
Do not give into your inclination to think about ghosts and apparitions ; rather keep your mind solely on God's Name and meditate on Him. In the presence of His Name no other power can function. This is the truth, be firmly convinced of it. The moment you have recourse to God's Name you should feel that no lesser power can touch you. If at that time you are aware of any physical anxiety, be quite certain that it is merely a bodily reaction.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Sitaramdas said that this was 'Nama'. 'Nama' meant 'Nama' of God ; Rama, Krishna, Siva, Durga ; but 'Nama' had to be repeated constantly. 'Nama' could reach the Sadhaka to 'Nada' and 'Jyoti' ; 'Nada' could bring 'Sakti' i.e. Durga and 'Jyoti' could bring Purushottam, i.e. Vishnu and ultimately Name could bring 'Onkar', the Anahat sound one could hear inside. So what the Rishis of the old days could not gain even after hundreds of years of Tapasya in jungles, Nama could achieve even when a person lived his normal life and did his every day work.

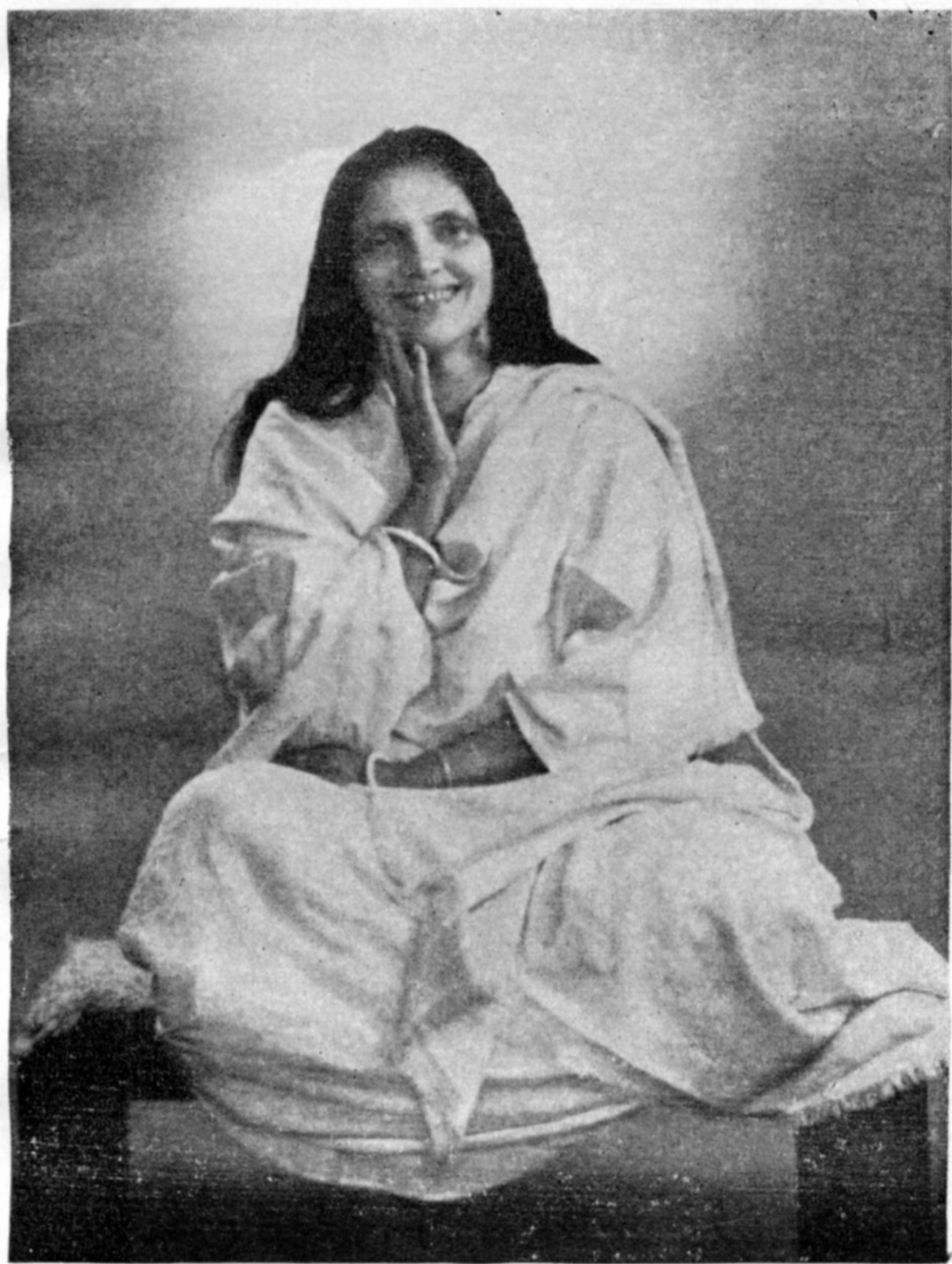
—Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

* * * *

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

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ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

Vol. XXXX

● JANUARY, 1993 ●

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Annual Naam Kirtan at "Matri Mandir"

Shree Shree Anandamayee

Charitable Society

CALCUTTA ZONAL OFFICE

"MATRI MANDIR"

57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road

Calcutta-700 019

Phone : 74-8504

Dear Brother/Sister,

We have great pleasure in informing you that we have organised a **NAM-YAGNA ADHIBAS** on the auspicious day of 6th March, 1993, Saturday (Bengali 22nd Falgun, 1399) at 6-30 p.m. sharp and a **DAWN TO DUSK NAM SANKIRTAN** on the following day i.e. on the 7th March, 1993 with special Pujas of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, Shree Shree Narayanji & Shree Shree Onkarnathji from 9 a.m. onwards in MATRI-MANDIR here. After the Purnahuti the assembled devotees will be entertained with prasads.

We look forward to your active participation in this auspicious programme.

Yours

In the Service of Ma,
Members

Dated :

The 16th of Jan. 1993
(1st Magh, 1399)

(Executive Council)
Shree Shree Anandamayee
Charitable Society

Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

Krishna Banerjee

One day in early morning, Ma, with Her eyes closed, said, "I saw this body there where Aurobindo Baba* is. Gurupriya Didi, Abhaya and Mauni Ma was with me. I met Baba. No word was uttered, but as the eyes met, it was as if there was a conversation. I saw His hair was not grey but black. Then, how beautiful ! When Baba went away, a lady and a gentleman of that place took some earth from the spot where He had been sitting and began to apply it like sandal-wood paste. There were flowers and that earth in lieu of sandal. With them they started to worship the place where Baba had been sitting.

* * *

A devotee wrote to Ma, "Ma, you just boost up our ego as you greet us saying, '*Namo Narayana*'. You are our Ma, we seek your *satsanga* in order to get rid of our ego. But when we approach you, you augment our ego all the more."

Ma smilingly said, "Well ! It creates a bondage, you say ? On the contrary, it does help you on that path. If it were to forge fetters, then what about your wish to sit still (for *sadhana*) ?—that, too, should produce fetters ! What do you say, Baba ? Is that a bondage of sense-gratification ?"

*Sri Aurobindo, Pondicherry.

Then Ma Herself added, "The sap (of desire) is getting dried up. You will be taken to the shore in this way."

*

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*

It is generally observed that the *sadhus* and *sannyasins* have a feeling of restlessness for coming to Ma. What to say of the householders! Referring to this, some one said to Ma, "Why do the *sadhus* and *sannyasins* have such restlessness for coming to Ma? All is one, isn't it?—*Tattvamasi*—'Thou art that'. Ma, what do you say?"

Ma immediately replied, "Bah! The truth has been expressed as '*Tattvamasi*'—that is why there is so much affection for this daughter. '*Tattvamasi*'—that is, verily, I am That! Nothing exists besides this 'I'. That is why such affection is felt for this daughter. What do you say, Baba?"

*

*

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One day, standing at the kitchen-door, Ma said, "One gets a little bit even by simply standing at the kitchen-door. Don't you think so?"

A few persons present there said, "Yes, Ma, they say, 'Smelling of food is semi-eating'."

Ma—"You know, how it is! Just as on account of the company of the saints the effect of the saintly company is gradually produced. Do you know what is going on in the saints? A kind of 'cooking' is going on in them. While one stays in the company of the holy, 'cooking' goes on in him slowly and gradually. That is how it is. I referred to *that*

cooking. I did not talk about this cooking that you people perform with your pots and pans."

*

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*

Question—"Is it not possible to live a spiritual life even while staying at home?"

Ma—"Look, what has been said does not mean that you should give up everything and go away. Stay in the midst of all this ; only keep the fire of His name ever burning. Keep this fire carefully aflame. If He so wills this very fire will burn down all your impurities, purify you and take you to Him. Keep Him with yourself ; then attend to worldly activities. This husband is a form of that Supreme Lord. This very wife is *Devi*, staying with you in the form of wife. The children are forms of *Bala Gopala* and *Kumari*, thus living with you. Go on serving them. Live the householder's life with this attitude. Do not worry. Well, will you do so little by little?"

*

*

*

Kirtana was going on in Ma's presence. A strong gale was also blowing now and then. Whenever there was a storm, the *kirtana*-singers were in high spirits. They danced in a state of exhilaration. Once as the stormy wind started raging more forcefully, the singers began dancing and singing, rapt in a great joy. Seeing this, Ma said, "Now at last you have started singing the right way. So far you were mindful of decorum while singing. Now as the storm has started raging, the knots have snapped open. Do the knots get untied without a storm?"

Reminiscences of Anandamayee Ma*

7. The Epistemology and Mythology of Goddess Durga

Professor Bireswar Ganguly, D. Litt

(*Continued from previous issue*)

Introduction : I visited my *Guru-ashram*, Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Bhadaini, Varanasi from Patna during the Durga Puja holiday of 1951. On the Navami Puja day, we went to witness the evening *arati* of Goddess Durga at the residence of Patalda, an earnest devotee of the Mother, in a few motor cars, along with the Mother, after the evening *arati* of the ashram was over. At the end of the *arati*, a relative of Patalda asked the Mother, "Ma, are the episodes of the killing of Mahishashur and others, as parts of Durga Puja, historical facts or only the figments of imagination of the Rishis?" The Mother turned grave on hearing such a question, Her face began glowing with a divine crimson aura and She uttered in firm tone in an aphoristic language of ancient seers, "The divine play of Goddess Durga did take place, is taking place, shall take place in future and is a part of Her eternal manifestation." That is to say,

*Translated by the author from *Ananda Varta* (Bengali), April, 1990, year 37, No. 2, pp. 149-154.

the divine play of Goddess Durga is certainly not the figment of imagination of the Rishis ; rather the divine play did take place in a previous cosmic cycle in some part of the infinite universe, is now taking place in some part of the universe, shall take place in subsequent cosmic cycles in this or some other universe, and the spiritual battle between gods and demons rages always in the subtle-body of the *shakti-sadhak* (a yogi who aspires for the power aspect of God).

Later on I consulted Mahamahopadhyay Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, the greatest of India's indologists of the twentieth century on the meaning of Mother's aphoristic utterance and also studied *Durga Saptashati Chandi*, *Devi Bhagavatam*, *Sadhan Samar (Devi Mahatmya)* of Brahmarsi Satyadeva and *Tantrik Bangmayee Shakta-Dristi*, a Hindi treatise on *Tantra*, written by Dr. Kaviraj. I shall note down below the essence of knowledge gathered by me on the above subject.

“Did take place” :—The story of worshipping of Goddess Durga by Surath, the King and Samadhi, the merchant is narrated in *Shree Durga Saptashati Chandi*, a chapter of *Markandeya Puran*, written by Sri Vedavyasa. King Surath of the Chaitra dynasty was the ruler of a kingdom during the overall reign of Swarochisha Manu, the second Manu (emperor of men) of the world. By the grace of Goddess Durga he got back his kingdom and in the next incarnation, he was born as Savarni Manu, the son of Sun-god and was the eighth Manu. From this account it is clear that the mythological story of

Chandi does not belong to our historical period of only five thousand years. According to Hindu mythology the four cyclical cosmic periods of *Satya*, *Treta*, *Dwapar* and *Kaliyuga* repeat themselves endlessly. According to ancient Indian astrology we are now passing through *Kaliyuga* within the cosmic cycle of *Shwetavarahakalpa* and the seventh *Vai-vaswata Manwantara*. The duration of *Sweta-varahakalpa* is of 432 crores of years. Out of this long span, only 1972949071 years have elapsed. The span of *Kaliyuga* is 4,32,000 years and only 5090 years of this *yuga* (cycle) have elapsed. When the cycles of the four yugas revolve 71 times, then it is called the *manwantara* or the reign of one Manu. In this way when 14 such *manwantaras* are over, it is called the end of a *Kalpa*. One such *Kalpa* is equivalent to one day of Brahma, the creator. The longevity of Brahma extends over 100 years according to this calculation. Out of this astronomical time only 50 years have elapsed and his age now is 51 years. We are now passing through the 28th four-yuga cycle out of the destined 71 such cycles. Within this cycle again, *Satya*, *Treta* and *Dwapar yugas* are over and the first part of the primary transition period of *Kali-yuga* is just running. According to other epics, Lord Kalki, the last incarnation of Vishnu (God) shall take place at the end of *Kali-yuga*. However, the narration of the incarnation of Lord Kalki during some previous *Kalpa*, is found in *Kalki-Puran*. Hence we see that the present historical period comprises only a few seconds in the time-science of ancient Hindus.

We have to understand the implication of the aphoristic utterance of the Mother in the background of this comprehensive astronomical time-canvas.

The narrator of the *Durga Saptashati Chandi* epic is Medha Rishi, a realised soul, and the audience consists of Surath, the King and Samadhi, the merchant. King Surath, after losing his Kingdom and the merchant Samadhi, after being persecuted and banished by his kinsmen came to a jungle to commit suicide there. However, on hearing the glory of Goddess Durga from Medha Rishi, they performed *Durga Puja* on Her image in the month of Chaitra (March-April) consecutively for three years, according to rituals prescribed in scriptures and got Her blessings, as a result of which King Surath regained his Kingdom in that life and in his subsequent incarnation became Manu, the emperor of the world, and the merchant, Samadhi got *moksha* (liberation) at the end of his life. For Goddess Durga, the universal energy of *Brahma* (God) is capable of bestowing both pleasures of life and liberation. It is with the help of Her energy, God creates the universe as Brahma, sustains it as Vishnu and destroys it as Rudra. During the *Treta-yuga* of the present *Kalpa* and present *Manwantara*, Lord Rama had performed *Durga Puja* during the Sharat season (autumn) to assassinate the demon King Ravana, and this tradition has been maintained by Bengali Hindoos since the Bengali Prince, Vijay Singha returned from Sri Lanka after his victory during the medieval period.

In the first chapter of *Durga Saptashati Chandi*, we come across the narration of the assassination of two demons, viz. Madhu and Kaitabha, as part of the glory of Goddess Durga, described by Medha Rishi to Surath and Samadhi. When after cosmic dissolution, Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe was in deep slumber in Hydrogen gas, Madhu and Kaitabha were born out of the ear-wax of Vishnu and they began obstructing the work of Lord Brahma, the creator. Hence Brahma invoked Vishnu's energy, *Yoganidra Mahamaya*, who aroused Vishnu, who in turn killed them.

In the second chapter of *Chandi* we find how the gods were banished from their kingdom of heaven by the powerful titans and how the soldiers of Mahishashur were killed by Goddess Durga, who was pleased by the prayers of the gods, who had individually bequeathed their arms to Durga to constitute the collective strength of the Divine. The third chapter describes the assassination of Mahishashur along with all his generals. The image of Durga Devi with ten hands, who had killed Mahishashur, is worshipped in autumn by Hindoos of North India. In the fourth chapter, the collective prayer of gods to Goddess Durga after the annihilation of Mahishashur, is stated. In the fifth chapter there is the episode of the demon King Shumbha, who sent his emissaries, Chanda and Munda to Ambika Devi with a proposal of marriage, after he had learnt about the beauty of Her from his emissaries, who, of course, had to return without any success in their mission. The

sixth chapter describes the killing of Dhumralochan. The seventh chapter describes the killing of Chanda and Munda. The eighth, ninth and tenth chapters describe respectively the assassination of Raktaveej, Nishumbha and Shumbha. After all the major demons had been annihilated, the gods went to Goddess Durga and prayed to Her in the famous invocation to Narayani, who blessed the gods, and this narration finds place in the eleventh chapter. The twelfth chapter describes the glory of reading and practising the tenets of Chandi. In the thirteenth chapter we find how Durga Devi blessed Surath and Samadhi. In the *Devi Bhagavat* also we get descriptions of the emergence of Kaushiki Devi from the Divine Deity Bhagavati, who also assumed the forms of Kalika Devi, Durga Devi, Shatakshi Devi, Shakambhari Devi, Mahagauri Devi and Mahalakshmi Devi.

“Is Taking Place and shall Take Place” :—The above mentioned war between the gods and the titans, the incarnation of the Divine Goddess, the re-establishment of the kingdom of gods after the defeat of the demons, have been taking place since time immemorial in different universes and different *Kalpas* (cosmic cycles) are taking place now in some other *Brahmanda* (universe) and shall take place in future somewhere or the other. How can the all-powerful Divine Deity, who can do or undo anything at will anywhere in the universe, and who is full of mercy and compassion for Her creatures, stop short of creating life in this tiny earth of ours? In the milky way of our galaxy there are

innumerable solar systems and as in each solar system there are three planes of existence, e. g. *Bhurloka*, *Bhubarloka* and *Swarloka*, so also above the solar systems there are the supra-mental planes of *Maharloka*, *Janaloka*, *Taparloka* and *Satyaloka* (*Brahmaloka*). According to the vast literature on *Tantrashashtra*, each *Brahmanda* (universe) is the playground of nature or matter and beyond the material plane there are subtle planes of anti-matter, known consequitively as *Prakrityanda*, *Mayanda* and *Shaktyanda*. The Lord of *Brahmanda* is *Brahma* and His energy is *Saraswati*; the Lord of *Prakrityanda* is *Vishnu* and His energy is *Lakshmi Devi*; the Lord of *Mayanda* is *Shiva* and His energy is *Kali*; and the Lord of *Shaktyanda* is *Ishwara-sadashiva* and His energy is *Maheshwari Parama Prakriti*. *Paramashiva* of Kashmir Shaivism is transcendental above *Sadashiva* or it may be said that He inheres within Himself *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*, as well as the playgrounds of their consorts, e. g. *Saraswati*, *Lakshmi* and *Kali*.

In the dialectical theories of evolution of Hegel and Marx, there is the equal importance of the forces of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Similarly the gods and titans represent the dialectical contradictory forces of thesis and anti-thesis and as a result of their conflict the synthesis of creation proceeds in cosmic process of evolution. In the different mythological epics, the symbolic episodes make an attempt to prove that ultimately the forces of divinity, manifesting devotion to God, welfare of all beings and co-operation of individuals in society,

triumph over forces of the undivine demons, manifesting the nature of atheism, selfishness and violence. In the epics of Chandi, Ramayan and Mahabharat it has been proved how in the process of cosmic evolution, out of the conflict between the thesis of divine forces and the anti-thesis of undivine forces, the former wins ultimately for the establishment of the Gnostic collectivity. The symptoms of divine nature are manifested in the formula of action of 'maximum good of the maximum number reconciled with enlightened self-interest.' The symptoms of undivine nature are manifested in the formula of action of 'self-aggrandisement through the torture of others.' Of course, finally there is the triumph of the divine nature,—'there is victory, where there is *dharma* (righteousness)'.

"It Does Happen" :—The *sadhana* (spiritual practice) of *Shrimad Bhagavad Geeta* is meant for devotees of God, who can perform duties of life without desire and attachment and it appertains to the mental plane. Whereas the *sadhana* of *Chandi* is meant for devotees of the Divine Mother, who aspire for salvation and who can sublimate the gross desire and gross matter to the supramental plane. Brahmarsi Satyadeva of Allahabad, in his priceless treatise on "*Sadhan Samar (Devi Mahatmya)*" had explained the symbolic significance of the annihilation of Madhukaitabh, Mahishashur and Shumbha-Nishumba in volumes one, two and three respectively. In his spiritual explanation he has proved that the battle of gods and demons or the conflict of moral and immoral forces

goes on always in the subtle body of *divyachari sadhaks* (divine yogis). The *Sadhan Samar* is a superb exposition of the integral yoga of *jnana* (knowledge), *bhakti* (devotion) and *karma* (duty or action). It explains how the knots of ignorance are torn asunder, how the *sadhaka* tastes the bliss of liberation in life, being established in truth, energy and joy. It further explained how the *Kundalini Sakti* (primal energy) of the *Tantra-yogi* is aroused from *Muladhar* (solar plexus) for reaching the *Sahasrar* (cerebral cortex), where there is the union between *Shiva* and *Shakti* (universal consciousness and individual consciousness) and how in this inner pilgrimage of the individual consciousness, libido, anger, greed, infatuation, egotism and jealousy are conquered.

In the first part of *Chandi* we get the description of the death of *Madhu* and *Kaitabh* that is the mastery over the feelings of pleasure and pain, which means that *Sanchiyaman Karma* (new activity born of desire) is put an end to. In technical language, this means the arousal of *Kundalini* through *Muladhar* and *Swadhisthan* chakras, whereby the knots of *Brahmagranthi* are unravelled. In the battle of *sadhana*, this is the first victory. In the second part of *Chandi* we get the description of the death of *Mahishasur*, that is mastery over libido or control passion. When passion is destroyed *Sanchita Karma* (seeds of accumulated desire of past lives, which have not yet sprouted) is annihilated. In this stage the *Kundalini* passes through *Manipur* and *Anahata Chakras* and the knots of Vishnu-

granthi are unravelled. In the third part of *Chandi*, there is the description of the death of *Shumbha* and *Nishumbha*, that is the mastery over the consciousness of "I-ness" and "My-ness". When the *sadhaka* crosses this stage, his *Prarabdha Karma* (seeds of past actions, which have borne fruits in the present life) is also destroyed and he becomes a liberated soul. In this stage, the *Kundalini* passes through *Vishuddha* and *Ajna Chakras*, that is the knots of *Rudra Granthi* are unravelled. As a result of this, there is union between *Shiva* and *Shakti* in the *Sahasrar Chakra* and the *sadhaka* experiences *Nirvikalpa samadhi* and when he is in wakeful consciousness he behaves like a *Sthitaprajna* (one whose mind is always in equilibrium, i.e. a liberation soul). This condition is termed as 'liberation in life' and '*Brahmanirvan* after life'. This is also called monistic liberation or *Brahmisthiti*, by attaining which, the *Jivatma* (individual soul) realizes that the concepts of *Ma* and *Guru* are the same and he himself becomes *Anandamaya* or *Anandamayee*.

Om Shantih

(*To be continued*)

When there is constant effort to grow into the awareness of THAT which IS, there is hope that in time this awareness may become permanent.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Sri Sri Ma

Chaitanyaben Divatia

In January 1945 I had my first *darsana* of Sri Sri Ma at late Kantibhai Munshaw's place and at Samartheshwar Mahadeva Mandir in Ahmedabad. I saw my own mother in Her. It was not mere imagination but actual reality for a few moments, hardly one or two minutes. But these precious moments had a profound effect on my mind and heart. From that day onward, whenever Mataji visited Ahmedabad, which happened at intervals of two or three years, I without fail would go for Her *darsana*. Each time I felt greatly attracted and experienced a deep love and joy which I can't describe in words.

Several times I had the chance of talking to Mataji in private. Her superhuman qualities, Her powerful eyes radiating boundless love, completely captured my mind. In those days circumstances did not permit me to visit Sri Sri Ma's Ashrams. But although I was engaged in various types of mental and physical work, Mataji possessed my inner self. I remember distinctly how in a private interview, She gave me the following advice: "As soon as you get up in the morning, pray to Ma (*Devi Bhagavati*): Let me do all my work today not of my own volition but as an instrument in your hands." And when you go to sleep at night pray to Her that you may sleep in Her lap."

These words Sri Sri Ma spoke to me with so much love and motherly affection that I made it a rule to regularly carry out Her instructions to the letter. This was only the beginning.

A few years later, when reading some books on Mataji's life and "Ananda Varta", I learnt that during *Maha Sivaratri* Mataji's presence had a wonderful effect. I at once wrote to Her for permission to attend this festival and Mataji replied that I should come. But unfortunately or fortunately I was unable to leave and so, greatly disappointed, I wrote again and asked Mataji how to perform *Siva puja* on *Mahasivaratri* at home as I had already been observing *Sivaratri* at my home for several years.

Mataji sent Her reply in one or two sentences : "There is no need to perform *puja*. Just practise *japa* of Siva's name the whole day without a break." She asked me to keep it secret and not to speak about it to anyone.

I carried out Her instructions with deep faith. The result cannot be imagined without one's personal experience ! Who is Ma ? What is Her Grace ? Her compassion ? How can I explain it ? Ma Herself told me not to.

My father was an ardent devotee of Rama-krishna Paramahansa. He used to read from the Gospel of the Master every day. I too would sit by his side and read the *Kathamrita*. While doing so I often used to wonder whether I would ever in my life find a God-like (*Brahmanista*) Guru. I also went with my father for Mataji's *darsana* and it

pleased him greatly to see my faith and my devotion to Sri Sri Ma.

God heard my heart's prayer. I found my Guru at my very first *darsana* of Sri Sri Ma—the Goddess in person. After that I began visiting Her ashrams regularly. Even though Mataji is all-knowing and all-pervading, we cannot know or understand Her with our human limitations. For Her those who go to Her ashrams and those who don't are alike. Sri Sri Ma has come to us in human form as Mother. She imbues us with a rare strength by Her Grace and Her compassionate glance.

We should pray to Her so that we may become worthy to deserve Her Grace and Blessing. Sri Sri Ma is *Narayani* (the Goddess) incarnate. If one is able to receive and absorb even a particle of the deep peace and the radiant light that Mataji emanates, one becomes transformed. Slowly but steadily Her grace works upon us and gradually changes our hearts, our minds, our very nature. The greater our faith the more are we able to receive. As Ma says : “According to your playing you hear the sound.”

Ma ! Bless me with the grace of your glance and the power of your touch. Receive me unto yourself totally and in all ways. Be in me so that only your thought remains ! May I think of you day and night and never forget you for a single moment to the very last—this is all that I pray for !

Sai Ram Sahay

M. Rama Rao

My pilgrimage Part III

At Dharmasthala it striked to my mind that unless a devotee is sincere and pure he will not be accepted by any guru. When he becomes pure, he is accepted and blessed. Meghanath (Megha) was a Brahmin having no education. His case is as stated above.

Shri Sai Satcharita

Chapter XXVIII

(3) Megha

Now let us go to the third and bigger Brahmin cook of Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe. He was a devotee of Shiva and always chanted the five syllabled mantra 'Namah Shivaya'. He did not know the sandhya nor its chief mantra, the Gayatri. Rao Bahadur Sathe was interested in him, got him taught the sandhya and the Gayatri. Sathe told him that Sai Baba of Shirdi was the embodied form of God Shiva and made him start for Shirdi. At the Broach Railway station he learnt that Sai Baba was a moslem and his simple and orthodox mind was much perturbed at the prospect of bowing to a Moslem, and he prayed his master not to send him there. His master, however, insisted on his going there and gave him a letter of introduction of his

(Sathe's) father-in-law, Ganesh Damodar alias Dada Kelkar at Shirdi to introduce him to Sai Baba. When he reached Shirdi and went to the Masjid, Baba was very indignant and would not allow to enter. "Kick out the rascal" roared Baba, and then said to Megha, "You are a high caste Brahmin and I am a low Moslem ; you will lose your caste by coming here. So get away." Hearing these words Megha began to tremble. He was wondering as to how Baba had come to know about what was passing in his mind. He stayed there for some days, serving Baba in his own way, but was not convinced. Then he went home. After that he went to Tryambak (Nasik District) and stayed there for a year and a half. Then again he returned to Shirdi. This time at the intercession of Dada Kelkar, he was allowed to enter the Masjid and stay in Shirdi. Sai Baba's help to Megha was not through any oral instruction. He worked upon Megha internally (mentally) with the result that he was considerably changed and benefited. Then Megha began to look upon Sai Baba as an incarnation of Shiva. In order to worship Shiva, Bel leaves are required, and Megha began to look upon Sai Baba as an incarnation of Shiva. In order to worship Shiva, Bel leaves are required, and Megha used to go miles and miles every day to bring them and worship his Shiva (Baba) : His practice was to worship all the Gods in the village and then come to the Masjid and after saluting Baba's gadi (asan) he worshipped Baba and after doing some service (shampooing His legs) drank the washings (Tirth) of Baba's feet. Once it

so happened that he came to the Masjid without worshipping God Khandoba, as the door of the temple was closed. Baba did not accept his worship and sent him again, saying that the door was open then. Megha went, found the door open, worshipped the Deity and then returned to Baba as usual.

Ganges-Bath

On one makar-sankranti day, Megha wanted to besmear the body of Baba with sandal-paste and bathe Him with Ganges water. Baba was first unwilling to undergo this operation, but at his repeated requests, He consented. Megha had to traverse a distance of eight koss (going and returning) to bring the sacred water from the Gomati river. He brought the water and made all preparations for the bath at noon and asked Baba to get ready for the same. Then Baba again asked him to be freed from his bath saying that, as a Fakir He had nothing to do (or gain) with Ganges water ; but Megha did not listen. He knew that Shiva is pleased with a bath of Ganges water and that he must give his Shiva (Baba) that bath on that auspicious day. Baba then consented, came down and sat on a pat (wooden board) and protruding his head said, "Oh Megha, do at least this favour ; head is the most important organ of the body, so pure the water over that only—it is equivalent to the full or whole bath. "All right", said Megha and lifting the water pot up, began to pour it on the head but in doing this he was so much overwhelmed

with love that he cried out 'Har Gange' and emptied the pot on the whole body. He kept the pot aside and began to look at Baba, but to his surprise and amazement he found that Baba's head was only drenched and the body quite dry.

Trident and Pindi

Megha worshipped Baba in two places ; in the Masjid he worshipped Baba in person and in the Wada, Baba's big picture given by Nanasaheb Chandorkar. This he did for 12 months. Then in order to appreciate his devotion and confirm his faith, Baba gave him a vision. Early one morning when Mega was still lying down on his bed, with eyes closed but internally awake, he saw clearly Baba's form. Baba knowing him to be awake threw Akshata (rice-grains marked red with Kumkum) and said, "Megha, draw a Trident" and disappeared. Hearing Baba's words he eagerly opened his eyes but did not see Baba, but saw only rice grains spread here and there. He then went to Baba, told Him about the vision and asked permission to draw Trident. Baba said, "Did you not hear my words asking you to draw a Trident ? It was no vision but direct order, and my Megha said, "I thought it was a vision." Baba rejoined, "I require no door to enter. I have no form nor any extension ; I always live everywhere. I carry on, as a wire-puller, all the actions of the man who trusts Me and merges in Me".

Megha returned to the Wada and drew a red Trident on the wall near Baba's picture. Next day

a Ramadasi Bhakta came from Poona, saluted Baba and offered Him Pindi (an image of Shiva). At this time Megha also turned up there. Baba said to him, "See, Shankar has come, protect (i.e. worship) Him now". Megha was surprised to see Pindi following Trident immediately. Then also in the Wada, Kakasaheb Dixit was standing with a towel on his head after having taken his bath and was remembering Sai, when he saw a Pindi before his own vision. While he was wondering about this, Megha came and showed him the Pindi presented to him by Baba. Dixit was happy to know that this Pindi exactly tallied with one he saw a few minutes before in his vision. In a few days after the drawing of the Trident was complete, Baba installed the Pindi near the big picture which Megha was worshipping. The worship of Shiva was dear to Megha and by arranging the drawing of the Trident and the installation of the Pindi, Baba confirmed his faith therein.

After continuous service of Baba for many years, doing regular worship and Arati every noon and evening Megha passed away in 1912. Then Baba passed His hands over his corpse and said, "This was true devotee of Mine". Baba also ordered that at His own expense the usual funeral dinner should be given to the Brahmmins, and that order was carried out by Kakasaheb Dixit.

We left for the holy place Sri Kukke Subrahmanya and reached at 8-30 p.m. I wanted to spend nearly the whole night in prayer and meditation but owing to tiredness slept at 11-30 p.m. Early in the

