
No evil can ever overcome him who cleaves to God's name. What one suffers is in exact keeping with the nature of one's actions. If the flow of God's name is sustained, all work will beget the good.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Everywhere Nama received its due honour. Nobody could object to Nama. Who could object if one repeated Rama, Rama, Krishna, Krishna, Allah, Allah, Christ, Christ or the name of any other God? But Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was of the view that Nama had to be properly done and whoever did it should do it with full faith and reverence. If the person repeating Nama had no faith or reverence then Nama, instead of producing good result, might adversely affect the singer.

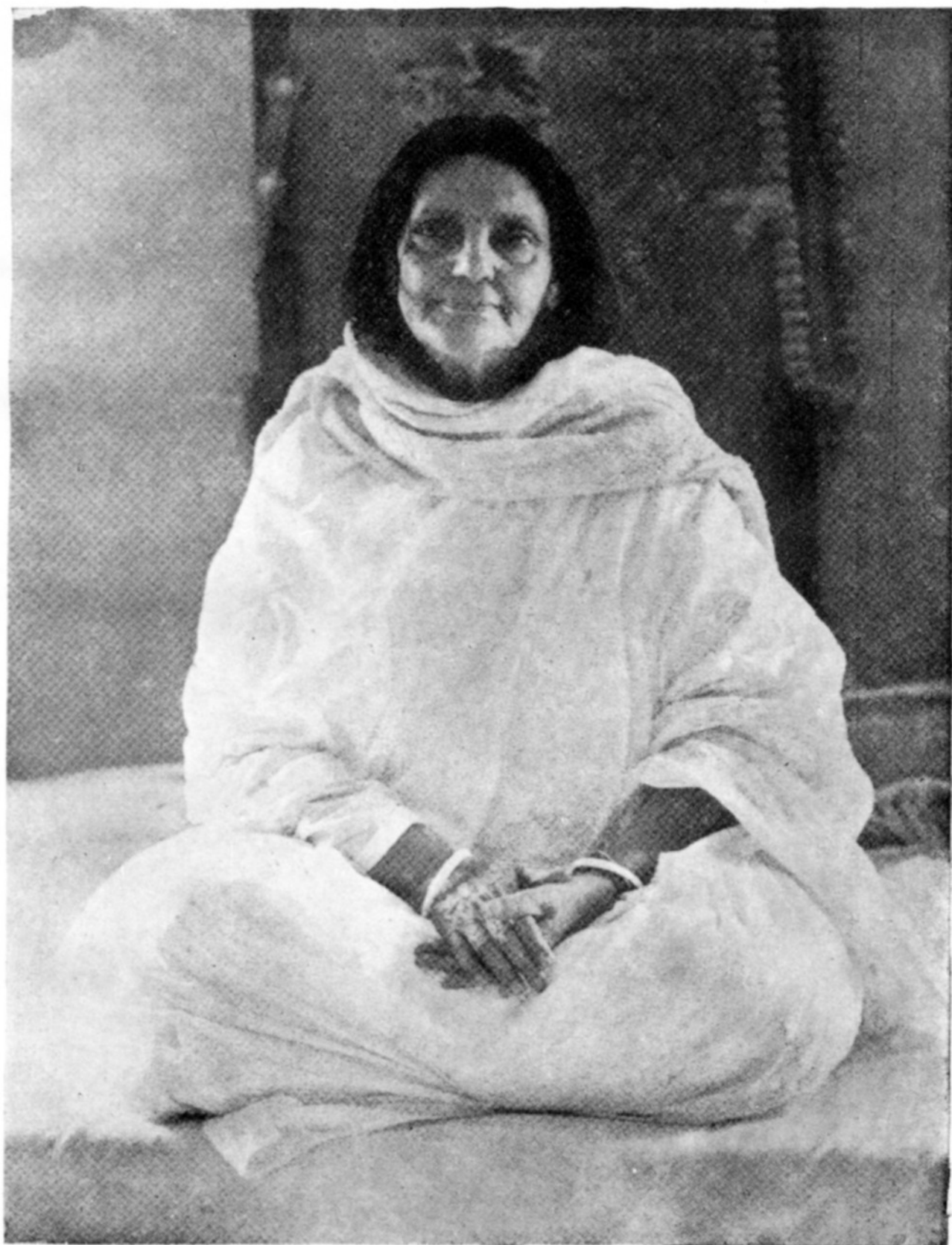
—Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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No. 2

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God's Holy Name is itself the rite for exercising undesirable influences. In the presence of God's Name ghosts and evil spirits cannot remain.

—Shree Shree Ma Anandamayi

'Namakirtan' will remove the fear of death's envoy and all troubles to be suffered in hell and also the fear of punishment after death.

—Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

One day the Rajmata (the mother of the king) of Solan said to Ma, "Ma, a long time back, once I told you that I had heard so much of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, and that it was my ardent wish if I could experience that ! But now I have become old, how can I aspire for it at this stage ?"

Ma : "Why not ? It *will* happen, no matter when. Look, don't think ; since the body has grown old, what hope is there ? If the moment comes, if His Grace is manifested, it may be possible even within the time left. Why despair ? In His territory, mind you, there is nothing as 'impossible'."

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Ma was narrating the incident of Baba Bholanath's *diksa*. She said, "Of course, I did not give him *diksa* in that way (in the usual manner). You know how it took place ? I told Bholanath to sit on the *asana*. Then the Name which used to be repeated in my mind as *japa* gradually came out louder and louder. Bholanath brought his ear near the mouth of this body (referring to Herself) —though I had not told him to come near— and, nodding his head, said, 'Yes, I have heard it' ; but I myself did not tell him anything. He himself did so (adopted the Name). Meanwhile, perhaps, I

once touched Bholanath's hand with my own hand."

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Question : "During the period of *sadhana*, is it possible to sustain the body with food ?"

Ma : "It may happen in this way—there is absolutely no need for food. Again, it may also be that the food necessary for the sustenance of the body is derived from the five elements in a subtle form. In still another case, what you people talk about—the nectar drops from the *sahasrara*, so on and so forth —by that itself the body is sustained. The health looks quite fine. Like this, there are so many things. This, too, is of infinite varieties."

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One day, during meditation, a person sat to meditate with his back towards Ma (who was sitting there in disguise). Later, in this context, the question was put to Her, "Is it wrong to do so ?"

Ma said, "Since you have asked the question, let me reply. The fact is that if there is scarcity of room in the meditation hall, then of course you must sit wherever possible, whether behind or in front of one another. But if there is sufficient room in the hall then one never take one's seat exactly in front of another person."

On the same occasion, since Ma was sitting in a playful disguise among the meditators, they thought that Ma was not there, and many persons absented themselves from the meditation. Referring to this incident, Ma said, "I noticed that many

people did not come to meditate at all since 'Ma' was not there ! What is this ? It is necessary to go on doing one's work regularly. I was watching it all, and again I kept seated in such a manner (in a still posture) as is recommended for showing due respect to the saffron clothes (in which She was clad to conceal Herself)."

* * *

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth was permanently transferred to Varanasi. The girl-students of the school came to offer *pranama* to Ma before leaving for Varanasi. Ma said to them, "Now you are going to *Kashi* (Varanasi). Try to be very good girls. Don't bear ill will towards anyone. Always try to tell the truth. You should not have the tendency to hurt any one with your words. Always try to take His Name. You will see what joy you get in it."

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

Ma touches us :

11. In Caste Biology

Prof P. C. Datta

Basic Biology of Caste

When we start with the scientific study of caste system we find a dirth of correct approach of understanding the caste system, its origin and evolution. This is relative to another fundamental aspect, whether the science of development of a social system should be regarded as that of a living organ or organism. This is a very important step, because mechanistic approach considers the society as composed of some dead material like clay or a melted metal. The leaders of thoughts suggest different systems of processing, leading to pouring the material in artificial moulds prepared according to whims of their ego-inspired brain. This process gives enormous freedom to the leaders in drawing excellent models according to their beautiful dreams.

On the contrary, the vitalistic thinkers have no scope of indulging in dreams of model societies. Actually they have to be absorbed in understanding dreams of Nature, who has created the living plants and animals with their unique physiological systems following genetic codes hidden in the organisms. This is truly a scientific approach. Ego based

mechanistic approach has created innumerable reformers. Vitalistic approach has created a few scientists watching actually the inherent laws of nature. But voices of their approach are not heard in the universe of chaotic sounds created by emotional shouting of the reformers. The scientific approach is clearly noticed in the Indian sages, including Swami Vivekananda who pointed out the diseases of the societies but discarded reformers activities as detrimental. When we accept the scientific vitalistic approach we must throw away our emotional inclinations to likes and dislikes, and we must also follow the development biology of the processes. Here also, we must be clear in defining the principle of development. From embryonic condition two phenomena work simultaneously, One is *growth* (irreversible increase in mass by multiplication of homogeneous units) and the other is *differentiation* (being different from each other and the mother unit). So there is no development in nature without differentiation and growth. There is no example in the healthy living being having growth without differentiation. Differentiation without growth is a common phenomenon. Growth without differentiation is a dangerous phenomenon found in cancer tissues or tumours. So fundamental scientific approach will never search for multiplication of uniformity. The reformers abhor diversities, for which the scientists await.

India produces four castes in the society which have later been differentiated into hundreds. This

increasing diversity indicates a developmental progress. Now the questions are : How did it originate in India and what were the steps of evolution and why is the system deeply rooted with no sign of weakening of the structural framework.

Science of origin and development

Regarding origin, none will be able to show any scientific relation to any religious preacher. The scriptures explaining social systems are actually grammars, on the ever changing systems of bold races of India. Anyone respectful to the social science and are not emotionally allergic, will be able to follow the steps of evolution of caste system. If one studies the "*Shaiva*" community of Kashmir, Rajasthan and Nepal will find differences of origin and evolution of the system. Thus the norms have no relation to religions, as found in Christians and Muslims. Indians mostly believe that the forefathers of the families become happy to see their descendants prosperously developing the professional skills, but become unhappy if wives of their children coming from other families having different profession neglect the trends. Family traditions, cultural heritage and devotional pride for the value, knowledge and capabilities of the family were never allowed to be drowned by the foreign technical waves from wives. In India naturally scholars married daughters of scholars, warriors daughters of warriors, industrialists daughters of industrialists and so on. Monetary gain was given less importance than the tradition. Priest

class was poorest of all classes even more than *sudras*. Nobody gave up traditional professions and encroach others' fields of earning.

The social system encouraged matrimonial relation between different races and discouraged relation between families having the same name (*Bansha*) and between *Santanans* of the same spiritual sages.

The question is : In the Darwinian process of evolution, changes in progenies are related to beneficial adjustment with environment. What benefit was exploited by nature for the survival of the society. The answers are in apparent preservation of traditional oldest repositories of human knowledge in *Vedas* and *Vedantas*, inspiring moral and honest system of the warrior classes and adventurous process in the development of interlinks between different parts in India and some countries of the west. The process also disallowed very close genetic relation (*Swabansa*) and also grouping within families of the same religious heritage (*Swagotra*).

Regarding origin of the system western Indologist also consider that *no evidence* can be produced to show that the caste system was improvised by any group of men with motives, whose planned models were super-imposed on the whole country.

Some of the western Indologists missed many precious contributions of caste system e.g. literature, philosophy, religion, technology and many arts. The defect of caste system which they presented exaggaratedly, were evident only against the development of machine-based civilisation. Some

other Indologists write that caste system is a wonderful discovery, a type of social order which has protected the Hindu society ages after ages from lawlessness, wretched conditions in mechanistic industrial growth and strongly competitive life. At the beginning it may appear as an antagonistic weak system. Actually it is comparable to a powerful trade union. (Bhattacharya).

The famous Indologist Blunt says : externally the system appears to be demarcated by certain fixed ideas but internally it appears to be ever-changing and flexible. It never stands on a fixed position. It moves and evolves always, and the evolution is still going on. New castes and branch castes are being produced, old ones are vanishing. Prevalent caste related customs are quickly changing, the main structure remains unchanged.

Trick of caste-system

But the tendency of criticising the system and tabulating some aspects as good and some as bad, antagonise the attempts to understand scientifically. No personal feeling, no personal liking or disliking can determine whether, the system will survive or not. The special socio-historical processes that have built up the system, particularly social, economic, political and religious elements that caused survival of the system, that is so long as these conditions are effective, the existing arrangements in the system will survive. The existence of the arrangements do not depend upon whether it is moral or immoral or how far it

is tasteful, whatever may be the personal views. Even the political powers can not stabilise the system or uproot it. It has been compared with a banyan tree which suck the soil nutrients with specialised roots. The tree will survive so long as the roots survive (Narendranath Bhattacharya).

This is vitalistic view which is more scientific than the outlook of reformists (Mechanistic outlook). According to Nirmal Kr. Basu "The first apparent aspect of the societies of India have been created by synthesis of many races. In other countries also the defeated race is influenced by the conqueror by losing political or economic identities. One extracts the juices of the other and introduces with different new systems of production and new distribution patterns. But in India new genius has been coming to life. In several political ups and downs, several calamities of the luck, India has saved its culture from possible deaths. The *trick* of India remains in the caste system. The old sociologists in India consider the caste system was applicable to all the societies where there are many races. India has converted them to a reduced number *four* (castes). Every race was divisible into four if people worked according to capability, without disturbing others' profession, and lived together in a co-operation preventing starving of others. Defeated groups or races in India never revolted against the conqueror because both had the same social system—caste system. There is no reason to believe of motives of the Brahmins.

They install the economic vertebral column in the caste system.

Untouchability vs. castes

In spite of this good effects the system accompanies some unwanted diseases such as untouchability, intercaste hatred (occasionally). Those are actually politically improvised by selfish motives. Though most of the races in India have created caste system of their own, certain tribes have failed to progress in the same way. They are not yet regarded as *Brahman* or even *Sudra*. Spreading of education, improvement of standard of life, development of respect to Hindu hygiene, etc. not by political processions leading to temples.

Most of authors of caste system relate untouchability with it. But actually they have no causal relation, and the untouchability is not an effect of caste system (Bhattacharya). Reports of untouchability in America and Europe ("coloured and dogs are not allowed",—posters on waiting rooms) are not available in India. Many a pious people of India prepare his or her own food untouched by other members of the family. The idea that works behind this is the purity of food, uncontaminated or unpolluted things, is the basic inclination. Infection comes about not only by germs but also by anger, ego, hatred etc. also.

Many invaders from Iran and Middle East, Greece, Germany, etc. were Kshatriyas at the beginning, some of them neglected *upanayana* system and merged into *Sudra* caste (Bhattacharya).

Hindu Dharma is actually an integration of innumerable religious paths originated in India, which include even atheism. Hinduism gives every freedom to individuals in accepting any path, does not revolt against the system. Caste-system is usually regarded as one of ecological factors which changes automatically in time and space with which a spiritual aspirant should adjust and utilize it. Basically all religions prescribe SAMADRISTI, but without neglecting apparent differences Hindu-dharma and Hindu-Caste system have not even slightest ontogenetic or phylogenetic relation (Bhattacharya). They are like-two plants growing side by side on two distinctly different roots. Jain religion, though suggested *Sama-dristi* praises Brahmanic culture, and developed a caste system of the other Hindu type. The picture of society drawn in Buddhist literature is of the common Indian type, giving superior position to Brahman caste. *Dhammapada* includes one full chapter praising Brahmans. The book also says that attacking a Brahman is an unforgivable crime.

Cultural stability was related to the following type (simplified) of system of marriage. Suppose two races (A & B) reside together in a locality. They have two (I, II) castes each (suppose). So the combinations of race and castes if freely mixed are AI, AII, BI, BII. Suppose each have two *Vansas* (families), a and b, resulting combinations being AIa, AIb, AIIa, AIIb, BIa, BIb, BIIa, BIIb. Suppose each has two (i, ii) *gotras* (spiritual guides whom they followed generation after genera-

tion). If they are allowed free marriage, the following would be the 16 character types :—Alai, Alaii etc., actually, 8 types of each race. Each character type (4 in each caste) can pair in 4 compatible combinations. The principles discard inter-caste marriage (which may weaken the heritage of required professional skill), intra-*bansa* marriage and intra-*gotra* marriage (i.e. within the same religious lineage).

Husbands → Wives ↓	Alai	Alaii	Albi	Albii	Allai	Allaii	Allbi	Allbii	Blai	Blaii	Bibi	Bibii	Blilai	Blilaii	Libi	Libii
Alai	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Allaii	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Albi	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Albii	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
Allal	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
Allaii	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Allbi	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112
Allbii	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128
Blai	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144
Blaii	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160
Bibi	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176
Bibii	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192
Blilai	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208
Blilaii	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224
Blilbi	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240
Blilbii	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256

The 4 types, ai, aii, bi, bii of the Table join comparatively in combin, 4, 19, 34, 49 for example, in the same caste. If the barrier between the two castes is removed, the possibility is doubled. The caste system maintains the caste boundary, but removes that between the races resulting in the same doubling process.

Lepcha tribe of North Bengal has now been on the way of extinction Barring intercaste (inter profession) marriage and opening the inter races boundary will revitalize the tribe.

Spiritualists view

How is it looked upon by spiritual teachers of India ? Usually they dislike caste-hatred and un-touchability (which are not related to the system at all). Usually they look at the system as a biologist's subject, a dynamic development, just like a tree differentiating with development producing newer and newer organs, casting off old ones. Ma Anandamayi is beyond *samskaras*, she has no like or dislike on the process but accepts all changes.

Once a boy of the Ghosh family of Dhaka, was mentally protesting against some activities of Ma, supporting caste system. When a *kirtan* was going on at the corner of the yard, a dog was eating *Vatasa* prasad thrown there. Ma participated with the dog, and uttered, "Can I have any caste superstition ?" Ma explained many times, that though She is free, the people gathered around Her are not. It is for the benefit of them that She behaves like them.

Once Dr. Dasgupta of Varanasi asked Ma, "Do you support caste system ?—for you were calling Brahmana kumaris for *Kumari Puja*." Ma replied, "This body is never inclined or disinclined to any thing. Still an artist follows certain conventional systems and requirements for drawing pictures, or for performing a festival."

Some body asked : Should we observe caste distinctions ? Ma : What do you feel ? (I explain as, where do you stand on the topography of the Map of caste *Samskars* ?)

He replied : I think, we should !

Ma : In that case you should, for one's *Bhava* should not be spoiled. Your particular *Bhava* emerges from your *samskar*. You must progress on that very path (*Hypocrisy* will block your spiritual path). The same path is not prescribed for all. One should behave indeed according to whatever *Samskar* one has.

Again, one should also try (scrupulously) to find out how at all a particular *Samskara* has been formed. Sometimes it so happens that you do not observe certain rules of good conduct due to laziness. On the other hand a person may be seen to observe particular codes of conduct since childhood, by which he got accustomed but inwardly he has a different *Samskar*. Various troubles arise out of that *Samskar*. But his habit does not permit him to act according to his *samskara* : Like this there are various other cases.

(Our leaders and politicians superficially declare a future ideal of *casteless society*, which is unscientific, nonbiological and antidevelopmental—according to the author of the present article. Ma, on such a casteless society says : if such a stage comes, it will come through changes in the social *samskara* and you must be ready to accept. Still, you should try to detect the *samskara* within and adjust with the spiritual line).

Q. : How can we detect the unreal *Samskara* or *Bhava* ? (Suppose some one pretends to be like you).

Ma : “He will hurt himself. For whosoever has had even the slightest experience in this field

will detect him as an imposter. One who behaves hypocritically will also fall with a crash, getting all the more injured (while he will injure others). You see, you should hold on to the advice of the *Mahapurushas* with concentrations. Do not try to imitate their activities from outside.”

For *Ashrams*, a general instruction of Ma, is to follow or evolve such a system or behavior, which will not hurt any one of the aspirants, having different types of *samskara*. Help them all in the advancement in real life and liberation from the unreal *samskara*.

●

Ishvara, the Lord of the world is not a thing to be perceived by the senses or grasped by the mind. By contemplating the Divine, peace is won. God Himself draws you towards Him.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Reminiscences of Anandamayee Ma*

8. Touch of the Divine Mother

Professor Bireshwar Ganguly, D. Litt

(*Continued from previous issue*)

Most of the devotees of the Mother are familiar with instructions or advice, viz., "Please don't touch the feet of the Mother, salute Her from a distance." However, there is a natural and intense aspiration of every devotee to pay his obeisance to the Mother by lying prostrate and touching Her feet in utter surrender to receive Her touch on the head along with Her affection, compassion and blessing. From the very first day of my visit (on the day of Saraswati Puja in 1951) I had reconciled to such instructions from Swami Paramananda or Sri Sri Gurupriya Devi. But I found that many devotees were displeased with this dispensation and used to openly criticize it. Attempts were made to explain the reasons. One such reason was that the Mother used to return the salutation by touching the feet of the devotee, while She was at Dhaka. Hence the convention of paying obeisance by touching Her feet was discontinued under instructions from Father Bholanath. Another reason cited by

*Translated by the author from *Ananda Varta* (Bengali ed.), July, 1990 & October, 1990.

Swamiji was that we do not know the exact mood of the Mother at any moment in her divine play. Hence the moment a layman touches Her body, Her facial expression as well as the radiance of Her face change, for Her mood is adversely affected. Sometimes it was observed that the disease of a suffering devotee was transmitted to Her body after physical contact and then Her face would become very grave. In some cases the devotees felt electric shock after touching Her feet, and so on. However, though I had willingly accepted the constraint of not touching Her feet, I had the rare opportunity of having occasional contacts with the physical body of the Mother. Even to-day, I am overwhelmed with a holy emotion, when I recollect the spiritual sensation derived from a few such contacts. I would like to narrate a few such incidents and share the joy with other devotees.

Since it was forbidden to touch the physical body of the Mother, inspite of intense desire, the suppressed desire used to accumulate in the subconscious mind and the dream-like fulfilment of such desires would sometimes be manifested in some external situations. After the first encounter with the Mother at Patna during the Saraswati Puja of 1951, I used to start for Varanasi from Patna by the afternoon train of every Saturday, provided that Mother was staying at Varanasi, and spend the whole Sunday in the Varanasi *ashram* in the presence of the Mother, to return to Patna in the morning of Monday. At the time of devotional music in the presence of the Mother in the morning

and evening *Sat-sanga* (spiritual congregation), I often felt shivering and trembling of the body at the end of which I used to fall asleep. One day, while Professor Sudhir Gopal Mukherjee was having a discourse on *Srimad Bhagavatam* after 11 a.m., I fell asleep at the end of such a temporary feeling of shivering, trembling, rolling down of tears etc. When I was awake again, the Mother remarked, "Did you dive down the stream of consciousness?" On hearing this I had another round of spontaneous rolling down of tears, etc. The Mother then looked at me with deep compassion and said, "Nilmani, come near this body." I moved slowly and sat near the feet of Mother, who was seated on a chair. The Mother pulled my head slightly near her knees, covered with Her white cloth and began patting it with Her right fingers. This produced a cold electric current from the bottom of my body towards the head and tears rolled down my cheeks. I did not know the meaning of *Brahmananda* (divine bliss). I recollected the experience of the unique comfort that I felt when my own mother used to pat my head during illness in my boyhood. But the sensation of the Divine Mother's touch can not be compared with any mundane experience and it is not possible for me to describe properly this kind of experience due to the poverty of my literary expression. The only feeling that persists is that my human life was blessed by the affectionate touch of the incarnation of the Divine Mother and heavenly bliss could never be superior to this experience. I began

experiencing the joyful sensation in every atom of my subtle body by the blissful touch of the joy-permeated Ma Anandamayee, and I again fell asleep on the lap of the Mother.

At the beginning of the Summer vacation of 1951, when I reached the Kashi *ashram*, I learnt that the Mother would be leaving for Vindhyachal the next day along with a few of Her devotees. The Mother was to travel by the motor car of Yogi-Bhai, the Raja Saheb of Solan and that in two other cars Swami Paramananda, Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj and a few others would be accompanying the Mother. On the previous day a few male and female attendants had left for Vindhyachal to make prior arrangements in the *ashram* for Mother and Her party. I had a great desire to accompany the Mother, but it was not possible without any hint from the Mother or Gurupriya Didi. Yet I was ready for a call after performing my morning duties, such as morning bath, *puja*, breakfast, etc. When everybody was seated in his allotted seat in the cars, Mother asked me with a smiling face, "Nilmani, do you really desire to come with us?" When I said, "yes", Gurupriya Didi said, "But there is no vacant seat in any of the cars." Mother said, "He will get some accommodation in this very car. Go Nilmani, fetch your suitcase." I brought my suitcase and kept it in the luggage deck and as I attempted to occupy the vacant seat by the side of Yogi Bhai in the front row of the car, Mother said, "No, not there, Baba may feel uncomfortable, you should rather sit by my side." Mother was seated in the

middle of the rear seat, Gurupriya Didi was seated at the left of Her, Udasji was seated near the feet of Mother and the right side seat was vacant. I was hesitating to do so. Hence Gurupriya Didi asked me to sit near Mother's feet without any further delay, but the Mother said, "No, no, sit by my side and go on muttering your *Ishta-Mantra*." I was not ready for this unexpected kindness of the Mother, but it was not possible for me to decline this coveted offer. I uttered 'Jai Ma', touched Her feet with my hands as well as head, took my seat by the right side of the Mother and began uttering my *Ishta-Mantra* silently with tears in my eyes. The car started. I fell asleep within a few minutes and dreamt that I was sleeping on Mother's lap like a small child. Perhaps the time is not yet ripe to narrate other incidents of the dream, for there is no indication from the Mother in this regard.

The Mother arrived at the Anandamayee Ashram of Ranchi on the auspicious occasion of *Akshay Tritia*, 17th April, 1980 for the installation of the marble statue of Didima (Giriji). On hearing this news I came to Ranchi by bus from Gaya along with a musician friend, Sri Govardhan Mishra in the night of 16th April. The next day there was a huge congregation of devotees in the *ashram* from early morning on account of the installation ceremony. It was difficult to approach the Mother and talk to Her ; hence the only alternative was to look at Her from a distance. However, it was imperative for me to return to Gaya the next day, in connection with some important work in the

(Magadh) University. Govardhan Mishra expressed his intense desire to sing a few devotional songs in the presence of the Mother. Finally we decided to take *prasad* (holy lunch) in the pandal at Peppi compound. All of a sudden the sky began reverberating with the sound of 'Jai Ma', and we observed that the Mother was looking at us with a smiling face from the verandah of Khoka Babu. When the lunch was over, many of us congregated around the verandah on three sides and began looking at the Mother's face. Mother looked at me for a few second without winking and spread her compassion and grace towards me. Tears came in my eyes, I felt a little shivering and thought that our communication did take place without words as well as blessings were showered on me. Just then Mother threw an apple and I caught it with both my hands. The next moment Govardhan Mishra caught hold of an orange. I told Govardhanji that the purpose of my visit was successful ; however, if he wanted to sing a few devotional songs, he could do so the next day, but that I had to return that very day by bus to Gaya. Mishraji said that his purpose of the visit was also fulfilled, for he had also received Her blessings through Her eyes and that he would receive further satisfaction by singing devotional songs in front of Mother's photograph. Thus another aspect of Mother's subtle touch was revealed this time.

(To be continued)

Divya Sharir of Shri MA

ER. Girish Chandra

I have taken upon myself the task of writing on the above subject which is a very complex one. How many people are there who know Shri MA fully? Yet I shall make an attempt to deal with the subject from various aspects in the hope that it will induce greater devotion among the disciples of Shri MA.

I am fully convinced that Shri MA's sharir was not like that of an ordinary human being. It was extremely sensitive to impure vibrations and impure physical contact etc. I shall quote an example which will throw light in the matter. Many years ago, one business-man from Calcutta came to have Shri MA's Darshan and by mistake he touched MA's arm. One of Shri MA's devotees Smt. Sushila Modwel was near Her. After the visitor left, Shri MA told Smt. Modwel that SHE was experiencing a burning sensation in the arm. When Smt. Modwel had a look at the affected spot, She told MA: "There are burn marks of four fingers on the arm." From this incident, readers can judge how sensitive was Shri MA's sharir to impure contact.

In the early stages when Shri MA was at Dhaka around 1930 or so, people had come to know of HER spiritual powers. When people tried to touch Her feet, SHE would get a burning sensation in Her feet. After sometime, people were advised not to touch Her feet.

It is one of the famous sayings of Shri MA that spiritual vibrations issue from the holy feet of a Mahapurush ; therefore, Pranams should be offered at their feet. Visitors to Shri MA would remember that SHE used to put on white socks—presumably to prevent outside impure vibrations entering Her body and cause adverse reaction.

Visitors to the Ashram would remember that while talking to people generally, Shri MA would put some cloth in front of Her mouth. Smt. Modwel once picked up courage to ask Shri MA directly why She did so. She replied that She was not able to withstand vibrations from people talking to HER.

It is generally advised in holy scriptures that we should meditate on the unmanifest aspect of a Mahapurush e.g. all pervading and ever present in full consciousness. Majority of us cannot do this and have to meditate on the lotus feet of SHRI MA and performing Japa of Her Name ; this practice will lead to meditation on Her unmanifest aspect. Just as a frog clings to the stem of a lotus plant, we should cling to Her lotus feet which is the repository of Bhakti, bliss and grace. There are no words to express the benefit derived from backing in Her Glorious presence. To look at Her was to have one's mind stilled. To fall within the sphere of Her beatific vision was to be inwardly elevated.

Sai Baba of Shirdi had said : "Every particle of dust from my tomb will answer the devotees prayers". This is equally true of Shri MA's Mahasamadhi Mandir. Shri MA is present in HER

Samadhi Mandir and also resides in the recess of our heart and answer our prayers.

Shri MA emanated powerful waves of bliss. A question arises if SHE emanated such bliss at all times. This question has been answered by Raman Maharishi : “Mahapurush directs the spiritual emanation ; sometimes these are powerful at other times not so.”

During the early stage of Her life, She did not take food for several months, She lived on hardly a few grains of rice. She explained that Her body could draw the necessary nourishment from air.

Once a lady visitor from Punjab asked Shri MA abruptly : “why can you not eat with your own hand and why others have to feed you ?” She explained that all hands are HER hands and all mouths are HER mouth. Through this answer, Shri MA gave an idea of Her feeling for the body during “Sahaj Samadhi” which was Her permanent state even while asleep.

Shri MA reflected all the essential qualities of God e.g. compassion, love and grace towards all living beings. This phenomenon has been explained by Raman Maharishi : “God’s qualities can be reflected only by one who possesses a pure mind”.

Physical proximity with Shri MA promoted spiritual advancement—people might not have felt it in their life—but it was a fact. People who came to Shri MA for the sake of curiosity would be blessed with “Shradha” ; seekers would be blessed with Bhakti and Gyan and advanced Sadhaka would get a feeling of the self effulgent SELF. In

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this way, each category of Darshak would advance to a higher level. This phenomenon in the "Sat-sang" of Shri MA can be put in other words : Wet wood would become dry and dry wood would immediately catch fire.

It is well known that miracles take place at the time Mahapurush attain Maha Samadhi. Bhakt Kabir's body disappeared leaving two flowers behind ; Mahaprabhu merged in the Vighraha of Bhagwan Jagannath. Similarly Meera Bai merged in the idol of Govinda. Manickava Sagar did not leave a body behind. Nandnar's body disappeared in blazing light. A natural question, therefore, arises as to why no miracle took place at the time of Shri MA's Maha-Samadhi. SHE left Her physical frame in a normal manner. In this way, She belonged to the category of Shri Krishna, Gautam Buddha and Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa etc. Shri MA looked down upon miracles all Her life and it was natural to expect that She would leave the body as others do.

Yogic Kriyas would take place in Her body ; when SHE stood up, the Kriyas increased : when SHE sat down, these subsided. Once Shri MA had to sit on an elephant ; SHE became very light with the result that HER attendants could easily lift Her to take Her seat.

May Shri MA accept the above flowers offered as Shraddhanjali. We pray to HER to bless us with ever growing devotion to HER lotus feet : Her sacred Naam and Her Leela.

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# Sai Ram Sahay

M. Rama Rao

## Ramanavami Message for Me

Today 11-4-1992 is Sri Ram Navami Festival. I got early in the morning, offered my simple prayers and meditation. After taking bath I spent in puja of my Kuldevata Sai Venkatesha, Istadevata Sai Rama, Sri Sita Rama, Lakshman Deva, and Rama Das Sri Hanuman. I also prayed as

Abhiramagunakara Dhasarathhe

Jagadheka dhharurdhhara

dhheeramathe

Raghunayaka Rama Ramasa Vibho

Varadho bhava dheva

Dhayajaladhhe

O Lord ! O the Personification of  
all good qualities ; The valiant unmatched ;  
Rama, Help us by sending your boons on us.

I thought is it enough on these holy festivals we engage ourselves in eating sumptuous food, seeing Cinema and T. V. and nominally visiting temples ? The answer is 'No ! We have to spend in japa, wise speech, puja and pathan of hymns are messages. We should also read about Sri Ramachandra's Valour, his love of brothers and subjects. He sacrificed his comfort and crown for fulfilling his step mother's ambition. In the forest he had troubles and trials as well as wisemen's company. In all

these circumstances he kept equanimity. We should make up our mind to emulate his character and put into practice.

After Puja and Coffee I entered my room to put on my shirt. I found that Vision Magazine for the month of February 1992 was lying. I picked up. When I glanced at the cover page, I noticed as follows :

### FRONT COVER

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Cultivate love for all and behold God in all beings and things. Follow the path of Bhakti, i.e. love and longing for God, intensify it day by day and you are bound to have His darshan in a universal vision.

Om : Om : Om :

what an apt message for the day of Sri Ramnavami ?

After this I went through the news papers

### Deccan Herald

*Wednesday, March 11, 1992*

Thought for the day

WE have a lot of anxieties, and one cancels out another very often.

—Winston Churchill

When I was reading the Hindu Paper on the last page I noticed as

### Counsel, Essential in Plan Execution

*Madras, April 11*

Men of noble character, noted for courage have

said that deliberation before action or prior to launching a scheme is essential for success. Administrators used to consult their Ministers about their plan and the latter did not hesitate to offer their counsel, pointing out the demerits if any in their proposals.

But the tendency among some of them was to nod their heads and never say 'No to the suggestions tabled, lest they should incur the rulers' displeasure. Sycophancy was the cause of ruin of top leaders. Men of calibre wedded to the Law of Virtue openly resisted any move to transgress it. Among the rulers too, there were some who resolved to follow a particular course without caring to invoke this Law. In the end, when matters worsened, they regretted.

It may also be noted that such persons having powers and who had deliberately violated Dharma and who however sought guidance later from wise-men about correcting the error already committed or to escape the consequences, had no peace of mind. Their statements were contradictory because their conscience was constantly pricking.

Outlining these human foibles, the Ramayanam presents the picture of the crest-fallen Ravana who was upset by the terrible havoc caused by Anjaneya in Lanka and his consultation with his ministers and advisers. Most of them, in a great frenzy praised Ravana and declared that it was a very easy task to wipe out Sri Rama when he invaded the island.

Sri P. R. Vaidyanatha Sastrigal in a discourse referred to the sincere advice tendered by Vibhi-



shana not to underrate the Lord's strength and to give back. Sri Sita Kumbhakama also censured Ravana for his precipitate action but agreed to support him in the war. The king of demons explained why he could not coerce Sri Sita when a suggestion was made to him to possess her by force.

Meanwhile the Postman delivered me Prabuddha Bharata for the month of April 1992. I opened it and at random read as noted below.

### **Be Fearless ! Be Heroes**

Where should you go to seek for God—are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, gods ? Why not worship them first ? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganga ? Believe in the omnipotent power of love. Have you love ?—You are omnipotent. Are you perfectly unselfish ? If so, you are irresistible. It is character that pays everywhere. It is the Lord who protects His children in the depths of the sea. Your country requires heroes : be heroes !

Swami Vivekananda

### **If you want peace**

One must live carefully, every action produces its results. It is not good to use harsh words towards others or be responsible for their suffering. The purpose of one's life is fulfilled only when one is able to give joy to another.

Sri Sarada Devi

### **Tava Kathamritam**

It is useless to pore over the holy scriptures if one's mind is not endowed with Viveka and Vairaga. No spiritual progress can be made without these.

How many one attain God? One has to sacrifice body, mind and riches to find him.

Why does a God-lover renounce everything for the sake of him whom he loved? The moth after seeing a light has no mind to return to darkness; the ant dies in the heap of sugar but does not turn back. So the God-lover gladly sacrifices his life for the attainment of Divine bliss, and cares for nothing else.

Sri Ramakrishna

I bow to Lord Hari who is called Rama, who is beyond all cause, to whose Maya this whole world as also the gods Brahma and others are subjugated, and due to whose essence everything shines as real (though in reality false), even as an illusory snake in a rope, and whose feet are, as it were, the boat to those who aspire to cross the ocean of Samsara.

According to Yoga-Sutra of Patanjali the aspirant says to himself: What have I to do with wishing. His will be done.

To Him surrendered I have no wish of my own. I have been blessed by Sri Swami Keshavaihji just on the Sri Ramanavami festival I chanced to glance the book "Pearls of Wisdom." In that book Sri Keshavaihji has written as :

"Sri Sai Baba during His lifetime annually celebrated with great eclat the Sri Rama Navami festi-

val to impress on His devotees the importance of such a celebration. This day was sacred to all His devotees who turned up in large numbers to participate in Sri Rama Navami festival. In these celebrations, Hindus and Muslims participated in harmony. Sri Sai Baba probably had an end in view to bring respect to tradition and religion. He always believed in Nama Bhajan and Sankeerthana, and in all congregations, he used to feel himself as one amongst his devotees.

In the evening I visited Sai Mandir. I bowed to my revived Guru Sri Sai Padmanda Radhakrishna Swamiji.

Sai Baba said to a devotee as noted below.

1. Saints and sages live for granting their devotees both material and spiritual happiness.

2. Blessing my devotees is my profession.

3. My devotees first come for getting their material wants and their next step will be towards their spiritual progress.

4. I am God residing both at Dwarakamayai and elsewhere.

5. I am the Goddess Mahalakshmi.

6. I am the great Para-Shakthi.

7. I am the Ganpathi to whom all the offerings you give, come and reach me.

8. I am the Lord Dattatreya. All your prayers to Him to beget a child, have been granted by me.

9. It matters very little to you if you see in meditation this Sai or the God you are accustomed to worship.

10. I am the brother of Sri Maruthi (Anjeneya—Sri Rama's Devotee).

11. I have given you ten senses and a mind (10 senses—5 Gnyanendriyas + 5 Karmendriyas) to think and meditate upon me.

12. I am without attributes. No name, no particular place to reside. The entire universe is my dwelling place.

Note : This should be understood as Sai Baba a great Guru.

He also said to a questioner.

Q. Are the Purahas, true ?

A. Yes true.

Q. What about Rama and Krishna ?

A. They were a great soul's gods they were Avatars.

When I was passing through a distressed period, one day Sai Baba appeared in my dream and told me to take refuge under Sri Sai Paddanamda for relief and peace of mind. Accordingly I met the holy man Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji, he looked at me and graced a copy of Sri Vishnu Sahasranama and packet of Vibhuti (Udi).

By daily chanting Sri Vishnu Sahasranama I got peace of mind.

Saints and Sages pass their grace of power to the devotees by looking or talking or touching. Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji passed his grace to me by looking and Sri Keshavaihaji touching my Bhru-madhya or Thrinetra (the place in between two eye brows) with Vibhuti.

As usual on Sri Ram Navami day also I changed the sacred namavali of Vishnu. My attention was drawn at the following verse 43.

Rama Viramo Virato Margo Neyo Nayo'nayah  
Virah Saktimatam Srestho Dharmo Dharma-vid  
Urramah.

## 43

394. Ramah : The eternally blissful one in whom the Yogis find delight. Padma Purana says : Ramante Yogino Yasmin Nityanande cidatmani. Iti Ramapadena etat param brahm adhi-dhiyate. The word Rama denotes supreme Brahman who is the eternally blissful spiritual self in whom Yogis delight. Or the word can mean one who of his own will assumed the enchanting form of Rama, the son of Dasaratha.

395. Viramah : One in whom the Virama or end of all beings takes place.

396. Viratah : One in whom the desire for enjoyments has ceased.

397. Margah : That path by knowing which the liberation-seeking ascetics attain to immortality. Sve. Up. (6-15) says : "Nanyah pantha vidyate" Yandya—there is no path to liberation other than the knowledge of the Atman".

398. Neyah : One who directs or leads the Jiva to the supreme Being through spiritual realisation.

399. Nayah : One who leads, that is, who is the leader in the form of spiritual illumination. The Lord is here conceived in these three forms—Margah, Neyah and Nayah.

400. Anayah : One for whom there is no leader.  
S—(Commentary by Sri Sankaracharya).

(Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras).

After returning from Sai Mandir I had a chance to read Shree Anandamayee's Anand Varta Magazine. The portion I read, is reproduced below.

### Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

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

One afternoon a group of people were sitting round Ma. In the usual course of conversation one of them started to comment that a number of bad people were among those who visited Ma, and since they were never slighted by her, their audacity increased ; that mischief-makers should also receive proper punishment, so on and so forth.

9A. In reply to this Ma said smilingly : "Look, so many of you have given me so much advice regarding this, but I am unable to follow it—what shall I do ? You know what the truth is ? Saintly persons avoid the company of the vicious because it is true that owing to evil company the pious may suffer degradation ; there is another group of seekers who are so elevated that they may not be harmed by keeping company with the impious, yet they keep away from the vicious for setting an example before the people. And here with this body, you know, everything is just topsyturvy—you know what kheyala arises ? Isn't it true that boils appear in the body ? But then, does one cut off one's hand because it has got boils ? Instead, he

applies medicines, tries to cure it. Over here, however, there is no trying as such whatever comes to pass ! To whom shall I say.

9B. Go away ? and what is there to turn out ? and whither to turn out ? There is verily no second besides the One and only One. "Saying so, Ma smiled as she added, "that is why I say, where shall I push out the diseases ? and whom shall I push out ? Just as you all come to this body and play with it similarly, the diseases also come and play with it. Of course, you may complain that the body becomes thin and weak when visited by them ; that is but natural, since it is their nature or characteristic to weaken the body. Whoever comes must spread his influence".

So often have we heard such words from Ma and have marvelled at them ! What a level of transcendence they manifest ! Only the One who pervades the whole cosmos, the Supreme, Limitless, Eternal, without beginning or end, only that Being is capable of saying such words. Again we forget all this ; being tossed and turned in the whirlpool of her lila we fail to retain the memory of all these things. She makes us forget everything—we tiny beings are just tossed about, caught in the mesh of her creation—what to do ?

How grand great compassionate you are Ma (Mother). If good and high people only are saved, who will protect the low and miserable ? Except like you O-loving Ma. I bow to you.

I look the above statement in good sense as messages of Sri Ramanama for me and made up

my mind to follow them and try to put them into practice as far as possible.

### PRAYER

Aartaanaam—artihantaaram  
 bheetaanaam bhayanaasanam  
 Dwishataam Kaaladandam tam  
 Ramachandram namaamyaham

I bow to Rama the destroyer of the afflictions of the afflicted, of the fear of the frightened, and death to the enemies.

Om Santhihi Om Shanthihi Om Shanthihi

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Just as without the help of teachers and experts one cannot become proficient in the worldly knowledge that is taught in universities, so the sublime knowledge of the Absolute does not come without the guidance of a competent Guru. To find Him is the problem, whether it be for spiritual progress, liberation, or any other matter, however insignificant it may seem.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# What saints say about Ma

Swami Krishnananda

World-famous spiritual genius Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee left Her body on 27th August, 1982 at Dehradun. Her lifeless body was brought to Kankhal where it was given *Bhumi-Samadhi* (buried under ground) on 29th August. On 30th August Bharatiya Sadhu Samaj, the main organisation of the saints of all-India, arranged a gathering in Swami Purnananda's ashram at Kankhal to express their boundless respect to Divine Mother. Women saints also took part in that gathering. Saints expressed their respect and gratitude to the Holy Mother, narrated Her great Divinity and exalted state. I had the great privilege to attend to the lectures delivered by saints.

Swami Prakashanandaji, the chief of Sankaracharya ashram at Kankhal, said in his lecture :

“Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was the immeasurable power, Para-Shakti. (Para-Shakti is super-power or self-power of God. The self-power of God being an inseparable entity of God, She is identical with God.) She was always in a timeless state. Mother was pure Atma, the birthless-deathless spirit, as described in Katha Upanishad :

Na Jayate mriyate va vipashein nayam  
kutashcin na babhuva kashcit,  
ajo nityah shashvato'yam purano  
na hanyate hanyamane sharie.

“Neither born is She, nor She dies—beyond the world of cause and change. She is the eternal being and cannot be slain. When dead, dies the body not She the deathless spirit. Her body was just imaginary (not true in absolute sense), made up of five basic elements. The clay pot breaks but the space inside it remains. The space was there even when the pot was intact. Similarly, Mother is the immortal spirit even if Her body is now dead.

“She was always in high state of Advaita-Jnana even while engaged in many *Karma-Kandas* (religious functions).

“Mother advised the circle of Indian Ministers, specially Indira Gandhi, the (then) Prime Minister to provide various facilities to saints and so Bharatiya Sadhu Samaj is ever grateful to Mother.

“She used to respect all religious communities. As well, there was a grand synthesis of *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* in Her. She was Para-Shakti. That is why pundits like MM Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj prostrated himself before Her with all his submission and dedicated his best book ‘Tantric Vangmoy Me Shakta Dristi’ in Mother’s name. She taught Vedic rules and regulations in the real sense. As well, she unceasingly attempted to re-establish love and kindness in humanity which this present age lacks. Mother remains ever-honoured in India as well as all over the world for Her supremacy.”

One lady-saint narrated her experience with Mother. She said, “Mother could easily read anybody’s mind and would hint whenever necessary. Once I was staying in Vrindaban when Shree Shree

Ma arrived the same pilgrimage. One morning I fixed-up a *Panda* (priest-like man) to bring for me *prasad* of Radha-Raman temple of Vrindaban. The *prasad* had to be brought in noon time. In the mean time I went to see Mother in Her ashram in Vrindaban Itself. I could see Her and got Her blessings. It was getting proper noon and I was thinking of going back to my shelter to meet the *Panda* who would bring *prasad* of Radha-Raman. Mother could read my mind and told, "Don't worry to go hurriedly. Radha-Raman's *prasad* would be available here." Lo and behold! after a few minutes a man brought *prasad* of Radha-Raman for Mother. I was wondered with the miracle. Mother started laughing and She offered a great portion of that *prasad* to me."

One saint (wearing spectacle) expressed his feeling about Mother. He told, "On one occasion I got proof that Shree Shree Ma was Para-Shakti. Of course, She graciously gave me the proof. Once I met Mother in a religious ceremony. After Her lunch was over she called me in Her room. She lay down on Her cot and told me to fan Her with a leaf-fan which had to be driven with hand. She told me, "You fan me till I do not tell you to stop." I obeyed Her and started fanning with my hand. Mother was seemed to be drawn in deep sleep (though) She never slept; Her sleep-type matter was *Yoga-Nidra* only). Afer fanning for ten minutes or so my hands reached fatigue and I was unable to carry it out any more. I was thinking, 'I cannot stop fanning because Mother told me to

fan Her till she tells to stop. But I am tired and not able to carry it out anymore. What to do ? As such thought was going on in my mind, suddenly I felt great energy in my hands ; all fatigue vanished. Then I continued fanning Mother for long time. After that, Great Mother woke up and told me smilingly, "Now stop fanning." It was Mother, the Para-Shakti (the limitless energy of God) who gave me new extra energy in my hands to fan Her for long time. It was then obvious that She pretended for a long sleep in order to bring about the circumstances for the above proof."

On 12th September, there was a ceremony in Kankhal ashram related to Mother's bodily disappearance. Puja was performed on Her Samadhi (tomb). *Kirtan* was sung from 11th September evening to evening of 12th September with the syllables "Om Ma Shree Ma Jai Jai Ma."

Again on 13th September special puja was performed on Mother's Samadhi and people were fed free. Many great saints assembled on the occasion and delivered lectures. Swami Prakashananda, the chief of Shankaracharya-ashram said :

"Ma Anandamayee was the Absolute Being—Consciousness—Bliss ; knowledge incarnated. She was an emblem of Vedas and a great power."

"The split between insentient and sentient is only for name's sake ; but in reality there is only sentient. The insentient body of Mother is no more but sentient Mother as spirit is always present."

Swami Giridhar Narayan Puri, the chief of Nirvani Akhara of Kankhal said, "Mother used to

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speak in the language of trance. Her language was of uncommon type. Mother was a Great Shakti and Her Samadhi is a *Chetan-Samadhi* (alive or conscious tomb). Whosoever prays anything to Mother here at this Samadhi would get the prayer fulfilled, because Mother's full body is buried here.

“Mother spread spiritualism in society in order to elevate people from worldly pleasures.

“She had unitary vision with all spiritual communities. Completely egoless She was. One who is learned in Vedas and Vedanta but could not achieve God-realisation can deliver long lectures ; but Mother used small sentences, sometimes in simple words, to speak on God which would create blissful resonance in hearts of man. Mother destroyed Her ego with the help of God's name.”

Swami Brahmananda (the chief of Suratgiri Bangla), Swami Vidyananda (the chief of Kailash ashram), Swami Chidananda (the chief of Divine Life Society) spoke high about Ma in that series of discourses. They spoke :

“Ma was Paramat-Ma, the Brahman. She preached the key of happiness of life—‘Whatever happens should happily be accepted.’ Her look was blissful which connotes the Brahman ; such eyes see nothing while seeing everything-unattached She is.”

“What is Dharma” ?—was asked to Mother. She replied, ‘Which lifts the life from a lower plane to a higher one and finally causes liberation is Dharma.’ Teaching of Mother is the essence of Vedas and Upanishads.”

Swami Ramdas of Mangalore spoke highly about Mother Anandamayee which is found in his books 'Ramdas Speaks' and 'World is God.' Shree Ram Thakur, Shree Sitaramdas Omkarnath prostrated themselves before this Divine Mother as a reverence. Shree Balananda Brahmachari of Deoghar and his disciple Shree Mohanananda Brahmachari kneeled before this Mother-God.

J. Krishnamurti, Mahesh Yogi, Swami Chinmoyananda of South India, Shankaracharyyas of Shankara-Maths, Mahatma Gandhi had the pleasure of visiting Her and they talked on Truth. Sri Aurobindo said about Mother : 'Mother Anandamayee remains in the state of Satchitananda (state of Brahman)'. Paramahansa Yogananda, in his world-famous book, 'Autobiography of a Yogi', has announced on Ma—'I had instantly seen that the saint was in a high state of *samadhi*. Oblivious to Her outward garb as a woman, She knew herself as the changeless soul.'

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was neither male nor female but God Himself. God took shape as an Incarnation to save spirituality from erosion of time.

Ma Anandamayi in Madras and Tiruvannamalai

S. S. Cohen

(*Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai.*)

It is seldom that Rishis in this country go about to preach their gospels and inspire and uplift the people by their example and inner experience. Usually they are sedentary and, by the power of their mighty tapas and Supreme Realization, automatically act as giant spiritual magnets and attract to their abodes seekers from many lands and climes. Yet, there are illustrious names in history, e.g. Lord Buddha, Sri Shankaracharya, Lord Gouranga and others, who travelled the length and breadth of the land and showed the way to infinite peace and happiness by their teachings and devotional songs. To this category belongs Sri Anandamayi Mata, the famous saint of Bengal, whose name is known in every household in North India. Although she became known very early in life and began her peregrinations about two decades ago, she had all this time not felt inclined to turn South*—or could it be that Heaven had reserved her peculiar activities for the North, while South India was enjoying the ineffable presence of two Rishis of

† Reprinted from Ananda Varta, Vol. I/2 in 1953.

* She visited South India once many years ago, when she was known only to a few : (Editor's note)

the first magnitude ! Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo, who brilliantly shone there for about half a century : Rishis who could have illumined any age by their vivid spiritual lustre ? Now that both of these have passed into Mahanirvana and the people have to have a living God who speaks the language of men to turn their hearts and minds to Him, Mataji has come South to fill the gap. She set foot on the soil of Madras on October 27th, 1952, at about 8-45 a.m, with twenty of her devotees, headed by Sri Hari Babaji Maharaj and Didi, her personal attendant. She was received at the railway station by some of the most prominent citizens of the city and brought to the spacious bungalow "Abbotsbury", belonging to Sri J. H. Tarapore, in Teynampet, Mount Road. In "Abbotsbury's" vast grounds a large shamyana with an inner bedroom had been constructed for her own use out of mats and palm leaves over which whole pieces of new long-cloth and beautiful curtains were spread. It was suitably decorated, carpeted and electrified.

Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan of Ramanashram had met Sri Mataji last year in Delhi, and had taken a promise from her that if she ever blessed South India by a visit, she Mrs. T. should be given the chance to serve her by making all the arrangements necessary for her stay, etc. Last September the promise was fulfilled and Mrs. T. immediately contacted the highest in the administrative, juridical and social life of Madras and with her characteristic tremendous energy in a short time succeeded in forming a

powerful Reception Committee as well as making excellent arrangements for the honoured guest's accommodation, which made her stay of one week a very great success. The people of the city poured in their hundreds to have Mataji's darsana. From the first to the last day of her stay there was a constant stream of visitors, dozens of whom daily kept waiting for hours to see her. Her appearance, her magnetic personality and her sweet conversation charmed everyone and attracted big audiences to her bhajans and talks. The language difficulty was a serious bar for the majority of Southerners to contact and understand her. The translation from Hindi into Tamil or English proved extremely inadequate to convey to the people the essence of her teaching. The translators who knew Hindi were not sufficiently conversant with the spiritual subject with which she dealt, and those who were so conversant, did not know Hindi, with the result that the most significant parts of her answers were either slurred over or distorted. Mataji herself did not make it any easier for the baffled translator to wade his way through all she said, but out of the depth of her knowledge of the Supreme she poured out streams of ideas, which kept him whipping his memory to retain all he heard, and his wits to unravel the mystery of her meaning. Nonetheless the audiences remained extremely satisfied, particularly those who could directly contact her through the Hindi language.

Her very presence silently exhaled the perfume of purity and joyful innocence which pervaded and

won all hearts. Her child-like, guileless laughter, the hope she instilled in the minds of the troubled questioners, the deep sympathy and understanding with which she met their suffering, gave immense solace and turned sorrow to happiness and at times to tears of relief.

Mataji's one-week stay was crowded with engagements ; even the few hours she could snatch in daytime for some rest were not without peering eyes and private interviews. Many were these interviews, wherein woes and laments and prayers for redress were made to her, as it is generally done to the sacred image of the Mother of the Universe in temples. She patiently listened to them all, and with infinite compassion answered sweetly and persuasively. One of the questions was—

“Do ceremonies performed for the dead actually benefit them ? If so, for how long ?

Mataji : Yes, they do benefit them, and for always, for even if the departed person were reborn, these prayers, being spiritual in nature, would not fail to uplift the soul, which, after all, never dies, but remains the same from life to life, continually progressing in its onward march towards God, till it finally merges in Him and thus attains its Liberation—*Mukti*—, which is Supreme, Everlasting Bliss.

Then knowing the history of the grief-stricken couple who had put the question, she related anecdotes of bereavements which resembled the one they had suffered, and told how in one case the departed child was seen by his pining mother in a dream

extremely happy in the company of thousands of other children, and how the deep yearnings of the mother caused the soul of her dead child to take birth again in her womb very soon afterwards, which disturbed his rest and retarded his progress. Grief is thus shown to be most harmful to the beloved-ones whose loss we mourn. The other case she related was that of the death of an only son. The mother, seeing the father unconcernedly smoking his hukka in a corner, piteously wailed and, with abundant tears accused him of hard-heartedness, to which he replied : "Do not think me to be indifferent to my son's death, but just now I am puzzling which son's death of all the dozens of sons I have had in the last eighteen lives I should mourn." This gave great comfort to the couple concerned, which made them look upon Mataji as a saviour-mother in whose lap they could always take shelter from the stormy blasts of life.

On the night of October 29th, Sri Mataji for the first time answered questions in public. The talk was opened by a young lady who wanted to know the remedy for the fainting spells she had contracted almost from childhood, and which used to seize her whenever she heard bhajans, attended puja or concentrated on the statue of Sri Krishna in her house. Mataji cross-examined her, and for ten minutes gave her full explanation of the import of her complaint, and finally exhorted her to practise self-control. "As", she argued, "you remain unconscious during these spells, and as they have all

this long time caused you no spiritual progress, nor furthered your sadhana, you should consider them unfavourable, and therefore make an effort to steady yourself whenever the impulse to faint begins to be felt. Take to *japam* and strengthen your mind by repeating God's name," and, placing her hand on the shoulder of the young lady, Mataji, smilingly, and with extreme tenderness, said : "You have had the darshan of Sri Krishna, now I am having your darshan" and folded her hands before her in salutation, which made everybody laugh, except the young lady who burst into tears out of excessive joy. At this stage a voice asked :

Voice : What is the easiest way to God ?

Mataji : Profuse tears.

Voice : And if tears do not come ?

Mataji : Then you should seek the company of those who shed tears, namely *Satsang*. This is the easiest way to God through love and devotion.

The next night, the same voice rose :

Voice : People are asked to worship God, to sing His praise in bhajan, to perform puja, to repeat constantly His name, and they do all this without knowing what God is. Will you please explain ?

Mataji : God is all-knowledge, and one cannot know His true nature till one attains Self-realization. Then one will find Him to be none other than oneself, the only *Atman*, the only Self there is, that He is with form as the world and without form as *chit*, Pure Consciousness. In the meantime prayers, worship, *japa*, *dhyana*, etc. have to be performed. A lady stood up and asked with warmth :

Lady : How can our minds be free for prayer and meditation when we are so much burdened by work and family responsibilities : husband, children, etc. ? What should we do in that case ?

Mataji : Let the work be done of its own accord without your exertion. Work without the feeling that it is you who are working. Take it to be God's work, done through you as his instrument. Then your mind will be at rest and peaceful. That is prayer and meditation.

Sri Anandamayi Ma has a partiality for temples and ashrams, and takes great interest in visiting as many of them as possible. It is erroneously stated in certain quarters that the *Mukta*, the Enlightened One has, by merging with the Absolute, cut himself off completely from the world and its activities. These *Muktas*, on the contrary, enjoy the world without the sense of participating in it, and in all the actions they perform the sense of doership and thus free from sorrow and delusion. They see the Divine Mind in the multitude of forms, colours and qualities that fill the universe in an eternal Play, which is all joy and bliss. They experience this gigantic Play within their own mind, which is also God's and themselves its detached spectators. Yet, Mataji looks at the *murti* in temple as the outer symbol of the Formless God in a special sense, and feels the devotional fervour which, for decades and centuries, lakhs of worshippers have poured out to it.

So, on the 28th morning she and her party motored up to the big temple in Mylapore and to

a few smaller ones in the city. On the 29th at 5 a.m., they visited the famous temple of Conjeevaram about fifty miles from Madras ; and on the 30th, the Sevan Pagodas (Mahabalipuram), where ruins of many old Hindu shrines exist in profusion. On their way back they climbed to the world-renowned Tirukazugukuntram mandir on the top of a hill, where two eagles come every day from a long distance at about 11 a.m. just to feed from the hand of a special priest and return with clocklike regularity in fair and foul weather and without a single day's break in all the many centuries of which tradition speaks. As Mataji's knees were too weak to permit her to climb the great number of steps, she was carried to the top in a palanquin.

Ramana Bhajan is being performed on the last Thursday of every month in the house of Sri P. S. G. Rao in Adyar, Madras. Mataji had accepted an invitation to attend it. As in this month it falls on the 30th, she and her party went in the evening of that day to Gandhinagar, Adyar. In the garden of his bungalow Sri P. S. G. Rao had made excellent arrangements for the bhajan. Mataji sat on a sofa under floral decorations, and facing her at the farther end squatted scores of Brahmins who chanted in rhythmic cadence the Veda verses which have been daily recited in Ramanashram at Tiruvannamalai during and after the life time of the Master, followed by "*Upadesa Saram*" in Sanskrit, the verses which He himself (Sri Ramana Bhagavan) had composed. The very large audience spread out on the lawn, in the whole open space and the veran-

dahs of the bungalow. Mataji's presence, the large exhibited photograph of the Maharishi and His all-pervading influence, the *Veda parayanam* and the incense uplifted and thrilled all present.

Sri Mataji's evenings were usually devoted to visiting outstanding places of interest, e.g. the International Head-quarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, the Ramakrishna Math in Mylapore, the Gujrati Sangha, the Bengali Club, and the gardens of certain people, one of which was that of Sri J. H. Tarapore. It must be incidentally mentioned here that Anandamayi Ma never enters a house where a *grihasta* lives. All she does to bless the person concerned, is to enter his compound, sometimes even without stepping out of the car, halt for a few minutes and then leave. At Sri Tarapore's, however, she did come out, but stood on the car platform, and, opening the big box of apples offered to her along with other fruits, with her own hand distributed almost all its contents to those present, not excluding the gardener of the bungalow. The Tarapore family and those who received *prasad* directly from her hand felt themselves singularly blessed by this special mark of her Grace. At the Gujrati Sangha and the Bengali Club there was music, but more than the music in the former place, there was the riotous joy of the children who swarmed every inch of it, even in laps, over shoulders and backs, and under knees. The Bengali music was exquisite.

On some days there were at "Abbotsbury" three darshans, namely :

10 to 11-30 a.m.

4 to 5-30 p.m.

7 to 9-00 p.m.

The first two items were variable according to the circumstances and the engagements of the day concerned, but the last-one did not vary, and was solely reserved for bhajan, except the last fifteen minutes, when all remained in silent meditation. These attracted large crowds which were accommodated in the wide open space of the garden just outside the shamyana. On the last five nights after 9 p.m. when the majority of the audience dispersed to their distant homes, the minority, which was appreciably large, moved into the shamyana ante-room and filled it to capacity. Mataji then came in, sat on the sofa and answered questions, some of which have been reported above. That was a happy time for all to have direct contact with her through speech. On one of the last nights a question was asked, as to when and at what age and through what *sadhana* she had attained Enlightenment. She laughed in her characteristic child-like way and said that she was not aware of any date or time when she had attained Enlightenment, she knew of no *sadhana* deliberately performed, nor of any suddenness in spiritual Illumination, which made a distinction between a life that had gone and a new-one that had taken its place, that she was now as she had ever been. We have had to draw our own conclusions.

On another night, November 1st, Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, Head of the Department of Philosophy

of the University of Madras, undertook the difficult task of translating Mataji's answers on the spot, and the next day he gave the following written record of the talk :

“Where questions arise, there is answer too. Who questions whom? There is only one *Atman* everywhere : you are that. Where there is duality, there is misery. You *are* non-dual, eternal. You seek and desire truth, knowledge, bliss because you are that. No one wants *Mrityu, Ajnana, Dukkha*, (Death, Ignorance, Sorrow). True, evil has a fascination for man, who, attracted by it, falls. This is due to *vasana*, which means non-recognition (*na*) of the existence of God (*vasa*). To counteract it, one must be attracted towards God, one's true Self. You are *purna* (complete).

Question: How to distinguish *purnata* from *apurnata* ?

Mataji : You are *purna*, and so you ought to know. There is the veil of *ajnana* ; but in the midst of that, there is the door of *jnana*. You have to find yourself. Of course, the guru will help you. You can begin from anywhere. What is required is *ekagrata* (one-pointedness). Enquire : “Who am I ?” and you will find the answer. Look at a tree : from one seed arises a huge tree ; from it come numerous seeds, each one of which in its turn grows into a tree. No two fruits are alike. Yet it is one life that throbs in every particle of the tree. So, it is the same *Atman* everywhere.

“All creation is that. There is beauty in the birds and in the animals. They too eat and drink

like us, mate and multiply ; but there is this difference: we can realize our true nature, the *Atman*. Having been born as humans we must not waste this opportunity. At least for a few minutes every day we must enquire as to who we are. It is no use taking a return ticket over and over again. From birth to death, and death to birth, is *samsara*. But really we have no birth and no death. We must realize that.

Question : How do we know there is re-birth ? There is the function of breathing in the body. As soon as it stops we die. How can we say that we are born again ?

Mataji : Yes ; that is ignorance. Why go so far as re-birth ? One does not know what will happen the next moment. Yet, there is knowledge. Those who have crossed the veil of ignorance tell us that we are the eternal *Atman*.

I am only a child and do not know how to lecture or give discourses. Just as a child, when it finds something sweet and good, takes it to his mother and father, so do I place before you what is sweet and good. You take whatever pleases you. Mine is only a child's prattle. In fact, it is you alone that question and you alone that answer. You beat the drum, and you hear the sound."

Mother addresses every man as 'Pitaji' and every woman as 'Mataji'.

At a very early hour on November 3rd, Mataji's car was ready to take her to Pondicherry, the next stage on her journey. Although it was very early in the morning, a number of admirers had collected

earlier still to bid her farewell. Their hearts were full and heavy at parting from her. I looked at a particular face usually imperturbable, in which I was interested, and read in it a solemn, pensive emotion, which a month ago I could not have dreamt it was capable of feeling for any saint or any religious institution, and I heartily rejoiced. It was one of the miracles Mataji had performed in the short space of only one week : She had relieved the long pent-up sorrow of my friend.

Tiruvannamalai

After attending one or two functions of the routine programme of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and spending the night in one of the Ashram houses near the seashore at Pondicherry, Mataji motored to the beautiful temple of Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram early next morning. Nataraja symbolises the Supreme Brahman dancing the Cosmic Dance as the manifested universe : the Formless Intelligence assuming countless forms and movements in an eternal Play.

Mataji was scheduled to arrive at Tiruvannamalai on the same day, the 4th, at 12-30 midday, when Mrs. Taleyarkhan in concert with the Trustees of the big Arunachaleswara temple and the local officials prepared to receive her with temple honours. But exactly at 11 a.m., i.e. 90 minutes before the scheduled time, her car quietly glided into Ramanashram ; thus leaving Trustees, officials, elephants, and priests cooling their heels in the shade of trees

on the Chidambaram High Road, waiting for her, totally unaware of her early arrival.

A few minutes afterwards she went round the Ashram to see the places sanctified by the holy presence of Sri Ramana Bhagavan in his life-time. Before His samadhi, she reverently stood with folded hands, and enquired about how the sacred body had been buried, and whether there was a lingam on the *samadhi*. The lingam she could not see because it was covered with flower garlands. Then she entered Mathurbooteswara shrine, which was built over the remains of the Master's mother and climbed to the *sanctum sanctorum*, where she was shown Sri Chakra and the sacred lingam. At 5 p.m. she attended the usual *Veda parayanam* near Sri Maharishi's samadhi, and between 7 and 9 p.m. the bhajan programme, as in Madras.

All the Ashram devotees and many members of the Managing Committee who had come from Madras, gathered in the Ashram at 9 a.m. on the next day, the 5th. The ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the Meditation Hall, which is proposed to be built over Sri Bhagavan's samadhi, was performed, and at its end, Sri Anandamayi Ma approached and strewed flowers over the foundation stone to the joy of all present. Then she made the eight-mile pradakshina of Arunachala Hill by car.

At a darshan gathering on the 6th morning, Mataji replied to questions :

D. M. put the first question.

D. M. : The other day in Madras you said that if one has no tears to shed in the search for God,

one should resort to *Satsang*. I have had *Satsang* for many years, and yet, I see no appreciable improvement in myself.

Mataji : Your being here now and your asking the questions are tears. By tears is meant perseverance in the search with devotion. How can you say then you have not benefited by those years of *Satsang*? But for them you might not have reached even so far.

A discussion ensued in which some of the Ashramites, Avadhut Baba, and lastly, Shri Hari Babaji took part.

On the same night, she delighted the Maharishi's disciples by leading the bhajan in calling the name of Bhagavan "Oh Bhagavan", "Eh Bhagavan", "Ha Bhagavan", etc.—for about ten minutes, suitably changing the modulations of the tune and the words of the appeal at each call. Her delicate, pure voice has the youthful timbre of that of a girl in her teens, which makes the glory of her spiritual state all the more captivating. It did captivate a neighbour at my left, judging from his loud groans and by what he later told me. Said he : "Seeing and hearing Mataji, I get flabbergasted. I am one of those half determined seekers, who hang between the material and the spiritual, inclined to lose hold neither of the one nor of the other. Mataji seems to be my conscience in human flesh. Now the question is, to leap or not to leap."

The bhajan that night—the last night was closed earlier than usual, as a Ramana devotee took the congregation to the big Hall and showed them

some films he had taken of Sri Bhagavan sometime before His last illness. The Masters was not at His best in them : general debility had already overtaken His constitution, and the rheumatism in His kneejoints had turned his legs shaky. Yet, His countenance had not lost any of its radiance and dignity, and His movements any of their gracefulness, which must have told volumes to Sri Anandamayi, who had not seen Him in the flesh. After the brief show, a member of the Managing Committee approached Mataji and with folded hands begged her to visit our Ashram again, to which she smilingly replied "I am not going anywhere : I am always here. There is no going nor coming—all is *Atman*," which very much reminded us of the very words of our Divine Guru, Sri Ramana Bhagavan.

On the 7th, at 5 a.m., Mataji stood under the arch of Sri Ramanashram gate in clear moonlight with Sirius brilliantly twinkling overhead. She looked around, and, seeing the small circle of Ramana bhaktas gathered to see her off, affectionately bade them farewell, then entered her car and sped away on her journey in the direction of the Southern Cross, extremely satisfied at the reception given to her here, and at the peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram. Sri Hari Babaji expressed a wish that their stay might have been a month instead of only three days. He was the next centre of attraction ; but although self-asserting and strict in matters of time, a thing Sri Mataji never bothers about, he throughout effaced himself. His quiteness

and his very kind heart endeared him to all those who got to know him intimately.

Farewell, beloved Mataji and, to speak the language of men, God be with you in your holy mission to bring peace and good cheers to the thousands of your children who need them, and who eagerly crowd to behold Thy divine face, and seeing it, turn their minds and hearts to God. "God, after all", say they then, "*does exist, and not only in some remote world in this far-flung universe, but here and now.*"

Programme of Ceremonies April to July 1993

1. 13th April, 1993, 30th Chaitra, Thursday—Maha Bisubha Sankranti—Sannyas Utsov of Shree Shree 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri Maharaj.
2. 14th April, 1993, 1st Baisakh, Wednesday—Bengali New Year.
3. 25th April, 1993, 12th Baisakh, Sunday—Akshay Tritiya.
4. 29th April, 1993, 16th Baisakh, Thursday—Death Anniversary of Baba Bholanath.
5. 2nd May, 1993, 19th Baisakh, Sunday—98th Birth Anniversary of Shree Shree MA.
6. 6th May, 1993, 23rd Baisakh, Thursday—Buddha Purnima.
7. 9th May, 1993, 26th Baisakh, Sunday—Shree Shree Ma's 98th Maha Abirbhav Tithi Puja.
8. 30th May, 1993, 16th Jaistha, Sunday—Ganga Dasahara.
9. 21st June, 1993, 6th Asar, Monday—Ratha Yatra.
10. 3rd July, 1993, 18th Asar, Saturday—Guru Purnima.

Before passing away

Nihar Ranjan Chakraborty

A bud in isolation
Blossomed into a flower.
No body looked at her ;
Although she had beauty
And a fair colour.

She had a plan in mind to fly
With the wings-like-petals
In the open sky,
The mother-plant knowing it,
Tied her in her breast,
Tamed and asked, "why" ?

The flower became sad,
Petals withered, she died,
And she mixed with dirt.
She was not able
To keep a momentary mark
In any human-heart.

The nourishing smell
That she had with her
Lavishly cherished all over.
Will it not be counted
As a mark of her love
In the stock of surrounding air ?

An Esoteric Approach to Sufism

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

Medical research together with recent explorations of the mind have now confirmed that many of the ills that used to be considered as purely organic in nature are actually caused by our attitude towards life and those around us. Even organic as well as nervous and psychological ills can be caused by hate, fear, jealousy and anger. Therefore, we must make every effort to widen the vision of every human being by discovering divinity, in each other, so that rank passion like hatred, anger, jealousy and selfishness are set at naught.

When an aspirant begins to observe his mind he comes face to face with only a few desires and feelings which dance on the surface of his mind. But below the surface the subconscious regions of his mind there are various kinds of thoughts and desires which exercise considerable influence upon the nature of the mind from behind the scene. Further, when one makes serious attempts in controlling the grosser desires and feelings which create disturbances, one is surprised to find that many subtle thoughts and desires rise from the deeper layer of the mind and create troubles. The tendency of the mind is simply to drag us down towards the sensual attraction and if we indulge too much in any form of emotional excitement then we

are only damaging ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually. We must realise the fact that we are attracted to sensuality because knowingly or unknowingly we derive certain pleasure by dwelling on those sensations.

Since the dangers of conflict of greed for wealth and power have never been so menacing as in this era, it is very essential that we lead a pure spiritual life so that we may cope with the innumerable problems maturely. Release from pain and attainment of absolute happiness is the highest purpose of human life. To understand oneself correctly is a tremendous job, because the self or mind is never the same from moment to moment. It is an obvious fact that life is a struggle not merely with circumstances and environments, but also because our minds are pulled in different directions. If we keenly observe we will find that there are so many contradictory desires compulsions and so many urges in our mind. Unless we grasp the totality of the mind we cannot be free. Right meditation alone can bring the realization of the true character of the self. A seeker must inwardly feel the call of Truth and he must discover the fact that when the true wisdom of Reality is attained, the veil of ignorance disappears which means one establishes the right way of living in his own consciousness amidst chaos and confusion.

If we are upset even by trivial affairs, if we lose our character even by a small temptation, if our self control is damaged by outward attraction then these are an indication that we have deviated from

the spiritual life. The deteriorating factor on the spiritual path is the distraction of the mind one feels while in meditation. Practice of meditation makes the mind calm and steady and eminently fit for reflecting the nature of Absolute Reality in its true light, then the serene flow of divine energy is directed solely Godward. Meditation sharpens the whole being, every pore of being becomes active in divine harmony. When the total mind becomes silent that supreme silence permeates the whole world which brings spiritual upliftment.

Since every moment of our waking hours is filled with ego centred activities we do not know how to live in meditation. Meditation is the way to understand the movement of the mind and not to identify with it. If we understand the mechanistic nature of brain and cerebral activity as a fact, then there is no more psychological identification with anything that mind brings up. If we can calmly observe our thoughts then we will reach a state where thoughts are completely eliminated and after that the observer remains immersed in blissful silence. This is something which we can really experiment with. Thus meditation is the total silence of mind in action. A spontaneous meditation releases a new and dynamic energy. It refreshes the nervous system and increases the sensitivity of the total being. The state of living in meditation is moving in spiritual freedom. The beauty of meditation gives us a new dimension of divine living. Meditation is the unfoldment of the totality of our consciousness. Meditation is an

experimental science and it is not a speculative game.

The Metaphysical science of Sufism explains that the notions of pleasure and pain result only from the contact of the senses with their objects. Since these contacts are connected with bodily existence, they have a beginning and an end and therefore they are not permanent. Further, it indicates that the unreal or impermanent is always in a state of flux ; change is its very nature. But behind the changing world is the unchanging Reality. The fact is that in order to observe change, there must be something not changeable. If the subject of the change is also changing, change could not be observed. Sufism insists that the true knowledge of Reality alone can be the sole means for the destruction of ignorance and for deliverance from the illusory bondage and sufferings from which man apparently suffers in this world. Sufism is not a creed or a set of dogmas, but a process enabling each man, whatever be his station in life, to grow and develop into a higher state of spiritual perfection.

Sufism insists that until and unless the practical life is fully imbued with love, devotion and contemplation of the Absolute, one cannot enjoy the beauty of spiritual life. The true goodness of divine life consists in the all-round discipline and development of the physical body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the emotions and the heart for the realisation of the Absolute Truth. Sufistic philosophy points out that everything except That is

changing and only That is eternal and that eternal Reality is the Self of man. Everything else has an impermanent existence only in relation to the Self. The indwelling Self is ever changeless, indestructible and illimitable.

Sufism declares that the liberating factor is meditative awareness which means if we remain simply aware of the pleasurable and painful feelings that arise within ourselves as a result of our contact with the external world, instead of reacting to them with craving or aversion as the case may be, then there is the possibility of putting an end to this mental distraction. For this reason only the cultivation of self-awareness occupies a central place in Sufism and in order to attain the true state of *Fana* the mind must be perfectly pure and transparent, calm and tranquil, absolutely undisturbed. It is only when the self is not that there is *Fana*—that state of being in which alone there can be purity. The state of *Fana* comes only when the self which is the process of accumulation ceases to be.

According to the esoteric aspects of Sufism, if a seeker maintains this state of *Fana* for a sufficiently long period he will experience that his individual consciousness completely unifies with the Supreme Reality. In this state the subject-object relation vanishes from the mind and no modification of the mind is felt, then only the real state of *Baqa* is attainable. In the highest state of *Baqa*, the Reality is not experienced as an object, but one becomes one with the Reality and therefore, there is no plurality or process of dualistic

knowledge. The unconditioned state of *Baqa* is a Supreme Consciousness in which there is no difference between the knower and the knowable. A Sufi is an integrated total man with a mind set free. A Sufi is he who has passed through various spiritual disciplines and attained the frame of mind which does not react to any condition or circumstance of life. A Sufi is not one who has retired from worldly life and lives away from the strife and turmoil of the world. A Sufi finds perfect inward peace and bliss in the midst of all the bewildering diversities of the world.

Sufism insists in understanding the fact that man suffers because of his false identification with an illusory separate self. His attachment to this fictitious entity, the 'me', is a result of distorted, dualistic partial perceptions and conditioned responses due to past psychological memories and experiences. Although to keep the mind quiet is one of the most difficult things to achieve, it is very necessary that one should cultivate the habit of maintaining the mind in a state of perfect peace. When the total mind becomes 'silence', then only one could develop the utter detachment which brings freedom from all the worries and sufferings connected with worldly events. Needless to say that the cessation of mental activity does not result in withdrawing from the active world and does not result in benumbing any one of one's capacities. The fulfilment of life at all levels is the aim of Sufism.

Nada Yogi Swami Haridas*

‘Saroj’

“न नादेन बिना गीतं, न नादेन बिना स्वरः ।
न नादेन बिना नृतं, तस्मान्नादात्भरं जगत ।
न नादेन बिना ज्ञानं, न नादेन बिना शिवः ।
नादरूपपरंज्योतिः, नादरूप स्वयं हरिः ॥”

“There is no song without *nada*, no melody and no dance movement without *nada*, hence the universe is replete with *nada*. There is no knowledge without *nada* ; even Siva is not without *nada*. *Nada* is the final beatitude of the Supreme Light, the Lord Himself is *nada*.”

Such was the *nada* worship of Swami Haridas. Being permeated by *nada*, he accomplished his *sangita sadhana* (worship by music) at the feet of his chosen deity Radha Krishna in Nidhiban, Vrindaban. Consumed by exclusive devotion for Sri Krishna and Radha, Haridas took to music for the pleasure of his Lord Kunjbehari (Krishna). Music to him was simply an expression of Krishna *bhakti* and applicable to life merely for the adoration of Beharilalji (Krishna) whose love lures made Haridas drunk with ecstasy.

Swami Haridas was a sole adorer of Sri Krishna who for him was the only *Purusa*, while all other men and women were His *gopis*, the humble

* Reprinted from Ananda Varta, Vol. XVI, No. 3

attendants of the Lord Ghanashyama. Filled with the *rasaswada* (delight) of divine love for Radha Krishna, Haridas would sing out his heart for the attainment of ecstatic heights in classical melody. Music was to him a sublime means for his identification with the celestial couple Shyama-Shyama (Radha Krishna).

Swami Haridas was born on *Bhadrapada Shukla Ashtami* in 1537, in a small village known as Rajpur near Vrindaban, the place where Sri Krishna's *rasa lila* had been enacted. Haridas' father, Sri Gangadhara and his mother Smt. Chitra Devi, Brahmins by caste, were rich in religious experience. Haridas, in the prime of his youth, felt inspired to take to renunciation. The germs of *vairagya* (dispassion) had already been in him right from his infancy. His urge to give up worldly life was so vital that no earthly allurements could stop him from adopting *sannyasa* in the year 1562, at the age of twenty-five. Swami Asudhirdeva, his religious preceptor, enunciated him in Krishnabhakti of *Nimbarka Sampradaya* that led to his life-long dedication at Lord Krishna's feet amidst the groves of Vrinda plants in Nidhiban, Vrindaban.

Swami Haridas, an ascetic of the highest order, was consecrated to *satvik sangit* in the theory of Indian music. He adopted *Dhrupada* and *Dhamar gayaki* to this effect and championed the spread of the *satvika* element in music. The concept of *satvika sangita* as opposed to *rajasika* music was innovated by Haridas to derive devotional delight of intense sublimity. His spiritual practices of music

gradually elevated him to the level of Oneness with the whole of creation. This sort of empathetic state enabled Haridas to see and feel in living beings and in insensate things an overseeing power of *Brahma*, the supreme Spirit permeating the whole universe. This experience of oneness made Swamiji's tunes so captivating that all people around him would feel bewitched for long. Such was the overwhelming and enthralling effect of his waves of melody both on animate and inanimate beings.

The *Dhrupad* style requires high concentration in music ; *swara sadhana* (song as *sadhana*) comes to the fore in this mode of music. Actually, *pranayama*, one of the exercises in yoga, furnishes the basis for *Dhrupad* style. Haridas was an exalted maestro of *Dhrupad* who had passed long days and nights in the endeavour to achieve proficiency in it. It is said that Lord Krishna had appeared in person to His dedicated disciple Haridas to grant him perfection in *Dhrupad* style, since it is pledged by the Lord to incarnate Himself where His devotees sing His glories :

नाहं वसामि बैकुण्ठे योगिनां हृदयेन च ।

मदुभक्ता यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद ॥

In this way Swami Haridas sang the glories of the celestial couple Radha Krishna from the core of his heart, touching divine dimensions in the musical firmament.

The music-sage Swami Haridas treated music as the basis of the fundamental unity of sound and

light. He conceived of music as an entity of two different aspects, namely the sound form and the visual form, as he made out fully well the fundamental psychic values of all the chief *ragas*, such as Bhairava, Hindol, etc., and to apply them to the requirements of a particular emotional situation or interpretation.

It goes without saying that each *raga* has its peculiar psychic form corresponding to its sonant body over which the presiding deity rules. This *aradhya devata* (image form) dwells in the super-consciousness of the elevated singer and can be invoked to descend on earth through the genuine prayers of a singer who is aided by a definite symphonic formula peculiar to such melody.

Swami Haridas was well versed in spiritual exercises through music ; besides this, he was blessed by the Lord Himself. He had, therefore, the insight of seeing a particular *raga-swarupa* (sound form) face to face. For example, his song :

जुगल नाम सों नमैं, जपत कुंज बिहारी ।

अवलोकत रहैं केलि, सखी सुख के अधिकारी ॥

made him see in visible form the divine couple Radha Krishna, making fretful attempts amidst *gopis*. In a similar manner he was endowed with the power of invoking *Varuna Devata* (the god of water) at the performance of *megha raga* (cloud *raga*) and *Agni*, the god of fire, by *dipak* (light) *raga*. To cap it all, *ragas* used to play and trip about him full of grace and charm, affording inward calm to this unassuming singer saint.

This concept of invoking the presiding deity or the spirit of divinity by means of a *dhyana* formula accounts for Haridasji's saintliness and *nada* worship. It is an evocative scheme of incessant concentrated prayer that led to the birth of his divine music.

Among Haridasji's disciples are the names of such noted singers as Tansen, Baiju Bawara and Gopala Nayaka. It is said that Akbar had expressed the desire to hear Tansen's Gurn. At his disciple's request Swami Haridas sang and made Akbar spell-bound by his unique performance of music and his mystical achievements.

The fifth day of *Margashirsha Shukla* is sacred to the followers of Swami Haridas and to numerous devotees of Lord Krishna, as on this day Haridasji achieved self-realization and got the *Sri vigraha*, the supreme image of Banke Beharilalji that is installed in the famous Behariji temple of Vrindaban at present.

Swami Haridas started a music tradition of his own. Some of his followers are well-known *acharyas* (instructors), such as Sri Vitthala Vipul Devaji, Swami Rasikadevaji, Swami Lalita Kishoredevaji and Swami Lalita Mohinidevaji whose compositions have copiously contributed to and enriched the *Braja Sahitya* and classical music tradition of India. Those singers have, like Swami Haridas, mostly concentrated on the eternal *lila* of Radha Krishna.

Swami Haridas entered the all-pervading spirit of the celestial couple Radha Krishna finally on the

eve of *Sharad Purnima* in the year 1632 at the ripe age of ninety-five.

Each year, the sacred earth of Vrindaban and Mathura, which is called '*Brajabhumi*', becomes resonant with the breath-taking performances of artistes of national fame. These musicians experience an inward gratification after paying their homage to Swami Haridas in musical language.

Thousand of salutations to this sage singer of Braja bhumi who embodied the essence of Indian classical music and represented a rich tradition in devotional songs.

“Who is the Kriya Shakti ? Thou theyself. And who is the Shakti ? He, the One.”

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Ashram News

Kankhal

On 14th January, 1993 on the occasion of Paush Sankranti, Special Puja and Kirtan were performed.

Like earlier years, this year too, Saraswati Puja and Shiva Ratri Vrata Festival were performed with deep devotion and gaiety.

On 13th April, 1993 —Tuesday, on the occasion of Maha Chaitra Sankranti, Sannyas Utsav of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giriji was observed at Giriji's Samadhi Mandir. At noon Sadhu Bhandara was also performed.

On 25th April, 1993--Sunday, on Akshay Tritiya, the foundation day of Shree Shree MA's Samadhi Mandir—'Ananda-Jyoti-Pitham' was observed with deep devotion and gaiety. On this occasion a good number of devotees assembled in the complex and paid floral tributes on the divine altar. At noon prasadam was distributed amongst the devotees.

Calcutta

Agarpara Ashram —Saraswati Puja, Shiva Ratri Vrata and Dol Yatra Festival were observed with deep devotion and gaiety.

On 13th April, 1993, on Chaitra Sankranti, the Sannyas Utsav of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giriji was performed at Giriji's Mandir. During this occasion Special Puja was performed and prasadam

was distributed among the devotees assembled in the Ashram.

Head office of Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society at Matri-Mandir, 57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700019—Like earlier years, this year too, from 6th March, 1993 to 7th March, 1993 the Annual Nam-Kirtan and Pujas of the Society were held at its office at Matri-Mandir with deep devotion and great grandeur.

On 6th March, 1993—Saturday, in the evening the function was inaugurated through religious rites. On the next day i.e. on 7th March, 1993—Sunday from the very dawn Nam-Sankirtan was started which continued till dusk. On this occasion Special Pujas of Shree Shree Ma, and Shree Shree Narayan was performed. Hundreds of devotees participated in the function. At noon after puja, bhog and arati, prasadam was distributed among the devotees who attended the function.

On 13th April, 1993—Tuesday, the Sannyas Utsav of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri Maharaj was observed with due solemnity and devotion. A large number of devotees attended the function and took prasadam at noon after the performance of Special puja, bhog and arati.

Bhimpura, Baroda

On 14th January, 1993—Makar Sankranti, Special Puja of Shree Shree Padmanabhaji was celebrated with great grandeur. On this occasion Special Kirtan and devotional songs started from the very dawn of the day. After puja and bhog-

arati, prasadam was distributed among the devotees who attended the function.

This year Shree Shree Shiva Ratri Vrata of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha was performed in this Ashram.

The devotees who came from other places had performed Shree Shree Shiva Puja under the guidance of Brahmachari Nirvananandaji. Next day, after the conclusion of the Vrata, prasadam was distributed among the devotees who attended the function.

On 25th January, 1993 under the supervision of Shri Shivanandaji and on the presence of many Sadhus and Mahatmas, the puja of Shree Shree Narmada Devi was performed. On this occasion many villagers also participated in this function. After puja and bhog-arati, prasadam was distributed among those who attended the function.

It is obvious that doubt lies at the root of the desire to know. If you had the firm conviction that God does everything, the desire to find out why things happen as they do would not arise in you.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Obituary

1. An ardent devotee and one of the most favourite sons of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee—Dr. Gopal Dasgupta is no more with us. He left his mortal coil on 10th February, 1993 and took eternal rest in the lap of our divine Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee. Late Gopal Dasgupta was the able son of Late Ganga Charan Dasgupta—the uncle of our revered Bhaiji. Late Gopal Dasgupta, in true sense, led his entire life as a Brahmachari, though in disguise. He was well known for his diligence, selfless service and intelligence.

Shree Shree Ma, Gurupriya Didi, Swami Paramanandaji in many a times entrusted him with various jobs to accomplish. He will be ever remembered by many a people both devotees of Ma and others for his selfless service, sense of humour and straight-forwardness. His sudden demise inflicts an irreparable loss to all of us. May his soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of our Divine Mother.

2. Late Gopal Dutta—one of the ardent old devotee of Mother breathed his last on 13th April, 1993—on the auspicious day of Chaitra Sankranti. Even at his old age, he, accompanying his wife Bina Didi joined various functions of the ashram. Soft speaking, broad hearted Gopal Da was loved by all. May his soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of Ma.
