrindaban has, over the years, acquired a special sanctity with its images of Gouranga and Nityananda, of Chhalia Krishna and Ananda Radha and of another pair of Radha-Krishna, besides six Siva Linga. In course of the few years preceding 1973, this Ashram had been graced by Ma's august presence off and on, sometimes for long sojourns. She had inspired so many *Satsungas* in the hall of the Ashram, including a record number of *Samyama Mahavratas* (1964, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1971 and 1973).

Samyama Mahavrata is usually unique everywhere. The 24th session, observed at Vrindaban in 1973, seems to have excelled all others. On the last day of the *Vrata* this time, we had the rare fortune of a special *darsana* of Ma who then seemed to be "God-in-man one with man-in-God". The inter-play between Ma's Outer Manifestation and Inner Being seemed to have reached the game of perfect synthesis. The former was in the role of a loving human Guru giving Her helpless 'children' theoretical lessons, accompanied by practical demonstration; the latter, ever in unison with the One, was apparently oblivious of our separate existence. Strangely enough, the spiritual guide in Ma declared that She was a beggar woman and asked the *Vratīs* for alms: "Fix a definite time every day for praying to God and let that period be dedicated to Him for the rest of your life". This saying combined in itself the humanity of a 'beggar', the assertiveness of a Guru and the affection of a

mother. And what was the prayer to God to be like? Ma set a model for our benefit:—"Lord, I am Thine. Thou art my refuge. Have mercy upon me and show me the path to Thee". This is the English translation (as far as a translation of Ma's sayings is practicable) of the text of the wonderful prayer we heard from Anandamayi—a prayer from Ma to Ma. There was a deep meaning underlying it. And the sound emanating from Ma had a message deeper than the sense conveyed by the three sentences uttered by Her. It travelled beyond the boundaries of words—its appeal was not to the brain but to the core of one's being. Ma, as revealed that midnight in the background of the *Samyama Vrata*, was a sight for Gods—Her face, aglow, Her eyes half-closed, Her body still as a statue, Her hands folded. Ma seemed to be completely merged in Herself, taking no notice of the presence of anyone of us and yet residing in all. Each of us felt Her presence within ourselves according to our own lights.

Worldly life is no doubt a battle-field. By becoming conscious of one's spiritual wealth one must strive to emerge triumphant from the battle.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Sai Ram Sahay

M. Rama Rao

My Pilgrimage

Part—I

The pilgrimage is one of the ways, of God's worship and seeking His grace and blessings. A question may arise why should we go on pilgrimage and worship other Gods abandoning our own Istadaiva. (Chosen God). Lord Krishna says "even those who worship other deities are really worshipping me (Istadaiva) (Gita Chp. 9 V. 23). But any worshipping must be with faith. Let us know what is meant by pligrimage. Swami Dhireshananda say as follows :

A sacred place of Pilgrimage

Swami Dhireshananda Ramakrishna order

(a) Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna Deva said, know for certain that God is manifest in the place where many devotees perform austerities, japa, meditation and earnest prayers for years, with the noble intention to have the vision of the Lord. Divine thoughts get crystallized there, as it were, out of their devotion. Therefore it is quite natural that in these places the devotees easily become absorbed in meditation on God and enjoy His vision.

Countless devotees, saints and realized souls, from time immemorial, have visited these holy places intending to see God. They renounced all their worldly desires, and came to these holy places

to pray with all earnestness to the Lord. As a result, God, though He exists equally at all places, is particularly manifest at these holy places of pilgrimage. (Dakshineswar Kali temple) for instance, is such a place, although there are numerous Kali temple, in the country).

Temples remind us of God and divine inspiration grows within. For those who have devotion already, visits to holy places increase that devotion in them. But those who are unfortunately devoid of devotion, how much can attain there? The place where the devotees discourse on Him is charged with divinity. The Lord's presence can be palpably felt there, and all the places of pilgrimage congregate, as it were, in such place.

Visiting holy places and service to the Lord constitute an important aspect of spiritual practice. This is a means to calm down the turbulent mind. In his life of Sri Chaitanya Deva, Murari Gupta writes, 'So long as the turbulent mind does not become tranquil and pure, the spiritual aspirant should go on visiting holy places. Just as a traveller takes shelter in a favourable place, similarly a spiritual aspirant after his mind become calm, being freed from all the impurities, will go to Puri Dham or to any such holy place, and spend his days in meditation and reflections on God.

In the beginning the aspirant goes to various places of pilgrimages, and later settles down at a place, and becomes engrossed in meditation. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva spoke about bahudak and kutichak monks. Some monks visit

many places and drink water there. The Master referred to them as bahudak. And some after visiting many holy places, attain peace of mind, and build up a cottage and meditate there. They are referred to as a kutichak. The results of a pilgrimage can be directly felt. It is seen that many people struck by miseries, have attained peace after visiting holy places. In a place of pilgrimage seekers of truth assemble around the saints and sages in order to satisfy their queries, and there they worship the various gods and goddesses with devotion. Such a place must also be beautified with lakes and rivers. Monks assemble at such holy places ; one can enjoy their holy company.

(Prabuddha Bharata, August—1987)

In Bhagavadagita and Uddhavagita Lord Krishna says :—

“Arjuna, I am the self sealed in the heart of all beings—(Ch, X—V. 20)

“O. Uddhava I am the self of all creatures, their friend and lord, I am all creatures and the cause of their birth, life, and death”. (Chap. XI —V. 9)

He also says he is mighty elephant Airavata, celestial cow Kamadhaneu, serpent Vasuki, Naga, Ananta, river Ganga (Ganges), the tree Ashwatha, the bird Garuda, the mountain Meru etc., in Bhagavad gita and Uddhava gita.

In Bhagavad gita (Chp.—IX-V. 23) He also says :—

“Even those devotees who are endowed with faith, worship other Gods, worship me alone ; O son of Kunti, though in a wrong way.

Some may raise objection for thirathyatra where people blindly dip in rivers and worshipping god and goddess and they consider Pilgrimage as waste of money and energy and no baneful of spirituality is derived from it. I can say that some moral codes for those who undertake such journeys are prescribed and strictly observed to please God.

Better explanation may be given in the following discourses from the Vedanta and the West delivered by Veer Sanyasi Swami Vivekananda in Sanfransisco, on 29th May, 1900.

Thoughts on the Gita

If a great man who has attained peace of mind and freedom ceases to work, then all the rest without that knowledge and peace will try to imitate him, and thus confusion would arise.

“Behold, Arjuna, there is nothing that I do not possess and nothing that I want to acquire. And yet I continue to work. If I stopped work for a moment, the whole universe would be destroyed. That which the ignorant do with desire for results and gain, let the wise do without any attachment and without any desire for results and gain.”

Even if you have knowledge, do not disturb the childlike faith of the ignorant. On the other hand, go down to their level and gradually bring them up. That is a very powerful idea, and it has become the ideal in India. That is why you can see a great Philosopher going into a temple and worshipping images. It is not hypocrisy.

Later on we read what Krishna says, "Even those who worship other deities are really worshipping me. It is God incarnate whom man is worshipping. Would God be angry if you called Him by the wrong name? He would be no God at all. Can't you understand that whatever a man has in his own heart is God—even if he worships a stone? What of that!

We will understand more clearly if we once get rid of the idea that religion consists in doctrines. One idea of religion has been that the whole world was born because Adam ate the apple, and there is no way of escape. Believe in Jesus Christ—in a certain man's death! But in India there is quite a different idea. There religion means realisation, nothing else. It does not matter whether one approaches the destination in a carriage with four horses, in an electric car, or rolling on the ground. The goal is the same. For the Christians the problem is how to escape the wrath of the terrible God. For the Indians it is how to become what they really are, to regain their lost Selfhood.

On the above facts if we go on pilgrimage with a little and pure faith it will lead us to higher spiritual path.

I had to undertake pilgrimage to Dharmashala and Kukke Subrahmanya on 28th Dec. 1991.

I am a humble and simple devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba.

Bhaktapant :—Once it so happened that a devotee by name part a disciple of another guru had the good fortune of visiting Shirdi. He had no mind

to go but by the persuasion of his friends and relations he agreed and took permission of his own guru at Virat and left with the Party for Shirdi. They all went to the Masjid. The place of Baba's stay. All were pleased seeing devotees worshipping Baba but Pant suddenly got a fit and fell senseless (Perhaps he might have thought at that moment to make Baba his guru). With Baba's grace he regained his consciousness. Baba knowing that Pant was a disciple of another Guru assured him fearlessness and confirmed his faith in his own Guru and addressed "Come what may, leave not but stick to your Bolster (supportive Guru) and ever remain steady always with him". Pant knew the significance of Baba's remarks and he never forgot His kindness in his life.

So I went to Sai Mandir and on 27th Dec. '91 took permission mentally from Him and my guru Radha-krishna Swamiji.

If I mention in short a comparative life story of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sai Baba, it will not be out of place.

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA
AND
SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI
THE IDENTITY OF THEIR MISSION**

P. S. Narayana Rao
Bangalore

An ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who studies the life and mission of Sri Sai Baba cannot but be struck by the perfect identity in respect of their outlook on life and their contri-

tribution for the re-vitalisation of religious faith. Both came upon the Indian horizon when Nastikya (atheism) raised its head and had begun to eat into the very vitals of religious faith. Both were known for their abiding interest and love for the suffering beings. Both stood for the fundamental unity of all religions. Both entered now and then the realm of Brahman and would with considerable difficulty come down their ecstatic heights into the humdrum earthly plane. Both were known for their constant communion with the Supreme.

Birth and early life : In this context, it would be appropriate to consider the historical background of the two saints. This is however available almost to the point of exactitude in the case of Sri Ramakrishna. But it is to some extent inadequate and inexact in the case of Sri Sai Baba. Thus, the exact date of birth, parentage, place of birth, the family background and the spiritual inheritance in the case of Sri Ramakrishna are recorded by chroniclers, whereas there is absence of such detailed information in the case of Sri Sai Baba whose birth and early life are shrouded in mystery. However, on the available evidences, and from the casual utterances of Baba himself, who was reticent in parting with such information, biographers of Baba have made a most reasonable estimate of the year of his birth, as well as the place of his birth and parentage. Be that as it may, it should be noted that it is secondary in its importance compared to the great saint's work of spiritual ministrations. While Baba is worshipped by the countless devotees

as the Avatara of Lord Dattatreya, Sri Ramakrishna is hailed as the Avatara of Sri Gadhadhara, i. e. Narayana.

Sadhanas : Despite their god-hood, both the Avatara purushas underwent a rigorous course of Sadhanas in their early life. It is well known how Sri Ramakrishna started with the worship of the Divine Mother and realised Her as a living reality. Then he practised the several forms of Bhakti Yoga-Dasya, Sakhya and Vatsalya Bhavas and found that each united him with the Supreme. Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual Sadhanas, went later beyond the frontiers of Hinduism. He yearned for God realization through Christianity and Islam. He practised the methods of worship and prayers according to the two religions. He met face to face Lord Jesus Christ appearing before him in the Panchavati garden and entering his heart. He similarly had the darshan of the Great Prophet Mohamad Paygambar, appearing to him in the twilight of the serene and secluded Panchavati, entering his heart as did Jesus Christ. Sri Ramakrishna had already realised the ultimate reality according to the Tantrika Marga and the Advaita Marga.

The result of these Sadhanas was that Sri Ramakrishna was able to establish the fundamental validity and the universality of the different religions which according to his experience are "the different paths leading to the same goal". Although such details of Baba's Sadhanas are not known, it is clear that he practised Yoga, the path of Bhakti as well as the Advaita Marga. His respect for Islam

was because of his being brought up by a Muslim couple in his infancy, while according to his own statement he was born of Hindu parents. This contact he had with the Muslims gave him opportunities to know their religion thoroughly, enabling him to establish the great truth that both the religions lead to the same goal. Although he did not have any occasion either to study Christianity or to follow it in practice, his attitude regarding the religion was one of the respect.

Devotees of various Denominations :

What is of greater consequences is the contribution of these great saints, with their experience and background of the universal religion, to the cause of spirituality. While Sri Ramakrishna used to say repeatedly, "water is called by one as pani, as Tala by another and as water by the third, water as such will not alter its characteristics in the least. In the same manner call God as Rama, Krishna or Allah. All the names describe the only one God, the creator. This means, that the different religions are after all the different paths to reach the Supreme Reality. Likewise, are after all the different paths to reach the Supreme Reality. Likewise, Baba would tell his devotees, that "Rama and Rahim are the same".

Just as Sri Ramakrishna embraced the tenets of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and other religions, and has as his disciples, votaries of the diverse denominations, Baba also established the fundamental validity and unity of all religions and had

devotees flocking to him, belonging to several religious faiths. The annual festivals of Ramanavami conducted with great eclat and pomp at Shirdi have proved to be a convincing testimony to Baba's catholicity. This great event compares very favourably with the annual celebrations of the birthdays of Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohamed, Krishna and the Acharyas of Hinduism at every centre of the Ramakrishna Mission throughout the world. Thus, both the Avatapurushas lived for the unification of the diverse religious faiths. The spiritual and the social consequences of such an outlook among the populace are most significant : disharmony is replaced by harmony, discord by concord, hatred by friendliness, cruelty by sympathy and love.

The emphasis on the universality of the teachings of the various religious denominations was most needed and crucial in the respective times of the two great saints during which our great nation appeared to have been badly mutilated on account of religious fanaticism and attempts at religious conversions. Both Baba and Ramakrishna had identical views in respect of bringing together our people speaking different dialects and practising different religious faiths. So what the latter started in his life time, was continued by the former after the latter's Maha Samadhi in 1886.

Mission of both the saints : The stress on the development of a universal and catholic outlook by both the great saints was based upon a common mission : God realisation. The means for according to both were renunciation of Kama and

Kanchana (lust and wealth). Sri Ramakrishna constantly stressed on tyaga of the worldly pleasures and realisation of the supreme, whether through Bhakti or Jnana or Karma Margas. This mission of Sri Ramakrishna bears perfect identity to that of Sri Sainath. The purpose of Sri Ramakrishna was to set people on the Dharmik path and the path of God realisation. Tirelessly, he would continue his ministration to the scores of devotees flocking to Dakshineswar. In an identical manner, Baba would affectionately instruct the devotees to think of Allah (the Supreme Lord) who is the protector and preserver of every being born into this world.

Both Sai Baba and Ramakrishna never founded a new religion. But both gave renewed faith to every one to continue the tenets of one's own religion. The devotees of both belong to various religious denominations. There are Hindus, Muslims, Christians in the main. The devotees of both have acquired religious catholicity and an outlook of universal brotherhood. May the Blessings of both the avatara purushas protect humanity for all times to come ! May every one attain the highest spiritual goal through their Grace. (From the book Samarpana).

Sai movement was here and there and in a nook and corner in south of India. A devoted great man Sri B.V. Narasimha Iyer of Salem brought it out and spread. His life, in short is noted below.

Salem to Shirdi would have seemed a far cry in the second decade of this century, if it had occurred to any body to link the two places.

Around 1918, when Sri Shirdi Sai Baba attained mahasamadhi, it would have surprised and probably irritated Sri B. V. Narasimha Iyer, leading lawyer of Salem, freedom fighter, and legislator, if anybody had suggested that he should go on a pilgrimage to Shirdi. Perhaps the lawyer would have shot back : "Shirdi ? Never heard of Shirdi. Where is Shirdi ? Who is the presiding deity there ? And why should I go there even if I wanted to go on a pilgrimage ?" Anyway Sri Narasimha Iyer was too busy to think of pilgrimages, as all his time and talents were engaged in his professional work and public activities. Among his contemporaries in Salem were stalwarts like Sri C. Vijayaraghavachariar and Sri C. Rajagopalachari. Like them he was active in the town's civic, social and cultural life. Sri Iyer was a member of the Indian National Congress and a great admirer of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the stormy petrel of Indian politics. In 1917 he was chosen as a member of the three-man delegation appointed by Annie Besant's Home Rule League to go to England and present India's case for freedom. Members of this team were detained at Gibraltar and sent back to India on the orders of Britain's war-time cabinet. Twice he was elected to the Madras Legislative Council, in 1914 and again in 1920. There he exposed the inequities of the alien rule with eloquence.

(To be continued)

Botanic Terms and Expressions in the Vedas and Ramayana (Balmiki) and their Significance

R. L. Sinha, M. Sc., F. B. S.
Indian Forest Service, Lucknow

Abstract

A large number of Botanic terms and expressions find mention in the vedic literature dating back to 1500-2000 B. C. as well as in the Balmiki 'Ramayana'—the great epic of the Hindus composed some times from 200 B. C. to 200 A. D. Such terms and expressions contains information regarding many scientific matters. The present study is a brief analysis of such terms and expressions found scattered in the Vedas and the Ramayana (Balmiki) and their monumental significance in the History of Botany and Indian Medical Science.

(i) Introductory

The Development of any scientific thought in India is inseperable from the growth of religion and philosophy of the Indian soil. The Vedas are commonly understood to be the most ancient genuine compositions of India, dating back to 1500 B. C. and thereabout containing only religious teachings and spiritual prayers. Similarly the Ramayana (Balmiki) is the great epic of the Hindus,

composed sometimes from 200 B. C. to 200 A. D. This is no occasion to enter into the controversy regarding period of the composition of these two great Hindu Scriptures as various authors have put forward different views to determine the same.

The present study is an attempt to show that apart from the information regarding the cultural, spiritual and philosophical status of the vedic era (1500-2000 B. C.) and the Ramayana period (200 B. C. to 200 A. D.) these great works reveal astounding achievements of the Indians in the various realms of the natural science in those antique days. These great works are neither chronological history, nor they are books on science and so far as the question of solid proofs or archaeological evidence is concerned, no architecture, no coin, or no manuscript of these periods are available. But fortunately the above monumental literature is so fairly reliable and exhaustive that it has thrown a flood of light on various branches of science especially the Botany and the Indian Medical Science.

In these works scientific thoughts have been conveyed throughout in the spiritual background. The hymns in these great works being poetic in nature and figurative in form have mostly been confined to the intellectuals only. Consequently Science as it is in these works have not been fully discussed and disclosed.

(ii) Botany and Medicine in Vedas

The Vedas are collections of traditions, precepts and advice as well as of abstract metaphysical spe-

culations directed towards the spiritual benefit of the instructed. The hymns of the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda are full of references to the usefulness of rain, and speculations of the role of light in the manufacture of food in the green plants.

A perusal of vedic literature shows that there has been interest in medicinal plants and their applications in various maladies. There is a verse in the Rig Veda which says that health is maintained when three *dhatu*s or *humors* (i.e. phlegm, bile and wind) are in equilibrium. The Ausodhi Sukta of the tenth mandal in the Rig Veda describes in detail the various uses of plants in medicine. There are references to the use of plants for counteracting the evil influence of demons. Plants are classified as trees, herbs useful to man, climbers, creepers and grasses.

Ayurveda has been translated as the science of life and its exponents were medical men with a thorough-grinding in the knowledge of morphology and properties of plants. It is regarded as the branch of Atharva Veda or as the fifth veda.

At the dawn of human civilization very few medicinal plants were known and used. In the Vedic India (upto 1500 B. C.) not many medicinal plants were in use. Among the holy Vedas written by the Aryans on their arrival in India, Rig Veda is the most ancient.

In this manuscript names of many plants, herbs and trees with their healing properties have been mentioned but they are not grouped in any manner. After Rig Veda three more Vedas were written.

The Atharva Veda, the last one of the three contains a part called 'Ayur Veda', which enunciates the principles of attaining long life. In this we also find names of a good number of plants, but they are not systematically arranged. Much emphasis was however given on charms and supernatural elements.

Medical plants have been intimately associated with the life of human beings since time immemorial. The quest for remedies from vegetable kingdom or other natural sources for the cure of diseases is peculiar not only to mankind, but also to animals. This instinctive search for the remedial plants by the people of ancient India have been aptly depicted in the verses of Atharva Veda.

'Soma' has been described in the Rig Veda as the king of plants having medicinal properties of great value. Its juice immortalises the human being and is liked by the Gods. Its identity is still disputed. Some regard it one of the 'Ephedras'. 'Somras' was commonly prescribed to relieve pain during surgery and childwork.

For baldness 'Nitani' = *Solaum nigrum*—a herbal medicine, was used by Rishi Jamadagni to cure his daughter.

More than 150 herbal and other medicines like the following have been described in the vedas :—

'Ajshurangi' = *Rhus succudanea* ; 'Artu' = *Colasanthus indica* ; 'Aswatha' or 'Pippali'—*Ficus religiosa* ; 'Udamber' = *Ficus recemosa* ; 'Kusht' = *Costus speciosus* ; 'Khadir' = *Acacia catechu* ; etc.

These are being used by the vaidyas even now-a-days.

The following were also used in the Vedas :—

‘Retavari’ = for defect in voice.

‘Pippali’ = *Ficus religiosa* for gout.

‘Kachmachi Nittuno’ = *Solonum nigrum* for hair diseases.

‘Apamarg’ = *Achyranthes aspera* for suppressing hunger and thirst.

‘Sahdevi’ = *Veronia cinerea* for increasing yield of milk in cows and their general diseases.

Descriptions of poisons, medicines to create impotency and seeds of Tridosh. Theory of Ayur Veda and other principles are also mentioned in the vedic literature.

The vedic Rishis knew the preparations of ‘Sura’ or alcohol and other juices of fruits of medicinal herbs e.g. Soma Rus, etc. They used to mix different juices or extracts to yield different medicinal effects.

The Rishis had an idea about the ecological divisions of the plants. They were well aware of the different categories like aquatic, terrestrial as well as amphibious plants. More than 100 medicinal plants gained much popularity in the Vedas, some of which have been mentioned above.

The medicines of Vedas are magicio-religious like Egyptian and Mesopotamian medicines and seem to have been evolved from the Indus Valley civilization medicine with an Aryan element.

It was during Post-Vedic period that Caraka, Susrata, Vaghbatta and Medhava gave empirico-

rational basis to the Indian Medicines. Vedic medicines however were not primitive medicines.

Atharva Veda has references to drugs and plants used by the Atharvian for increasing their virility and fertility and they also had the know-how of the contraceptive drugs from plants and their sterilising techniques.

Lord Dhanvanter wrote Ayur Veda from the information contained in the Atharva Veda.

(iii) Botany in Ramayana (Balmiki)

Period of the composition of Ramayana can be placed between 200 B. C. to 200 A. D. Scientific and Botanical information is found scattered throughout the text. Names of various trees, plants, flowers and fruits are mentioned throughout the text of Ramayana.

Trees like 'Ashoka' = *Saraca indica*, 'Bilwa' = *Aegle marmelus*, 'Sami' = *Acacia suma*, 'Salmadi' = *Bombax ceiba*, 'Sing Sapa' = *Dalbargia sissoo*, 'Varuna' = *Gratavea muruala*, 'Vetas' = *Colamus rotang*, etc. find mentioned both in Ramayana and Vedic literature.

Other trees which find mentioned in Ramayana are :

'Arjuna' = *Terminila arjuna*, 'Asvas' = *Karnas cassiafistula*, 'Asvatha' = *Ficus spp.-F. benqulensis*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Ficus elastica*, *Ficus racemosa*, 'Aguru' = *Aquilaria agaloocha*, 'Asuakarma' = *Vatica rolusta*, 'Ankola' = *Alaquiium lamarckii*, 'Asana' = *Terminia alata var. nepalensis*, 'Atimukta' = *Ougenia oojeinensis*, 'Amalaka' = *Emlice officinalis*, 'Kukuba'

= *Aegle marmelos*, 'Karnikara' = *Pterospermum acerifolium*, 'Kkalaguru' = *Aquilaria malaccensis*, 'Kimsuka' = *Butea monospermum*, 'Kuruvaka' = *Barleria cristata*, 'Kurumata' = *Marselia quadrifoliata*, 'Kasmeri' = *Gmelina arobgea*, 'Ketaka' = *Pandanus tectorius*, 'Kovidara' = *Bauhinia variagata*, 'Kharjura' = *Phoenix sylvestgi*, 'Candena' = *Santalum album*, 'Ciribelwa' = *Derris indica*, 'Curnaka' = *Bambax ceiba*, 'Tala' = *Borarrus flaberrifer*, 'Tamala' = *Garcinia morella*, 'Tinduka' = *Diospyros peregrina*, 'Dhanvana' = *Grewia tilaetoia* or *Grewia asiatica*, 'Naga' = *Mesua ferrea*, 'Naktamala' = *Derris indica*, 'Nipa' = *Anthocephalus chinesis* or *Berringtonia racemosa*, 'Paribhadrika' = *Erythrina variegata*, 'Punnaga' = *Callophyllum indicum* or *Mammea longifolia*, 'Lodhra' = *Symplocas recemosa*, 'Bakula' = *Mimusops elengii*, 'Bijapura' = *Citrus medica limon*, 'Bhandira' = *Albizzia lebbeck*, 'Saptaparna' = *Alstonia aschalaris*, 'Madhuka' = *Madhuca longifolia var. latifolia*, 'Slesmataka' = *Cordia wallichii*, 'Sarja or White morinder' = *Terminalia arjuna*, 'Sarala' = *Pinus roxberghii*, 'Septa Cchada' = *Stercula Foetida*, 'Sala' = *Shorea robesta*, 'Sindhudara' = *Vitex negundo*, 'Hintala' = *Phoenix silyestris*.

2. **Shrubs (Plants)** : 'Arista' = *Sapindus emarginatus*, 'Timiḍa' = *Sesamum orientale*.

3. **Herbs and grasses** : 'Kasas' = *Saccharum spontanum*, 'Kusa grass' = *Desmostachya bipinnita*, 'Darbha' = *Desmostachya dipinnata*.

Note : The above mentioned three names find mention in the Vedas also.

'Dhava' = *Woodfordia fruticosa*, 'Vanira' = *Calamus rotang*.

4. **Flowers and Fruits** : 'Kunda' = *Jasminum multiflorum*, 'Gajapushpa' = *Elephant flower* = *Arum spp.*, 'Campaca' = *Michealia champaca*, *Mangolia grandiflora*, 'Jaba' = *Jasminum sambac*, (*Mallika*, *Yellow Jasmine*, *Evening Jasmine*), 'China rose' = *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, 'Matulinga' (*Sweet Lime*) = *Citrus limettoides*, 'Purna' = *Cupressus spp.*, 'Nalini' = *Nelumbo nucifera*, 'Jambu' = *Vitis vinifera*, 'Takko-la' = *Pinieta aeris*.

(iv) Concluding Remarks

The Vedas as well as Ramayana have been studied from social, political, literary and cultural standpoints. The present account shows that the Vedic era was at a higher level of development in comparison with other contemporary civilizations as far as scientific information and mysticism and herbal charms are concerned. Sufficient records of considerable knowledge are available in the Atharva Veda. Lord Dhanvantari wrote Ayur Veda from information contained in the Atharva Veda. The Saints and Rishis during the Vedic period were acquainted with the life history and properties of plants. The knowledge of ancient botany (early and medievals) is based on the Vedic literature but developed subsequently in the other Post-Vedic period starting with *Sukrat*, *Sanhitas*, *the Ramayana* and other works. The Vedas are pregnant with invaluable philosophies and deep scientific thoughts.

It may be concluded that there is a considerable amount of information in the Ramayana which throws light on the state of scientific advancement in the country at that time.

Both in the Vedas and the Ramayana the data of biological science in the ancient India is shrouded in mystery. Most of the botanical and medical topics relate to a large number of trees and expressions of scientific importance and pertain to plants used for utilitarian economic, social and religious purposes.

The purpose of this article is to emphasis the superiority of the Vedas and the Ramayana and to bring to light the great knowledge of our old Rishis and Saints.

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

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Reminiscences of Anandamayee Ma*

5. (In Association with Ma at Puri Ashram)

Professor Bireswar Ganguly, D. Litt

(*Continued from previous issue*)

After the Durga Puja of 1952 at Allahabad we went with Mother to Kashi ashram, Calcutta ashram at Ekdalia, and Navadwip, and finally we reached the Swargadwar ashram at Puri. Sri Sri Hari Baba, Sri Sri Avadhootji, Sri Sri Paramananda Swami, Sri Sri Gurupriya Didi, Sri Sri Didima and about 20 to 25 other devotees and attendants were there in Mother's party. For making prior arrangements, Kalachand-da and Girin-da had reached the ashram earlier. One *Bhagavat* preacher from Navadwip used to recite from and explain the *Bhagavat Purana* everyday in the afternoon. When that was over, we used to stroll on the sea-beach with Mother for about an hour. Again we would sit for a holy congregation of devotional songs and conversation with Mother upto 8.45 p.m., when the bell for silent meditation would ring. Thus the Swargadwar ashram was virtually converted into *swarga* (heaven). It was so planned that Mother would go on a tour of South India after *Kali Puja*,

*Translated by the author from *Ananda Varta* (Bengali), October, 1989, pp. 345-352.

along with Didima, Didi, Swamiji, Hari Baba, Avadhootji and a few other devotees. I was still then a bachelor. I had joined the Ranchi Government College after leaving the Patna B. N. College just about a year ago. It was my desire to accompany Mother to South India and then to resign from my job, if Mother would so direct me. Of course, I had a mental reservation also, for my old parents and younger brothers and sisters were all dependant on me, and I had a moral sense of duty towards them.

Earlier that year, during the summer vacation, I had asked Mother at Solan in the palace of the Chief of Solan, whether it was advisable for me to perform my *sadhana* (yogic exercises) within family life or after accepting *sannyas* (monkhood). To test me, Mother sent me to the Bahoch Shiva temple in the jungles, about 8 or 10 miles away from Solan, along with Bibhu-da, in order that I might myself decide, whether it was possible for me to stay there alone and practise *yoga-sadhana*. After returning from there, I told Mother that I was not yet ready for so much loneliness and that I would rather like to roam about in Mother's company for some time. Mother replied smilingly, "The time is not yet ripe for your *sannyas*."

This time again at Puri, when I asked Mother about marriage versus monkhood, Mother replied, "Ask me the same question tomorrow after visiting Jagannath temple." Next morning we set out in several rickshaws for the temple after finishing our morning rituals. In those days there were no

devotees at Puri, who could provide motor cars for Mother's conveyance. I was sitting on the foot-board of the rickshaw in which Mother was travelling and was asking Her many questions out of joy. When we reached the Jagannath temple, Mother told me, "We are going inside the temple. You should rather go round the temple for some time and then enter." I was being awestruck by the grandeur of the sculpture of the outer walls of the temple. Suddenly I discovered a few pornographic idols, sculptured on the walls and felt very sad about this aspect. However, I could not check the temptation of glancing at such indecent art. The extra-mural survey being over, when I entered the temple and glanced at the awkward idols of Sri Sri Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra on a bigger canvas than seen earlier in pictures and photographs, I had a spirit of wonder rather than that of devotion. I felt that I was far removed from the state, in which the devotee is liberated after having a vision of God *Vamanavatara* on the chariot of Sri Sri Jagannath. On our return journey in the rickshaw, I expressed my repulsion and wonder on the above two kinds of sights and Mother said, "There are many kinds of mystic significance of these. Ask Hari Baba about the significance today during the daily *satsang* (holy congregation) and he will remove your doubts." Accordingly I asked Hari Baba in the evening *satsang*, "Maharaj, how could the beautiful Lord Krishna with a flute in his hands at Vrindavan turn into the monstrosity of Jagannath at Puridham ?

And why have morally repulsive pornographic statues been engraved on the outer walls of the temple ?” Hari Baba replied, “I can give a reply to your first question here in the *satsang*, but I shall give replies to your second question in private.” The summary of his replies to the first question in public and the second question in private, in the presence of only three devotees, is reproduced below.

The significance of Jagannath statue :

To understand the significance of Jagannath statue, we must try to know the history of the Hindu nation and the science of idol-worship. Though there is a specific discussion about this matter in the *Utkalkhanda* of *Skandapurana* and the *Puri Mahatmya*, it is necessary to read the following books for purposes of research :—

- (1) The Rig-Veda commentary of Sayanacharya,
- (2) Maitri Upanishad,
- (3) Niladri Mahoday,
- (4) Madla Panjika,
- (5) Kapil Samhita,
- (6) Vishnu Puran,
- (7) Vishnu Rahasya,
- (8) Srimad Bhagavat,
- (9) Anargha Raghava,
- (10) Hari Vansha,
- (11) Devi Mahatmya of Markandeya Puran,
- (12) Purushottam Mahatmya of Skanda Puran,
- (13) Gautamiya Kalpa,
- (14) Chaitanya Charitamrita,

- (15) Brahma Puran,
- (16) Sanat Kumar Samhita,
- (17) Sarada Tilak,
- (18) Brahma Samhita,
- (19) Vishwava Sena Samhita, etc.

As there is an historical aspect of the statues of Jagannath, Valaram and Subhadra, so also there is a symbolic and spiritual aspect. Let us discuss the historical and mythological aspects first. The name of King Indradyumna occurs in Maitri Upanishad. According to the Utkalkhanda of Skanda Puran, the Malava King Indradyumna established the idol of Nilmadhava in the huge temple of Nilachal by the side of the sea in the *Satya Yuga* (Golden Age). After his death the temple remained submerged under the sand of the sea completely for a long time. Later on in *Kali Yuga* (the age of materialism) a King, named Gal discovered and renovated that temple. According to Narad Puran, Brahma Puran and Kapil Samhita, Jagannath, Nil Madhava and Purushottam are different forms of Vishnu or Krishna and whereas Jagannath and Valaram had four hands, their sister Subhadra had only two hands. Kapil Samhita was written after the incarnation of Sri Chaitanya Deva. That proves that about five hundred years ago the three idols of Jagannath temple were not without proper hands and feet. According to Chaitanya Charitamrita, Sri Chaitanya Deva had witnessed the Jagannath idol with four hands. Upto the sixteenth century A. D. the idols of Jagannath, Valaram and Subhadra looked like the three marble statues of

the old Ananta Vasudeva temple of Bhubaneshwar. In the tenth century A. D. Jajati Keshari, the son of King Janmejaya made renovation of the old temple of Purushottama and he was conferred the title of Indradyumna II after he installed the statues of Purushottama and His spiritual consort. At the fag end of the eleventh century A. D. and the beginning of the twelfth century A. D. Anantavarman Chodaganga, the great Vaishnava King of Utkal, a contemporary of Acharya Ramanuja, had started the renovation of the modern Jagannath temple. The three idols of Jagannath temple at Puri are made of wood and hence they are called *Daru-Brahma* (Wooden God). After the demise of Sri Chaitanya Deva in 1533 A. D., the Muslim Kings made several attempts at the demolition of the temple of Puri. But the serving Pandas of the temple kept the three wooden idols concealed in a cave near the Chilka lake. Once when Pratap Rudra Dev, the King of Utkal went on an expedition of South India, the Muslim Governor of Bengal attacked the Jagannath temple with his troops. Kalapahar attacked the temple in 1568 A. D. King Aurangzeb had sent orders to Nabab Ikram Khan to destroy the temple of Jagannath. On that occasion the wooden idols were saved by the efforts of Dravya Singh, the King of Khorda. When Kalapahar entered the temple of Jagannath after demolishing hundreds of Hindu temples, and did not find the wooden idols in the temple, he ultimately succeeded in discovering them at Parikud near the Chilka lake. Then he set fire to the idols

and threw them in the Ganga river near Kolaghat. Besar Mahanty, a devotee of the Lord saw the half-burnt idols floating on the Ganga and he concealed them in the house of Khandaik, the Chief of Kujanga fort of Utkal. During the reign of Ramachandra Dev, the King of Khorda, the wooden idols were brought to Puri by himself, and he performed the re-installation ceremony of the Lord, after making repairs and repainting and construction of the jewel-studded throne of the Lord. However, since then the previous beauty of the images has never been witnessed.

Symbolic Significance :

Even for understanding the symbolic significance of the wooden images, we may fall back on a mythological episode. According to the narration of Shishuram and Sagunia Das, two scholars of Utkal, regarding the installation of Jagannath images by King Indradyumna, the old celestial sculptor, Vishwakarma had laid certain conditions for the engravement of the wooden images of Jagannath, before the King. The King was debarred from opening the door of the temple till the images were completed, by the condition laid down. However, the King became curious as well as impatient, when there was an unusual delay in the completion of the images and hence he opened the door before due time. He was astonished to witness the beautiful body of the images, in which the hands and legs had not yet been attached. As the promise of the King was broken, Vishwakarma,

the old sculptor vanished immediately. The King was repentant and slept on grass. However he saw a dream in which Lord Jagannath said, "My son, don't worry. I shall appear in this form in *Kali Yuga*. You may prepare my hands with gold. This is one of my innumerable forms." King Indradyumna acted accordingly.

According to another mythological episode the symbolism of the arm-less and foot-less wooden images of the Lord is explained in the following way. All devotees of the Vaishnava sect know that there are eight symptoms of *sattwa-guna* (pure spiritual qualities), e. g., ecstasy, shivering, tears, sweating, trembling, titilation of skin etc. But we get a vivid picture of physical withdrawal of the organs of activity along with the organs of sense like the withdrawal syndrome of the tortoise, in the wooden images of Jagannath, which is comparable to one of the symptoms of the *Sthitaprajna*, as described in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. Once, in Dwaraka, Rukmini, Satyabhama and other consorts of Lord Krishna requested Krishna's mother, Daivaki to describe the playful activities of Krishna at Vrindavan. She kept a condition before accepting the proposal. When she would narrate the divine play of Krishna at Vrindavan, as heard earlier from Uddhav, the doors should be kept closed, and Valaram and Subhadra should guard the gate, so that Krishna might not listen to his own boyhood frolics from his mother. Accordingly, Valaram and Subhadra were kept as sentries near the gate. However, Krishna appeared suddenly and stood beside

Subhadra. While the two brothers and the sister were listening to the faint utterings of the mother coming from inside, there appeared the eight holy symptoms in the bodies of the three. When Lord Brahma witnessed the last symptom of withdrawal of sense organs in the bodies of the three, from heaven, tears rolled down His cheeks and He saluted the divine players. Later on the heavenly sculptor, Vishwakarma appeared as an old sculptor before King Indradyumna and prepared the images, as witnessed by Brahma. It is expected that the eight holy symptoms would be manifested in the bodies of devotees after witnessing these divine images. Hari Baba began weeping after narrating this episode.

The mystic symbolism of pornographic images

The next day, Hari Baba gave us confidentially the following explanations of the big and small porno images, sculptured on the walls of Jagannath temple :—

(1) All the nine *rasas* (Poetic Sentiments), all ideas and external forms are inherent in Lord Jagannath. The erotic sentiment is the primal sentiment. 'Kling' is the seed sound of Krishna and is manifested in the erotic sentiment.

(2) The pornographic images are meant for testing the purest state of mind and lust-less-ness of the devotees. Sri Chaitanya Dev did not observe those images, when he visited the Jagannath temple. They are forbidden for mendicants and bachelor devotees. If a devotee, while going round the temple, does not observe those images or remains

mentally un-affected even after observing them, then only will he be competent to feel the eight holy symptoms after witnessing Lord Jagannath in the inner sanctorum. That is to say, he will have the sublimation of his *Kundalini* (solar plexus) and he will be exalted to witness Lord Nil Madhav in the innermost recess of his heart.

(3) Those devotees, who find passion excited after observing the porno images before witnessing Lord Jagannath, will find at the time of sexual inter-course, that along with the porno images the grotesque image of Lord Jagannath is peeping through the mind's eyes, and as a result the offspring would become devotees of Lord Krishna in due course.

(4) When the devotees sit in meditation in their chapel after visiting Jagannath temple, they will often discover that along with the images of wooden God, the pornographic images are also appearing in the mind. This will aid the sublimation of the energy in the solar plexus. This may be understood with the help of the analogy of gas lamps, in which the flame above is fed by the chemicals at the bottom of the lamp. The semen has to be ionised into subtle *ojha* (energy) through some yogic methods before it can ascend to the *sahasrar chakra* (cerebellum) from *Muladhar* (solar plexus) through *sushumna* (innermost and invisible nerve inside the spinal column). Hence the pornographic images were foisted as a *Tantric* method of arousing *Kundalini* energy, according to the advice

of compassionate Rishis (spiritual researchers) of ancient times.

Marriage and the Rishi-way of life :

Later on, when I reported to Mother about Hari Baba's exposition, Mother said, "Nilmani, now you are able to understand as to why this body asked you to witness Lord Jagannath inside the temple after observing the extra-mural images. Four method of *sadhana* (spiritual practice) is that of the Rishis, for you had the sentiment of pleasure along with repulsion, while observing those images. You should marry after going to Ranchi, for the time of mendicancy is not yet ripe." The next day, Mother sent me some written commandments on the Rishi-way of life, through Bunidi (Sister Buni).

Be truthful in every way. Without purity one cannot advance towards Divinity.

--Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

The Lady all in White

(AN ALLEGORICAL TALE)

Richard Lannoy

Be vacant, and you will remain full,
Be worn, and you will remain new.
Clay is moulded into vessels,
And because of the space where nothing exists
We are able to use them as vessels.
When all in the world understand beauty to be
beautiful, then ugliness exists.

Three quotations from the Tao Te Ching.

There once was a great city in which there lived a master artist whose fame spread to the four corners of the world. Indeed it was the reputation of the Master which shed lustre and renown upon the fair name of this city. Notorious for his mysterious and secluded habits, the Master was so esteemed by the population that he required no patron to support him, nor the official backing of the government. Whatever work he executed he did solely for his own delight, or at least for purposes known only to himself. Few people had visited him and none dared to consider themselves his intimate friends. Had it not been for the quality of profound compassion that pervaded his entire creative work the Master would have been mistaken for one of those obscure artists who live a remote life, aloof from the affairs of the world.

His paintings, masterpieces of an unsurpassable creative invention, had for subject the images of all types of people, the humble, the eminent, the rich, the poor, scholar, craftsman, peasant and poet. He never shrunk from the most tragic elements of life, whereas at the same time, in all his work, even portraits of the forlorn, the forgotten, those in the most pitiful misery, there was a great reverence for life and a strangely pervasive feeling of joy. Though some of his imagery frightened people, its mood could evoke happiness and laughter as well as grief. All recognised that this was creative genius with energy and scale for exceeding the limitations of lesser men.

Mystery enveloped the figure of the Master, but it was observed that those few who were known to have seen him, though silent or reserved in their manner of reporting the occasion, frequently bore an expression of excitement or even of elation on their faces when questioned.

In the kind of circles where such matters are discussed with considerable vigour, not to say authority, there was one old man, held in great respect by people whose judgment was never for a moment questioned, who could speak of the Master with more knowledge than most would dare to boast. One day, while speaking to a gathering of his friends, this old man caused considerable commotion with some news he was eager to impart.

“Listen friends”, he said, “when I arrived in the Master’s house I was ushered into a room such as I have never seen before. The Master was

standing in the middle of a bare space, for this huge room contained no decoration of any kind, there was not a single piece of furniture and the walls were of plain white. Yet it was a noble room most nobly proportioned. The Master did not turn to look at me but was gazing with a deeply abstracted air at the sole object in all that bare space—a large white canvas—upon which there was no sign or trace of work commenced. He was silent for some while, a silence that was positively uncomfortable in such a setting. But I had ample time to overcome my amazement and realise that the Master was not as it were caught in a moment of absent minded reverie, but in his concentration on that empty canvas there was a purposefulness, something unutterably stark, something I can best express as both serene and kind.

“After several minutes of total silence he slowly turned to me and said that this empty canvas had for a long time been a source of constant interest and preoccupation. He told me that he had several times completed a picture on this very canvas but had stripped it down and started afresh. People had not evinced any particular enthusiasm for the works he had already produced on it. Therefore he had set himself the task of creating once again on the spotless white a totally new picture and might continue to do for as long as his powers endured. But more of his project I could not persuade him to divulge.”

As it so happened, in the weeks following this incident many conflicting rumours flew around the

city concerning the progress of the new picture, until once again the old man was able to give his friends a more reliable account of what had happened. It appears that the Master, normally in the habit of selecting his models for painting from among the people, had decided that for once he would not proceed as usual. After prolonged concentration he had formed in his mind's eye a subject so sublime, so perfect, that it must be an act of pure creation. Standing before the white expanse of his canvas he was inspired to produce an image of spotless purity. Now it was known that the Master hitherto had worked slowly, building, altering, rebuilding from his palette, images of detailed subtlety requiring considerable time for completion. On this occasion, the old man reported, alone in his house, the Master had awoken as from a deep trance, and in a single gesture had created on the white canvas the perfect form of a fabulous being, not an imaginary fantasy vague in outline, but palpably and with incomparable loveliness, the portrait of a "Lady All in White."

Soon after this news became widely talked about in the city the Master himself invited a number of people to visit him. They had returned from their visits mystified and stirred by the new work. One of them said : 'He summoned me to him and said, 'my friend, you see on this canvas the figure of a lady dressed all in white. Now you may wonder why she alone appears on such an expanse of canvas, but I must tell you that this picture is but scarcely begun. In the first moment of creation I

have, indeed, drawn the most important and central theme, but I can't leave this picture as it stands now. So I am asking you to let as many people as possible know about this new work. I want those who are really interested to come themselves and look at the Lady All in White. I want to try and break down the gulf that seems to have kept people away from here. I believe that this picture could become a more meaningful part in the daily life of the people. I intend to incorporate within the picture's design various groups of people. And for this I am asking friends here so that I may put them into my picture. If I can persuade them to drop their self-consciousness by concentrating on the central figure of the picture, forget to pose, as they habitually do whenever they come to my house, forget about colours, tones, harmonies ; if they should renounce their ideas about how pictures ought to be painted, about techniques and composition, I will put them on my canvas with all their concentration clearly delineated. Go now and let it be known that I await all who wish to come.' So saying he spoke not a word more, but as I left I noticed him smile, more to himself than at me, as if secretly amused and eager about some project or purpose known only to himself."

The invitation spread through the city swiftly and even travelled abroad to other countries where these matters are as much a topic of interest as in the city. Many people responded to the invitation, the curious, the grieved, the idle, the bored, scholars, princes, statesmen and beggars. Some-

~~~~~  
times they came alone, sometimes in crowds, and while some returned many times, others were content with a single visit which they long remembered.

What exactly was the nature of the attraction that the figure of the "Lady All in White" had for so many people? It is difficult to define, beyond the singular quality of this image, the precise reasons for the Master's success. By careful examination of the scene it represents, we may approach somewhere near to an idea of the very powerful appeal that was focussed on the main figure of the composition. All other persons within the picture, even the lines, the light and shade, the movement, were indissolubly and subtly linked to the central figure. The soft black strands of her hair were arranged as a frame to her face, accentuating the strange mistiness and withdrawn expression in her eyes. One felt that in the very brilliance of the space which enveloped her, she was turned to a concentration of quite extraordinary pitch, as if the air whispered. There were trees and flowers, rivers and hills in the background, and movement—all was animated, intense, vital. Here was a masterpiece which defined nobility of soul as precision. The greater the precision the more its capacity to suggest limitless meanings. The scene was both dynamic movement and serene stillness, a microcosm in which the ordinary world was transmuted into something more intensely real. A self-contained scene, it reached beyond the limits of its frame to stir the whole broad panorama and depths of life.

Among those who were frequent visitors to the Master's house was a man of great erudition, a famous Critic. When he heard of the new picture he declared : "Of course I cannot pronounce upon the value of this work until I have seen it, but it appears that the Master still retains some curiously archaic ideas. There is no special magic attached to creative activity ; it is illusionism, depending upon the application of certain specific techniques. Beauty is a subjective whim and its meaning originates not in fantastic imagery but in the perfect control of techniques."

This opinion of the Critic was uttered with a show of his habitual ill-temper and many people strongly reprovved him for his conceit, until their heated retorts stung him into the necessity of substantiating his remarks : "All right then !" he shouted. "I'll go and see for myself what all the fuss is about." He went to the Master's studio full of misgiving, but after a long perusal of the great picture, fell into silence, for the simple beauty of it disarmed him. After some time the Master discussed his work with him at length.

"I want everyone to experience a feeling of exhilaration and delight," he said, "and although the very nature of my picture is to have its definite shape within the limits of its frame, I want people to experience a feeling of great concentration, as if everything in life were there, but enhanced with poetic meaning. I want them to feel the picture as a part of life, but a more ordered one, something more acute, where all is disposed in a balanced

---

design. But the design is merely the frame work, because within it I want all to feel free.

“Furthermore,” he continued, “I have lately grown dissatisfied with the limitations of a picture which once completed, remains fixed, an unchanging image that for the rest of time will remain as rigidly similar at it was at the moment of completion. I have decided to give the picture a role in the life of the city that none of my pictures has had before. I shall constantly change it, so that no person seeing it more than once will ever see it the same again. It will be like a constantly changing drama, with no repeat performances. You see, for a long time I have pondered on the role my art plays in people’s lives. What is a picture? It is never a complete world. It depends upon certain highly significant aspects of life being selected, purified, enhanced. For each beholder the picture means, inevitably, a different thing; each man projects into it his own dreams and desires—and to each it gives different encouragement. But at the most I can only suggest perfection, never state it. That is why I chose white as the very focus of attention in the harmonious relationship of colours. White, as you know—pure white is an impossibility in pigment, a contradiction in terms, it is optically and chemically impossible. By introducing the colours of the surrounding figures in close proximity to the white I can at most heighten the effect of greater white purity. If I have succeeded in my central figure, I have failed so far to reach the same degree of success in the rest of the picture. Until

no single flaw remains I must continue. I may even have to begin all over again. Of course all this talk is of technique, of tricks so to speak ; like a conjuror I must have the whole-hearted participation of my audience. I am not merely interested in sleight of hand. This may seem to you like an arduous task but, I assure you, for me there is no other delight but the delight of continuous creation.”

Returning to the company of his friends the Critic talked earnestly of his views about the picture. “Oh how subtle, how crafty he is !” he exclaimed, “and how persuasively he seeks to win me over. Talking of colour harmonies and the like, when he knows that this is my special province ! Let us be frank about it, the Master certainly knows how to present a strong case. Even though I do say that he employs certain tricks to gain his advantage. I have imprinted on my memory every mark of his brush, I have analyzed the method of colour composition, I have examined every detail. But I will confess that I have to admit that although I may know all the intricacies of his technique, nevertheless the full meaning of his work eludes me. It depends, in all its nobility of scale, detail and complexity, upon, upon . . .” and here he became, as it were, violently, upset and distracted as he searched for words, “upon that central white.” It is curious how it exerts a kind of negative attraction upon the figures in the coloured areas of the scene, upon the figures gathered round the “Lady All in White.” I regret those figures being there at all, for they not only crowd the canvas but



they distract from the splendour of the main theme." His scepticism aroused some people into replying angrily about "his coldness and lack of appreciation for the warmth and humanity which characterise the work of the Master." "What" somebody enquired, "is so special about that white?"

The Critic was hesitant and slow to reply. "When one seeks the meaning through the method, one always remains outside the conception of the work—I would look into the picture, or try to, and finally I find that it depends upon that spotless figure in white—and when I look at that aura of whiteness I see . . . ." he fumbled for words, a look of wild desperation on his face.

"But what do you *see*?" everyone cried.

"I see that there is nothing—nothing—nothing," and the great Critic was so choked with sobs that his words were smothered, while all listened, tense with silent astonishment. Suddenly the Critic looked up and faced his anxious interrogators, his eyes were not focussed on them however, but upon some apparently distant object. "Nothing," he gasped, "nothing," and rushed moaning out of the room and into the street. His voice echoed along the pavement in the few seconds that elapsed before his friends, stunned by this extraordinary behaviour, hastily followed him out into the street. They immediately guessed he had taken the road which led to the house of the Master, and as they arrived somewhat breathlessly at the door, he was about to go in. But he turned for a moment, glared at them with an expression of pitiful torment and

cried out, "leave me alone!" and rushed inside. But his friends, anxious to see that no harm should come to him, stood around in the street talking excitedly arguing as to whether they should follow him in or not and wondering whether perhaps he was out of his mind. After some time the Critic re-appeared, his whole appearance changed, his voice shaking with emotion as he spoke to the hushed crowd which had gathered.

"I have examined the picture again" he told them, "and whether we have been deceived or not I cannot tell, indeed I do not care—take it how you like, but as sure as I am standing here, as sure as water can turn into ice, there is nothing there now on the canvas, nothing but spotless white."

Uttering these words and leaving no time for further explanation he slammed the door in their faces. The Critic was never heard of again. Nor did anyone feel inclined to speak of him, for when next day his friends, who could no longer contain either anxiety or curiosity, again went to the house of the Master, they found the picture, with but few alterations, virtually the same as before. The disappearance of the Critic would have been completely forgotten had not a few of his more observant friends thought that they could detect a certain marked resemblance to his features discernible in one of the figures in the picture who stood near to the "Lady All in White."

Reprinted from Ananda Varta, Vol. VII, No. 2

# Ma touches us : 10. On the question of learning Western Science.

**Dr. P. C. Datta**

Once, at Kishenpur Shri Ma Anandamayee Viswa Mandir (Dehradun) a University student asked Ma whether the science which he was learning so earnestly, is AVIDYA, as stated by some of the Ashramites ! Ma replied, 'Yes, it is so'.

Then, why should I learn science unnecessarily? Ma explained : Her body never discards anything in the creation of God. Everything is necessary. Your worldly wisdom even if unable to lead you to immediate realization of the Self, it can facilitate KARMA for the service of parents, family and humanity with selfless Love. This sacrifice of the selfish desires will open the realm of Vidya to see the ultimate reality, the SELF. She told a story : A wife loved her husband and served him with sincerity. Suddenly the husband became invalid and unable to earn money. By begging she was serving the husband with devotion. One day when she was going with her husband on her shoulder, the husband saw a beautiful prostitute and was shedding tears, with the thought that he had no money in exchange of which he could spend some time with that lady. When a drop of tears

fell on her body, she enquired about the cause of it repeatedly and uncovered the husband's pain. She collected the required money by begging from door to door and arranged the fulfilment of his desire. This sacrifice for the pleasure of her beloved, opened her heart and she realized God.

We can summarize the teaching in this way : Utilize the worldly wisdom (AVIDYA) in a sacrificial way of *Karma Yajna*. Convert your work to Worship. Knowledge of the diversity of world phenomena alone will attract you and develop lusts (*Kama*), from which originates anger (*Krodha*) — from that illusion (*Moha*), then loss of memory (*Smriti-bhransa*), then loss of senses (*Buddhi nasa*) and ultimately spiritual destruction (*Pranasa*). *Avidya* (worldly wisdom — morality, rituals *Yajna*, *dam*, recitation of *Vedas* or other *stotras*, reading scriptures, *Sankirtan*, etc. though not equivalent to divine light, on the contrary cover us in darkness, still, this *Karma Yajna* saves us from destruction. Dutyfulness towards husband or wife or family, children, society, humanity etc., though are different from knowledge of *Brahma* or God or Self, can save us from downfall and destruction. *Apara vidya* of *Mandukopanishad* includes different worldly sciences e. g. science of pronunciation (*Shiksha*), principles of ritual rules (*Kalpa*), grammar, glossary of technical words of *Shastras* (*Nirukta*), Prosody (*Chhanda*), Astronomy (*Jyotish*) etc. (*Manduko*, 1/1/5). These were sciences, which protect us from destruction or losing oneself in the diversity of the Sense World. Then what is

*Vidya* ? Aspiring divine Unity principle in diversity, and searching the ultimate One. *Mandukopani-shat's Para Vidya* means that technology by which the aspirant can realize that Reality which cannot be felt by senses, and is colourless, without origin, without sense organ, without working organs, eternal, pervading all diversities, finest of all, originator of the living world and unchangeable (*Manduko. 1/1/6*). Thus *Avidya* is not opposite to *Vidya*. Just like learning and practising swimming techniques and actual swimming are different but not opposite. Practising techniques is not swimming but has the potentiality. But attempts to swim before learning techniques, is dangerous.

Finally, what are the instructions of Ma ?

- 1) Learn *Avidya* for utilizing in *Karma Yajna* (including all rituals).
- 2) If *Karma Yajna* is performed sincerely that will be converted into worship of the One (*Vidya*).
- 3) So, both *Vidya* and *Avidya* are necessary.

*Ishopanishat* says : "He who performs *Vidya* and *Avidya* both together, overcomes the risks of downfall or destruction by *Avidya* and attains *Amritam* (realization to Self by *Vidya* (*Isho, 11*)).

Work without worship and worship without work have been disapproved by *Ishopanishat*. Ma in reply to a letter from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, say :

"If one's actions are carried out in a spirit of dedication to THAT, there will be no regret afterwards. For the server who works for the highest

good, there is hope that the power of inner vision may come to him. Endeavour to make yourself patient, calm, firm, serene and deeply serious. The body must be kept healthy and fit for the great service of God in the shape of man (*Jan janardhan ki mahan seva*).”

Those who perform all activities only (rituals and other duties with proper respect), enter into the emblinding darkness (because the worldly wisdom can enlighten the intellectual and sub-intellectual rules or scientific formulae but makes a barrier to realization of supra-intellectual higher truths). But those who are engaged only in worshipping (or in discussions on the nature of God, His existence or not-existence, etc.), enter into a deeper darkness. They neither progress spiritually nor are widened mentally like the renouncer of self-interests in work. They are stagnated in imaginary intellectual burdens) (*Isho*, 9).

Ma says : Your understanding means standing under new burdens of thoughts.

Another *Shlok* seems to be more clear : “Those who worship (by learning and obeying) Nature alone (unconcerned about the origin) are in darkness. Those who worship (try to trace and realize) the abstract Origin, ignoring Nature, are in more darkness (in the complexity of vague imagination) (*Isho*. 12).

Static calm of unity and dynamic activity of diversity must exist together for total development. This is the main principle of modern life science also.

Mystic nature is an inherent property of living man, says Einstein. This means that such a person does not accept the ephemeral apparent diversity as real. What is the cause of this behaviour? Ma Anandamayee says : you do not like sorrow, you want pleasure. Because you are an embodiment of eternal pleasure. When you buy a cloth you want it to persist forever. Because you yourself are that Eternity. You are not happy with unreal things, you want real truth. Because you yourself are the Reality behind unreal diversity.

“A golden glittering dish covers the face of Truth ; Oh Nourisher (Sun) of the world kindly uncover the Truth for me.” *Isho*. 15.

This is the cry ever rising from the heart of a living man. “Ma, I find no peace in anything of the world. How can I get peace?”—It was the question of a devotee. Ma answered smilingly, “What a nice condition you are telling of? How can you get peace in unreal things? How can you rest in ever-changing restless things? You can not get rest unless you realize the Self.” Just like a musk deer, we roam about wildly to discover the source of the smell which actually occurs within us, in the Self.

This mystic nature of a Living man has produced Sciences, philosophies and religions. Sciences have to depend on organs of senses and in the activities of which the brain occupies the key position. But modern science believes that the senses do not reveal the Truth. They act as barriers. You fail to understand the texture of snow, by putting it on the

tongue or by pressing it with fingers. By both the processes the snow melts immediately. Similarly, as modern science experiences, senses themselves are barriers in sensing the higher truths.

Religions from the beginning, are found to prescribe certain psycho-somatic exercises, for purification of senses from the impure selfish desires. Rituals and performances are also modified with the same purpose. The purpose is to develop an inner or superior consciousness for realization of higher Realities, to develop a sense of understanding the guidance of *Antar-Guru* (the inner Guide). Religious performances and Material science (*Avidya*) are for service of God through parents, children, guests, poor beggars, society, community, etc. Western cultures have cultivated *Avidya* with much devotion, while East is concerned most with *Vidya*. Upanisads and Ma suggest a combination of the two.

Revolutionist Barin Ghosh compares these two inclinations nicely : West being materialistic in its views is wedded to the so-called *realism*. Great progress achieved in the realms of material science has stressed this viewpoint there and discouraged the awakening of the subtles and higher faculties of man... The East is by nature, culture and tradition, meditative, inward and intuitive. So here the higher and truer and more comprehensive Science of Spirit has been studied for ages. Truth-poised beings like Mother Anandamayee and Sri Aurobindo are the natural guides to these in-accessible heights, into the deep mysteries behind creation." (Ma Anand.—Devotees : 152-3).



The mystic senses seek harmony in the material sciences as well as in the spiritual sciences. Ma helps in both the field, not by words, but by presence only. Educationist G. S. Dasgupta says, 'All Her activities are directed to the uplift of the human soul whose clouded vision is responsible for all the disasters of the Society. She enables all persons pass through the trials and tribulation of worldly life, with strength and determination as well as through all the difficult, intricate paths of spiritual progress or *Sadhana*. Sometimes Her silence becomes more eloquent and effective than Her words' (Ma Anand. : 49).

Thus, through *Avidya*, one mystic aspirant can overcome the possibility of death ; One has to practice *Vidya* also to attain afterwards a special consciousness, the *Ananda Rupam Amritam Brahma*. That consciousness is completely different from that attained through intellectual pursuits. Philosopher Dr. Brahma explains : .. One is infinitely removed from the other, Spinoza draws the distinction between the adventitious ideas and intuitive ideas and shows how the former fall short of the latter. The deeper we dive into the stream of consciousness, the nearer we approach the unruffled calm, the transparent serenity of the soul. As by the *mystic* is meant one who has dived very deep into the mysterious innermost current of consciousness, it follows that his experience must possess a transparency and clearness, a vividness and vivacity that is unique, and as such, cannot but carry conviction and appear to be self-evident (Ma Anand. : 58).

Ma is a new mystic power, who even in silence guides people from Avidya to Vidya, and Vidya to *Amritam* (the Absolute) “Her illuminating discourses show unmistakably the presence of a *Jnana*, a realization or an *anubhava*, that is not due to the training of the intellect and which is above the piecemeal working of the faculties. Her strong personality, Her indomitable will, Her deep devotion to truths, Her independence, Her care-free ease, and spontaneity, all show beyond doubt the realization of the ultimate Reality that is perfect freedom... and she always lives in *Satchidanand* Consciousness. (Dr. Brahma, Ma Anand. 64).

O mystic Minstrel holding the Wizard's Wand !  
 O Envoy of the Ethereal to Clay !  
 Teach us until our mind can understand  
 Thy gospel of Ananda, and come to stay.

—(Dilip Kr. Ray, Ma Anand. 100)

### CORRIGENDA

#### Ma Touches Us : 9. In our Social Revolution

| <i>Page</i> | <i>Para</i> | <i>Line</i> | <i>As printed</i>           | <i>As should be</i>         |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 90          | 1           | 10          | lacanee                     | lacunae                     |
|             | 1           | 21          | attituds                    | attitudes                   |
| 91          | 2           | 1           | seen their two<br>types     | seen that two<br>types      |
| 92          | 1           | 6           | attempts                    | attempt                     |
| 93          | 2           | 8           | several<br>hundred          | several hundreds            |
|             | 3           | 11          | a political<br>philosophies | political philoso-<br>phies |

| <i>Page</i> | <i>Para</i> | <i>Line</i> | <i>As printed</i>                                                                                         | <i>As should be</i>                                                                                          |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 94          | 1           | 4           | far of                                                                                                    | far off                                                                                                      |
|             |             | 6           | who had to<br>send                                                                                        | we had to send                                                                                               |
| 96          | 1           | 2           | bultures                                                                                                  | vultures                                                                                                     |
|             |             | 3           | readers                                                                                                   | leaders                                                                                                      |
|             | 2           | 3-4         | discovered<br>presented                                                                                   | discovered and<br>presented                                                                                  |
|             |             | 8           | Gebba                                                                                                     | <i>Jeeba</i>                                                                                                 |
|             |             | 17-18       | result of pro-<br>cess but in an<br>inherent<br>system of pre-<br>determined<br>life force<br>The readers | result of a pro-<br>cess but is an<br>inherent<br>system of pred e-<br>termined life<br>force<br>The leaders |

## AN APPEAL TO DEVOTEES

BY

### SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE SANGH

The Sacred Birth Centenary of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee falls four years from now. It is proposed to make a suitable collection of Photographs, Audio Recordings, Video Recordings and Letters and Messages given by Her.

It is believed that some devotees have got some rare collection of some of these. They are requested kindly to send them to Shri Panu Brahmachari, Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangh, Bhadaini, Varanasi, or to Swami Swarupanandaji, General Secretary, Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangh, Kankhal, Hardwar, within the next three months. After making suitable copies, the originals will be returned to the owners.

---

It is man's duty to try and cultivate faith and devotion. Blows are characteristic of life in the world ; thus man is taught to understand what the nature of this world — and then detachment from pleasure and enjoyment ensues.

— Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

*By Courtesy of :*

**The Asiatic Oxygen & Acetylene Co. Ltd.**

**Head Office : 8, B. B. D. Bag (East)**

**Calcutta-700 001**

**Phone : 204241/204247/204259/205115**

**Telex No. : 21-3527**

**Regd. Office : P. O. Kumhari, Dist. Durg,**

**M. P., Pin—490 042**

---

# Ashram News

## Vrindaban Ashram :

On 13th April, 1992 (30th Chaitra) Monday, the day of transition of the Sankara Bishuba-Sankranti), was the day of initiation of Sannyas of our Paramguru (the most venerable preceptor) 1008 Swami Muktananda Giriji Maharaj. On the occasion a festival was observed with grandeur. The place of worship was decorated with *gairik* (red ochre), flowers, etc. with accuracy and sense of beauty. Very early in the morning, the whole Ashram woke up with chanting. Devotees came from outside also to join the prayer.

Puja of Giriji and Sri Sri Ma with 16 articles were performed solemnly in time. During the *puja* period (nearly 3 hours) devotees offered prayer songs addressing Guru and Mata and different Stotras (verses of praise of God) were recited.

At noon, after offering *Bhog* to Sri Sri Ma and Giriji Sadhu-Sanyasis and devotees present were entertained with *Prasad*. At dusk lectures were arranged on Gurutattwa.

On May 1 (19th Baisakh) Saturday, the advent day of Ma was observed. Before the rise of sun, celebration started with un-interrupted song of the name 'Ma', which continued upto next morning. At 2 a.m. at night, puja started in the well decorated temple. The puja was conducted by

Shibanandji, Kumari puja was a part of the puja of Ma.

At next noon, a special worship was arranged after which Sadhus and Kumaries (Virgins) were entertained by *Prasad*, afterwards all attending were satisfied by a feast.

On 20th April, Monday, Bhakt-Bhandara was arranged. Swami Nirmalananda participated with major interest and a major role was played by him. His long speech, with memories of Sri Ma brought about a new inspiration in the minds of devotees.

In *Bhakt-Bhandara* more than 400 devotees were entertained by *Bhog-prasad*.

This great festival is a new chapter added in the history of this Ashram. Sri Prativa Kumar Kundu helped enormously to make this programme a success.

On 5th May, 1992 (22nd Baishak) Tuesday, *Akshaya Tritia*, due to great enthusiasm and donation, *Matripuja* and *Bhog-Prasad* were arranged in the Ashram.

On 10th May, '92 (27th Baisakh) Sunday, was the day of passing away of Baba Bholanath. It was celebrated by arranging Sat-sang and *Bhog Prasad* in the house of a devotee. Swami Achintyananda

Maharaj, delivered a captivating long lecture.

On 16th May, '92 (2nd Jyaistha, '99) Saturday (Buddha Purnima), Narayan Puja was arranged in the residence of a devotee. A good number of devotees congregated to attend the Puja. After puja, attending devotees were entertained by *Prasad* (fruits and sweets).

On 19th May (5th Jyaistha '99) Tuesday, the Birth anniversary (lunar birthday) of most venerable Sri Sri Ma, was celebrated by puja, Matri songs for whole night, continuous *japa* for day and night, puja of lunar day at 3 a.m. (next morning), in the nicely decorated Matri-temple.

After the Puja, *Hom-tilak*, fruits and *Bhog prasad* was distributed among the devotees. By the leadership of Swami Achintyananda, the whole function was perfectly arranged.

### Ranchi Ashram :

On 13th April '92, Monday (30th Chaitra) '98) *Sannyas* festival of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri Maharaj was celebrated starting from the dawn with recitation of Sri Geeta, Sri Chandi, and Bhajan and Kirtan, like previous years, worship of Giriji (with 16 articles of offering), *Bhogarati* and *Sadhu Bhojan* were arranged. After puja more than 300 devotees were entertained by *Bhog Prasad*.

On 14th April, '92 Tuesday (1st Baisakh, '99) in the auspicious evening, a large number of devotees gathered in the Ashram yard. They bowed down to feet of Ma and Ma Kali (worshipping places as these are the forms through which *Ishta* is worshipped regularly). They all prayed for a peaceful happy new year.

On 18th to 20th April, '92, Saturday-Monday (5-7 Baisakh, '99) a great *Nom yajna* communion was organised in the Ashram court-yard. *Adhibasa* (purification ceremony) of the communion festival was performed in the evening of 18th April. Then

the Mahotsaba started. Days and nights of the festive period, were resounded by the songs of God's name, upto 19th. *Malsa Bhogarati* (offering of food in a basin)—Dadhi-Bhanda Churna (Crushing of curd pots), etc. followed. The function ended with a procession through the town continuously singing the Name. Geetashri Chabi Banerjee lead the Nam-Sankirtan. In addition to the local devotees, many others from Calcutta and other places joined the great festival.

### **Kankhal Ashram :**

On 13th April ( Chaitra Sankranti — an auspicious day ) was the *Sannyas* festival day of Sri Sri 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri Maharaj. On this occasion, Puja with 16 articles was offered in the *Samadhi* Temple of Giriji. The *Bhogarati* and at noon 51 *Sadhu Bhojan* with cloth and money ( dakshina ) — was performed.

This year the turn of Kumbha was at Hardwar, for which there was a great congregation of devotees, for holy dips of Kumbha at *Brahma Kunda*. Distinguished scholars recited Vedas in Matri-Mandir. Many famous artistes versed in singing and music presented excellent devotional songs and increased the pleasure of devotees.

On 14th April ( 1st Baisakh ) Bengali New Year day, special *Puja, arati* ( greeting ), *Puspanjali* were offered to Ma.

On 2nd May ( 19th Baisakh ) 97th birth anniversary of memorable global mother Sri Sri Ma was observed. On this date, auspicious date of





Special puja held of Sri Sri Ma, Sriman Narayanji and Sri Sitaramdas  
Onkarnathji on 28.6.92 at its Head Office at Matri-Mandir,  
57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-19



Devotees taking prasad with Hon'ble Justice G. N. Roy.

Advent, the morning started with gay. In the last part of the night or the dawn, Shankha and Ghanta were sounded and rung. Puja with 16 articles was offered pompously. Meditation, devotional songs, greeting ( *Arati* ) and distribution of prasad were special feature of the morning. Thus started the 3-weeks festival programme of the holy Advent of Sri Sri Ma. Continuous *Japa*, recitation of 100 *Chandies*, *Gayatri Yajna*, washing of Ma's footwear, special *puja*, *Bhog* etc. were offered.

5th May ( 22nd Baisakh ) was the auspicious Lunar day, *Akshay tritita* ceremonies, washing of the foot-wear of Sri Sri Ma, Puja with 16 articles, chanting, song, etc. were important features. Many of the devotees bathed in the Ganga and pitchers full of Ganga water to Brahmanas.

10th May ( 27 Baisakh ) was the Lunar day of passing away of Sri Sri 1008 Baba Bholanath. It was celebrated by worshipping Bholanath with 16 articles on a nicely decorated picture, kirtan, and offering food and clothes to twelve *sadhus*.

From 13th May, the Birth Anniversary programme started specially. The daily programme was: in the morning Mangal arati, Kirtan at dawn, Puja of morning, recitation of Vedas, recitation of 1000 names of Vishnu, praising of God ( *stava* ), Kirtan, Arati after which, for seven days, the whole Gita was recited, uninterrupted Ramayana was sung. Chalisa song of Hanumanji, Sri Sri Ma, recitation of Shiva-Mahima stotra etc. were performed.

16th May was the auspicious Lunar day *Purnima*, which was observed by *puja* and *arati* of Sri Sri

Ma, then special puja and Arati of 108 Kumaris ( Virgin girls ), 12 *Batuks* (Brahmin lads), in a decorated hall. They were offered clothings, cosmetics, special foods and Dakshinas ( monetary gift ). The female devotees carried on Ma-nam-kirtan for the whole night.

The attending devotees were benefited much by the talks given by Mahatmas, every evening.

Swami Chidanandaji, a symbol of austerity, President of Divya Jeeban Sangha told in evening lecture : When I look at the nice decoration with petals every day on the *Samadhi Vedi* of Sri Sri Ma, it appears that Ma Herself is there in the form of this beautiful art. A question appeared in my mind, when I was standing in the "Jyotir-Mandir" : Why did Ma come on the earth and what has She done. My eyes were attracted as the *Akhand Jyoti*, ( charming light ) maintained carefully in the temple and I got the automatic reply. She removes the darkness of universe simply by Her presence. Everything becomes luminous. Ma never gave lectures. Thousands of confusions were solved through ordinary conversation.

Great scholar Swami Vidyanandaji, Maha Mandaleshwar of Kailashasram, Hrishikesh, explained the *Vibhutis* of Ma much profoundly. He described Sri Sri Ma as Shruti in motion.

On 19th May, after *Mangalarati* and *Usha Kirtan* in "Ananda-Jyoti Pitham" different programmes started, e.g. puja in every temple of the locality with the offerings, *Rudri Path*, *Purnahuti* of 100 *Chandi* recitation. *Puja* of 9 Kumaris with

dresses and ornaments, feeding of one *Batuk*, Service to *Daridra Narayan*, *Bhandara* for *Sadhus* etc. From the third *prahar* of the night Sri Sri Ma's Puja began, the whole surrounding was resounding with Ma-nam, Sri Giridhar Narayan Puriji ( Mahanta, Maha Nirbani Akhra ), Swami Chidanandaji and many other distinguished persons were present. After the songs of Names, silence and meditation from 3.45 to 4.15 was observed by all. Then a small Kumari beautifully dressed and ornamented was worshipped following proper systems. 108 pradeeps were lighted. 151 items of food were offered. Then *Arti*, *Havanam*, *Purnahuti* completed the ceremony. Puja was conducted by Sri Shekhar Brahmachari very sincerely and devotionally. In addition, sweet and charming songs by Geetasri Chhabi Bandyopadhyay made the total ceremony a memorable success.

After purnahuti of Yajna, Puspanjali was offered (1) first by specially honoured Mahatmas, (2) Then all Sadhus, Brahmacharis of the Ashram and then (3) all other devotees, irrespective of caste, creed, race and nationality, all offered *pranam* and received *prasad*.

On 20th evening auspicious *adhibas* for Sri *Nam-Yajna* for whole night by female devotees, was an important programme. At day-break devotees came out with Sri Nam, walked encircling all local temples. Nam-kirtan by male devotees started with sunrise and ended at sunset. *Malsabhog* at noon, walking with Sri Nam through the town in the evening, were two additional

features, after which in presence of Maharaj, *Dadhi-Mangal*, *Hariloot*, etc. were organised nicely by *Kirtan Mandali* of Delhi and Chhabidi.

On 10th June, on the occasion of *Ganga-Dashahara* devotees performed Ganga-snan in the morning. In the Ganga-temple of Ashram, Ganga Devi was worshipped by offering 16 articles and was greeted by *arati*.

#### **Agarpara (Calcutta) :**

Sannyas-Utsab of Reverend Giriji, ceremony on the occasion of passing away of Baba Bholanath, Akshay Tritiya, etc. were observed pompously. A large number of devotees attended each of the occasions and received *prasad*.

On 19th May, "Sri Ma Jai Ma" was sung devotionally from sunrise to sunset. Songs on Ma were presented nicely by many artist devotees. The famous singer, Sri Ramkumar Chattopadhyaya presented many "Matri-sangeets" for a long period. Brahamachari Tanmayanandaji also sang many divine songs. This was followed by VIDEO shows on Sri Sri Ma. From 2.45 a.m. (at night) in a very calm and pious atmosphere Sri Sri Ma was worshiped with 16 articles. At that time a large congregation of devotees was present there. The *Yajna-shala* of the Ashram was closed for a long time. This time Nirmalananda Maharaj, with great effort repaired and reconstructed the room and started again to use in Yajnahuti. On 20th May two *Vedjana* Pandit uttered *Veda-Mantras* loudly and offered *arati*. Innumerable devotees

walked around the Yajnasala in a *Parikrama* singing "Sri Ma Jai Ma". All religious functions were so perfect that many felt the presence of Ma. At the closing of the festival 3/4 thousands of devotees were entertained by *Prasad*.

### **Kheora (Bangladesh) :**

On 2nd May (19th Baisakh) the date of advent of Ma, devotees were waiting with puja articles at the new-built temple courtyard Bhola Pandit came from Kashi to worship Ma with 16 articles. Devotees from Comilla came and sang "Ma" name in loud voice and the whole atmosphere was filled up with Ma-name. In the morning the devotees offered *anjali* and received *prasad*.

On 5th May (Lunar day "Aksay Tertiya") in an auspicious moment a photograph of Sri Sri Ma and Narayan Shila, after *pradakshin* of the temple were taken in with conch shell, bell, Ma-name. A *shiblinga* brought from Kashi was also installed. After puja with 16 articles "Hom" was performed. Last of all was the distribution of *prasad* to all attending devotees.

That night, auspicious *adhibas* of *Namyajna*, and next day from dawn to dusk excellent *kirtan* of God's names, were organised by devotees from Comilla and Sri Pratibha Kumar Kundu.

Inspite of the fact that most of the students of Sri Sri Anandamayi Vidyalaya are Moslims, a proposal to read Words of Ma everyday was accepted with much respect.

Irrespective of caste and creed, all were invited. Hindus and Muslims were equally satisfied for being entertained by *Bhog-Prasad*.

---

## **PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES**

July '92 to November '92

1. Guru Purnima 14 July, Tuesday
2. Sree Sree 1008 Swami  
Muktananda Giriji's  
(Didima's) Tirodhan  
Tithi 5 August, Wednesday
3. Jhulan Ekadashi 8 August, Saturday
4. Sree Sree 1008 Swami  
Mounananda Parbat  
Maharaj's Tirodhan  
Tithi 10 August, Monday
5. Jhulan Purnima 12 August, Wednesday
6. Rakhi Purnima 13 August, Thursday
7. Janmastami 21 August, Friday
8. Sree Sree 1008 Swami  
Gurupriya Nandaji's  
Tirodhan Tithi 3 September, Thursday
9. Sree Radha-Astami 4 September, Friday
10. Mahalaya 26 September, Saturday
11. Shri Shri Durga Puja 1 October, Thursday  
to 6 Oct., Tuesday
12. Shri Shri Laxmi Puja 11 October, Sunday
13. Shri Shri Kali Puja 25 October, Sunday
14. Shri Shri Annakut 26 October, Monday
15. Samyam Saptaha 2 Nov., Monday to  
16 Nov., Monday

## Obituary

Dayananda (Arthur Klein) first came to Mother in August of 1973. He received diksha, his name and instructions for Sadhana at her Holy Feet. He returned for Mother's darshan several times after that including the Great Kumbha Mela celebration at Allahabad in 1977. At the age of 40 years he left this world on August 5, 1991 gazing at Mother's photo, hearing Tryambakam Sloka. Repeating Mother's name and listening to her words being read by friends, his last wish was that his ashes be placed in the sacred waters of the Ganges near Mother's Ashram in Kankhal. By Mother's divine grace, his asthi vissarjan was performed most beautifully on Nov. 24, 1991.

Dr. Hemanta Pathak was a devotee of Mother since his young student days. He received diksha from revered Didima. Hemantbhai and his family moved to America approximately 20 years ago where American devotees of Mother soon came to seek his company. His great love of Mother and Sanatana Dharma were like a bubbling spring to Mother's thirsty children in the West. Many joyful hours were spent in his home in Satsang and every year on Mother's birthday — his home became a beautiful temple where Mother's puja was performed. All devotees then received Mother's



bountiful prasad which had been lovingly prepared by his wife Sadana and other family members. On August 17, 1991, at age of 61 years, after suffering a heart attack, Hemantbhai slipped quietly away to those holy feet of Mother which he had worshipped for so many years. The loss in this world will be with us until we too can join him at our beloved Mother's feet.

Shri Kumar Datta, a worthy son of Late Arohendra Kumar Datta and Late Shobhamayi Datta, both wellknown old devotees of Sri Sri Ma, has obtained the abode of the lotus feet of Sri Sri Ma, consciously, on 1st April, 1992.

In a very early age, he saw Ma and became an earnest devotee of Ma. In the college life, he felt an urge to renounce the world and met Ma at Vindhyaachal with a prayer to live with Sri Sri Ma for the whole life. He did not consult with anybody at home. Ma persuaded him to go back.

Devotion to Ma, simplicity and truthfulness were his special qualities.

We pray to the feet of Sri Sri Ma, for an elevation of his soul, and peace in the family members.

---