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The love of God is alone desirable for a human being. The One, whose offspring you are, who is your Mother, Father, Friend, Beloved, Lord, who has brought you forth, has nourished you with the nectar of mother's milk—by whatever Name you invoke Him—that Word you should keep in mind at all times.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Arise and delay not, follow after the pure life, Who follows virtue rests in bliss alike in this World and the next.

Sri Walayat is the head of the entire Sufi sect.

—Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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# ANANDA VĀRTĀ

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

Vol. XXXXI

● JULY, 1994 ●

No. 3

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## **PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES**

**July, 1994 to November, 1994**

- 1. Guru Purnima—22nd July, Friday**
  - 2. Shree Shree 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri's (Didima's) Tirodhan Tithi—13th August, Saturday**
  - 3. Jhulan Ekadashi—16th August, Tuesday**
  - 4. Shree Shree 1008 Swami Mounanda Parbat Maharaj's Tirodhan Tithi—18th August, Thursday**
  - 5. Jhulan Purnima—20th August, Saturday**
  - 6. Rakhi Purnima—21st August, Sunday**
  - 7. Janmastami—29th August, Monday**
  - 8. Shree Shree 1008 Swami Gurupriya Nandaji's Tirodhan Tithi—12th September, Monday**
  - 9. Radha Astami—14th September, Wednesday**
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## Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

Talking of Her "play of sadhana", Ma said, "For five months, the kriyas (automatic manifestation of yogic postures etc. in Her body) took place at Bajitpur, and after that began 'mauna' (abstention from speech). 'Mauna', in fact, is not the right word, for it was not mauna. The 'bhava', (thought, idea) was like this—not to talk with anyone else in that manner. You may call it 'mauna' of a particular aspect. The manifestation of a supreme power—not to bow down to anyone, everything is just an expression of my own power, I am the supremest—something like that! And how wonderful! Look here,—not doing obeisance to anyone! But it is myself doing obeisance to myself—this bhava was not yet manifested. The phases that a sadhaka passes through were spontaneously manifesting in their own way. Even after the manifestation of this bhava (of Supreme Power and Glory), a curtain was drawn to conceal it, as it were. The play was on; even after having seen, known and experienced everything, it was kept under cover, as it were, by myself. This, too, was just a state of a sadhaka."

Question : You have absolute knowledge right from the beginning in a continuous manner; even then, since all the *kriyas* and *bhavas* of the *sadhaka* have taken place in you,—in that context I ask :

when did the subtle state of sadhaka-hood or the culmination of realization take place? And how did it take place?

Ma : In Dhaka. But how and exactly when—that is not coming out at this moment. It may be called perfection, the manifestation of perfection or the end of the play of “the sadhaka.” Again, it is not enough to talk of the manifestation of perfection, try to understand what this manifestation comes from ; seek it out.

Question : Even after these five months, the *yoga-kriyas* did take place in Dhaka—what about that?

Ma : As regards this body, it cannot be said that what has once happened cannot happen again. Anything can happen at any time. Play is just play. But at Bajitpur these *kriyas* took place in a kind of continuous manner for five months—just as setting down to do *japa*, *puja*, *kriyas*, etc. in a regular manner. But after that when verbal communication with others stopped, I arrived in Dhaka in that very state. Just after break of *mauna*—that is, it had started in the month of *Pausha* (mid-December to mid-January), and after the completion of three years, on the very day of *Pausha Sankranti* (the last day of *Pausha*)—the manifestation of *mahabhava* took place in Dhaka. Again, the *kriyas* which manifested in Dhaka were not like those which had taken place at Bajitpur. How the manifestation takes place spontaneously—that was revealed in various manners in this body. A great deal of such manifestation occurred

in Dhaka, too. After that, all those diverse manifestations which you have witnessed taking place in this body took place just according to the need of the moment. Before that, at Ashtagram, I used to take the name of "Hari" which I had heard from the father of this body. Even before that, for a short while, the mantra of sixteen names and thirty-two letters had been taken for a few days, just as a matter of *kheyala*. In the beginning, "Hari Nama" used to be taken. It was followed by "Jai Shiva Shankara." Then came *Shakti mantra*. People talk of *diksha*—what is this *diksha* after all? The self is the *Guru*, the self is the *shishya*. Such innumerable phases of *sadhana* came and went in a series.

Then, look, after arrival in Dhaka during the period of *mauna*, so many things happened—the stages of *samadhi*, living only on the fruits fallen from the trees, living only on milk, curing diseases, eating enormously, eating too little, eating food cooked on sacrificial fire—all these are *rishitva* (manifestations of rishi-hood). Manifestations of various powers and excellences—so many things took place. *Kashtha mauna* (total abstention from communication, verbal or by sign) occurred for some days. All these aspects of *sadhana* took place in Dhaka. After that, when the body was in a dishevelled state, so many things happened on so many occasions!

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God is the one and only friend of the pilgrim to the Ultimate. Act in this spirit so that you may come to accept Him as your all in all. Unless one is single-minded there will be obstacles at every step.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Two visits by Siva to Sitaramdas indicated that Siva bestowed on him the complete Jnana as He was the master of all Jnana. Not only that, Siva was the master of all Yoga and so He bestowed that also on Sitaramdas. Siva was in complete control of all His senses and that quality also Sitaramdas got from Him. Siva was the master of all music and tunes and poetry and Sri Sitaramdas inherited these also from Him. He was completely non-attached to anything in life just as Siva was.

—Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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## Sad Vani

If you can make your life like a running stream that swiftly and steadily flows towards its goal without ever halting, not only will no impurity of any kind be able to accumulate within you, but even other people will be cleansed by your presence. Fire flares up high into the sky, yet there is a point beyond which the flame cannot retain its own nature and is converted into smoke. But the current of ceaselessly flowing water is so powerful that, undeterred by the trees and rocks without number which get in the way, rivers and streams traverse thousands of miles until they arrive at their final destination. If you want to attain to Truth, you must, as a river, keep on advancing indefatigably with great singleness of purpose.

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From every creature in the world something or other can be learned. In this sense everybody is everybody else's Guru. But the Supreme Guru is He who guides man on the path to Self-realization. When, as a result of meditation and satsang a person begins to yearn for God, He Himself appears to him embodied in the form of the Guru. A true disciple is one who by complete surrender at the Guru's feet comes to realise who the Guru actually is. The disciple must devote himself to the service

of the Guru and always obey His orders implicitly. The Guru's grace and benediction rains down on the head that bows low before Him. The more one-pointed and the humbler the disciple grows, the quicker will develop his capacity for progress.

Another word for son is "dimaja", self-begotten. On the spiritual path, as soon as the relationship between Guru and disciple has become indissoluble, it is appropriate to call the disciple the real son, dimaja, of the Guru.

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If you wish to become a chieftain you need along with your sword and shield the strength and capacity to use them. You clamour so insistently for self-government (swaraj). When you are inwardly ready for swaraj, you will have it. On a foundation of ethics and morality build up a life of religion and righteousness (dharma jivan) keep God first and foremost in all your undertakings. In this way you will be filled with Divine Power (Mahasakti), and then, who will be able to interfere with your independence? When you have no subjects be ruled? If you become monarch in the kingdom of the mind, earthly government will automatically fall into your hands. Truth in the world rests upon dharma. Dharma is the very life of the world.

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# Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Volume VI

( Translated by Tara Kini )

( Continued from previous issue )

## March 7, Monday

As on other days, today also Ma rose at seven a.m. At five thirty a.m. Nishi Babu arrived and started *nama kirtan* accompanied by Biren Babu and the rest of us. *Kirtan* was sung for a long time. Ma's health recoups only with the repetition of the Name. After *kirtan* Ma was fed. At twelve noon the doors were shut and Ma lay down with her eyes closed. Sometimes she probably opens her eyes but does not speak for she says, "If any rule is to be observed it is better to follow it entirely."

People from many places came for Ma's *darshan*. At four p.m. today when the doors were opened, some *sannyasins* and other people arrived. One *sannyasin* enjoys narrating the *shastras* and so Ma often tells him to speak on good themes. He then narrates episodes from the *shastras* one after another, with great delight. Though others tire of it Ma listens with great pleasure and quiet attention. However, Ma alone knows how much of each topic actually reaches her ears. If anyone mentions this topic to Ma she says, "Let him speak—he is happy in repeating what the *shastras* say.

No one's *bhava* should ever be destroyed. *Shastras* are words about God after all."

One thing that we have observed is that some men and women who perform spiritual practices after meeting Ma, begin to imitate her language and *bhava*. Observing this in many instances we have brought it to Ma's notice. But Ma responds with, "Let him say that. Do not stop him. Even if you do stop him because you are here now, he will still do it when you are not here. How will you stop him then? Even an imitation of anything true, of my truthful *bhava* is good." Pausing awhile, Ma continued, "Look, when a mango is ripe it does not come and tell you, 'I am ripe'. You go and observe that it has reddened, that its fragrance is just right and that it has ripened. Similarly, if the pure *bhava* awakens within a person it is not necessary to tell anyone else about it. From that person's behaviour and expression it becomes obvious to others."

At four p.m. the Rajmata of Solan arrived. At six p.m. we all sang *nama kirtan* together. At ten p.m. Ma was made to lie down.

### March 8, Tuesday

At ten a.m. Nanki Bai came with her daughter-in-law for Ma's *darshan*. They wanted to hear Ma's advice. Ma responded saying, "Everything can be achieved by following the Guru's advice. One-pointedness is necessary. All have come from the One, all are within the One and all will merge into that One. We speak one word at a time, eat one

morsel at a time, and walk one step at a time. After mentioning one or two other points Ma summed up, "Maintain this attitude." They sat for some time and then left. At twelve noon the doors were shut.

At four p.m. when the doors were opened and people gathered again Ma began speaking and said with a laugh, "I just had the *kheyal*. When this body was photographed at Siddheshwari with a pulled down appearance, it was actually quite plump. But by the fruit of earlier spiritual practices, the *sadhaka's* body had lost weight and that was now substantiated in this body as well. Since that *kheyal* arose when the photograph was taken, the photograph revealed a pulled down appearance. During that *sadhana* no food was eaten, nor did the body require sleep; in fact, from entertaining guests to serving every member of the family, every household chore was performed conscientiously. Though the body lost weight it possessed an inner strength. I was very well indeed—though you people could not see at that time. May be that was the reason why the *kheyal* of the pulled down appearance arose when the photograph was being taken at Siddheshwari. Therefore you have only seen that pulled down form."

### March 9, Wednesday

This morning Akhandanandaji arrived from Vindhyachal. Bholanath's letter informed us that his brother's health was improving and that Bholanath would return in three or four day's time.

### March 10, Thursday

This morning, as soon as she woke up Ma suggested, "Come, let us go for a stroll today." With that she walked all around the Doctor's house saying, "If people come they can be accommodated in these rooms."

When she returned Ma sat in her room. Just then Niraj Babu and family arrived from Itawa while Maharatan's older daughter, Professor Dasgupta's wife and others came from Bareilly. Ma laughed and said, "I have just walked around to check if there is room here for you all to stay." They responded with, "Ma, you know it all and therefore we did not send any prior information."

All sat around Ma. Niraj Babu's wife asked, "Is there any need for practising *asana* and *pranayama*?" Ma replied, "Why not? Breathing in and out is going on all the time. Even while musing over worldly thoughts *kumbhaka* (breath retention) occurs sometimes as also some kinds of *asana*. Meaning to say that while a person is seated in that *bhava* and engaged in that thought for a length of time, the mind gets engrossed in a particular fashion. This happens spontaneously. Similarly the posture and kind of breathing that causes the mind to engage in thoughts of the *atma* (soul) must be practised. For those whose minds are turned towards the *atma* naturally such practice of *asana* and *pranayama* is necessary. While they are thinking of God, *asana* and *pranayama* occur spontaneously. In each *asana* the tendency towards one worldly action (*kriya*) is particularly roused.

During those actions such *asanas* occur spontaneously. Examples can be found in worldly actions if you observe attentively. By watching your posture at this moment the thought which is predominant in your mind can be revealed. By your gaze, even by listening to you or by watching the manner in which you write a letter your nature can be deciphered clearly. It is visible as lucidly as the reflection in a mirror." So saying Ma laughed. Everyone listened to Ma enthralled. Ma continued, "The mind is just as good as it is restless. It is never fully satisfied with only the outward objects."

After a long conversation Ma was offered *bhoga*. At twelve noon the doors were shut.

At four p.m. when the doors were opened Ma said, "At first by taking refuge in pure actions the impure *samskaras* have to be destroyed. After that even pure actions cease. Just like soap which is used to remove dirt from the body, is itself, after all an impurity. Soap is used to remove the dirt and then water is used to remove both the soap and the dirt." She spoke on similar matters for some time. Swami Akhandananda had come with many women devotees for Ma's *darshan*.

### March 11, Friday

Ma got up at four a.m. today. At five a.m. her hands and face were washed. As the day dawned people began gathering around her. We too were seated near her. In the course of conversation an incident that had occurred years ago was

mentioned. When Ma lived at Shahbagh she could not discern the distinction between fire and water. Ma now described that condition. “Do you know what it was like? I would look at water but its action seemed to be exactly the opposite of what it was. Just as I went places and climbed or descended stairs, this body would enter water after which no attempt was made to swim or emerge from it; because the nature of water did not exist in my *kheyal*, that kind of *bhava* did not arise. It was just like walking or sitting on the ground, that was all. In that condition these people “(indicating me)” had carried me back any number of times. The condition you people refer to as *samadhi* occurred to this body in the water. It was again the same with fire. The heat of fire was just not experienced, yet the action of fire would take place on the body as it does normally. But I did not notice it at all. In that state I placed fire on my feet and hands. It felt like placing a flower on the palm and playing with it. There was no distinction between the two.

Then the question raised was how was it that Ma could not eat fruit that had been pecked by a bird yet she had been known to eat food half eaten by another. So much so, that one day, when a dog was eating Ma had run to it saying, “I shall eat with him.” These sort of contradictory events have occurred so often in Ma’s life that recording them would become a never-ending job. We have seen different *bhavas*, big and small, innumerable, being constantly enacted by Ma’s body.



The next topic was about the dimensions of the pit in Siddheshwari. Ma said that it had the dimensions of a *yajna kunda* (sacrificial fire pit). Not quite one and a half arm's length, may be a little less than that. The length and breadth were equal. Ma would remain lying down in it. Ma's body sometimes became heavy and huge and sometimes light and tiny. This fact is known to all. Today again Ma mentioned, "How could I have remained lying in that pit without compressing this body?" We too had wondered how Ma's entire body could fit into that tiny pit. Today we heard the truth of that incident from Ma's lips.

Lavanya's *bhava* during *Vasanti puja* at the time of Chaitra Navaratri, was also discussed. Today we heard from Ma that when she laughed aloud and stood with the alacrity of wind, Lavanya said, "What is the matter with Kakima?" and embraced her, for Lavanya had never before witnessed Ma in *bhava samadhi*. As soon as she touched Ma, Lavanya's condition became such that she swayed across the room and fell outside. The house was made of mud, the *kirtan* resounded; the fear of the clay statue of Durga being knocked down in the terrible storm caused the people to run hither and thither in a panic and therefore no body noticed Lavanya.

At three thirty a.m. Ma went to the lavatory. On returning she lay down and spoke—"See by watching certain characteristics the level of each person can be gauged. The manifestation of a great *bhava* is very different. Ordinary *bhava* mani-

festations with an image are not called *leela*. It is true that all *bhava* is but God's *leela*; but what happens to a *sadhaka*? He starts with one *bhava*, then some may go into a *bhava* that needs no imagery and may also attain *bhava samadhi*."

"And as I mentioned earlier, some may attain an exhausted like *bhava* because of bliss. The characteristic behaviour of such a person is indicative of that. There may be a particular attachment for a certain deity. That may give rise to a wonderful *kriya* in the body, inspired by the depth of the *bhava*; but having descended from that state, the ordinary *bhava* arises within again—like worldly thoughts and the feeling that the body is the soul and such other emotions. Because the *bhava* of worldly enjoyments is not wiped out suddenly within the mind. Only in particular spots, like temples, or in the presence of the worshipped deity, all kinds of *kriya* happen. Therefore he is able to converse later about matters pertaining to the body and other mundane topics just as ordinary humans do. But the one who is actually elevated to the height of *samadhi* changes colour altogether. For has he not ripened? Also the essential truths pertaining to that state are revealed. Just like a mango which, when ripe, does not have to declare, 'I am ripe, come and pluck me'. Rather its colour and scent make it obvious to people that it is ripe. Therefore I say, may be he is immersed in one form or deity. So with *kirtan* or because of some other reason even if some special *bhava* does arise within him, he ultimately attains stability only at the ordi-

nary level. It is very difficult to understand the nature of this *bhava* perfectly.”

“Those who have attained the greater *bhava* do not need to take recourse to any particular deity or *bhava* in order to experience *samadhi*. In the most natural fashion all kinds of play occur within them simultaneously. For example at one time one may observe the characteristic of *samadhi* as a consequence of some cause ; at other times the person may attain *samadhi* for no apparent reason. That is the nature of such a person. There is no need for causes to exist. Natural *samadhi* is the play of one’s natural self, is it not ?”

Once while describing her condition Ma had told Charu Babu, “Do you know what this body is like ? Seeing water, fire or wind it would merge into that *bhava*, as if this body were the waves of the river, or the glow of fire or a part of the wind. The feet touched the ground only very slightly—this body swayed with the breeze, higher and thither, but did not fall. That was because this body had become as light as air. Similarly while going in a boat on a river this body would sometimes want to merge with the water. And in that *bhava* this body attained such unnatural strength, that these people “(pointing to me)” could not hold it back. Of its own accord this *bhava* would then cease. May be it ceased because this body had to be preserved, otherwise no one had the strength to keep back this body.”

Now again explaining about that *bhava*, Ma said, “The great *bhava*—it can be seen in this

fashion as it sports. Yesterday I had told you about the merging of this body with the nature of water, fire, wind and space. Do you know what that is? *Prakriti* (Nature) performs the *leela* (sport) while the formless *Purusha* (Person) lies inert, *Prakriti* manifests her sport within Him. The *leela* of *Prakriti* is like *Shakti* and *Shaktiman*. But He is not governed by *Shakti*. With *Shakti* the *leela* goes on, just as a husband and wife play the games of householderhood. Sometimes the husband may act according to the wife's wishes but that is also because the husband or the doer grants it. The Lord (*Swami*) is independent. The word *swami* means *sva*+*ami* that which is true, that is the Self (*sva*) is what I am (*ami*). Therefore a *sannyasin* is called *swami* which means *so aham* (I am That) what else? When this great *bhava* plays within someone all other *bhava* can also play simultaneously. True his body appears to be made up of the five elements, but the *leela* of that which lies beyond the senses occurs within him all the time. Unless they are beyond the senses, two kinds of *bhava* cannot manifest in one substrate at the same time."

"The actions of Rama, Krishna and other *avatars* is called *leela*. The word *leela* means one who can take (*le*). Whosoever He takes is merged within Himself. He is Himself many. He takes Himself and plays—that is *leela*. *Prakriti* performs the *leela*. *Prakriti* attains *laya* (dissolution) in the *Purusha*. This *Prakriti* accepts everyone equally just as a river flows away with dirt and sandal paste

alike, fragrance and stench are both borne by wind, the sun shines equally everywhere ; these are all games played by *Prakriti*. A river is called a river until she merges with the sea. As soon as she flows into the sea she is called the sea. Actually it is all the *leela* of the One who is Great."

Ma was quiet for awhile before she continued, "It is very difficult to discern such *bhava*. Even when this great *bhava* plays within someone spontaneously you may still find some worldliness in his personality. Because worldly and other-worldly sport can occur simultaneously within him. It is so naturally beautiful it feels as if great *Prakriti* Herself is manipulating the hands, feet and other limbs of that person. Even if there is some desire left in the mind the great *bhava* may still sport within that person."

As Ma spoke the day dawned.

I heard about yet another incident. While Ma was at Siddheshwari, Nani Babu had gone to offer *bhoga* on a particular occasion. Ma offered Kumari *puja* to one of his daughters. It was not a worship consisting of flowers and leaves. Perhaps the *bhava* that this worship should be performed with was manifested within Ma's body.

Once when Ma had gone to Vikrampur Pargana from Dhaka, she happened to visit a village called Noadda. *Kirtan* was performed regularly there and Ma was engrossed in *bhava*. She then experienced a most wonderful condition which can hardly be described. Ma was seated on the verandah. All at once the upper part of Ma's body with her head,

moved with snake-like speed and descended the stairs into the courtyard, while the remaining part of her body remained on the verandah. The top half of Ma's body had moved into the courtyard below, with exactly the kind of swift motion that is peculiar to snakes. This would have been impossible unless Ma's entire body had been stretched. Then, when Ma rose, still in an ecstatic state, and began to move about, every pore of her body seemed to exude blood. Later Ma had herself explained that she had had the *bhava* wherein every pore seemed to bleed. And every hair stood up in such stiffness that it resembled a thorn, the end of each hair having become as sharp and every pore seemed to have come out of a gland. A red glow suffused the whole body. That was the condition of Ma's body. Such kinds of *bhava* have been manifested at other times also in Ma's body.

Today when the doors were opened at four p.m. a *brahmachari* came and announced that Niraj Babu and others had arrived. Niraj Babu read out a verse from the Gita and asked, "Ma, what is all this about worshipping the formless (*Nirakara*) and the One with form (*Sakara*)? Also the Gita says, 'Keep the mind steady in the *ajna chakra*.'" Ma replied, "Look, it is possible to attain that state by keeping the mind steady in the *ajna chakra*. Other than that, however, the heart is the seat of experiencing joy, sorrow, bliss etc. Therefore some seat their Lord of the Universe in their hearts. Once He is seated, no sorrow or lack of joy can touch the spot. Once the mind is thus stabilized in the heart

it is automatically elevated to the *ajna chakra*. And having reached the *ajna chakra* it moves into the *sahasrara* in its natural course. Just as water when poured over a raised spot flows down naturally.”

“About *sakara* and *nirakara*. First when He is seated in one’s heart, it is *sakara*, then on going to the *ajna chakra* the *nirakara* is experienced. After that there is no concept of either form or of any one particular opinion. The mind then enters the unmanifest state. Then again you may observe that sound, form, touch, smell and taste—these five essences are each present within the other.”

In this fashion many incidents and topics were discussed. At ten p.m. Ma lay down but her body looked very strange. Her head had become very cold and after being fomented it warmed up slightly. She then lay down silently.

(To be continued)

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*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

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# Our Universal Mother— Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee

Mrs. Indira Lakshmi Malla

In 1969, while re-reading the spiritual classic “Autobiography of a Yogi” by Swami Paramahansa Yogananda, my attention was irresistibly drawn to a picture of a female saint who was a personification of peace and bliss. The name of this saint was Shree Ma Anandamayee. On reading that she had a hermitage at Dehradun, I caught the first opportunity of going there. I met the gentle Sister Atmananda who told me Shree Ma had left the ashram a few days ago. I bought a few beautiful pictures of Shree Ma and a book on her by her devotees. I hung her picture on the wall of my room and started doing namaskar every day. I read the book and decided to meet her in person.

It struck me that Shree Ma had all the qualities described of a “Sthitapragya” or an enlightened saint in the Gita. Moreover, I was attracted by reading various instances of Her all-embracing mother-love, Her compassion for the lowly and the down-trodden. But Mother was in India and I was in Kathmandu, Nepal. I came from a conservative family and could not travel alone. So I started praying to God, to Shree Ramakrishna Paramahansa to enable me to have darshan of



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Shree Ma who I felt would guide me on the right path of sadhana.

On the surface, I was happily married to Col. Shanta K. Malla, had two lovely children—one girl and one boy. Life was a whirl of parties, cinemas, shopping, etc. But I was not satisfied by mundane pleasures. My hobby was reading and I had read books of Shree Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Holy Mother Sharada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, Paramahansa Yogananda, etc. Sometimes I used to hear the voice of my conscience—“Is life only eating, drinking and merry-making? In different religions, saints and sages have shown different paths of Self-Realization. If I pray to God, He will surely lead me to a saint who will guide me”.

God heard my prayer and I met my niece Shanti, Kaverani Lakshmi Devi of Gondal at a lunch party in Kathmundu. I asked her if she knew about Ma Anandamayee. She replied, “Yes, I am Ma’s devotee. This year I am arranging a Samyam Saptah at Vrindavan and Shree Ma will be there then. I am sending invitations to most of you. If you want to get Ma’s darshan, please come.” I was delighted and mentally thanked God for His mercy. So, in November, 1973, my sister-in-law Rani Padma Rana and myself were off to Vrindavan.

God sends obstacles to test His devotees. My relatives discouraged me saying that at the age of 28, I should not be running after saints. Fortunately, I have an understanding husband. He knew about

my spiritual quest and he agreed to my going if I could find some reliable travelling companion. Before going to Vrindavan, I dreamt I was in a big marble temple where many persons were singing bhajans. I also saw Shree Ma with a beatific smile on Her face clapping Her hands to the rhythm of the music. When I entered the temple at Vrindavan, it looked familiar. Of course, I had seen it in the dream !

Thursday, 1st November, 1973 was the most auspicious day of my life ! I had darshan of Shree Ma Anandamayee ! Ma was like what I had seen in my dream. She greeted me as if I was known to Her. I also felt this was not the first time I was meeting Her. My heart said, "Here is the saint of the highest order like Ramakrishna Paramahansa which you have been seeking so far. When Shree Ma's eyes met mine, I felt She was looking not only at my physical form but also my heart and mind. I felt I was meeting my real Mother. My heart whispered. "She is a Divine Being in a human form. No human being can have that penetrating gaze which seems to encompass past, present and future." Tears of joy filled my eyes and I sat quietly for some time savouring the sweetness of re-union.

After some time, my reasoning faculty took over. So a private interview with Ma was arranged by the courtesy of Gurupriya Devi, Ma's companion and devotee, popularly known as Didi. Here is some portion of my dialogue with Shree Ma which I jotted down at night.

Indira : Ma, my heart says you are an incarnation of Bhagawati, Durga. But my husband says if it were so, why does she not remove so many injustices.

Ma : Whatever one thinks, that is so.

Indira : Please, protect my husband and children.

Ma : Narayan, Namō Narayan.

Indira : Ma, please, show me the path. What sadhana shall I do ?

Ma : Japa, dhyana, namaskar.

Indira : Ma, will you come to Nepal ?

Ma : Yes, when you wish.

Indira : That will be whenever you wish.

Ma : Nepalme bhi rahati hai.

Indira : In the form of Guheswari ?

Ma : (Smiling) Tujhme bhi rahati hai (Resides in you also).

This dialogue was in Hindi originally. Rani Padma and I also had the great fortune of getting indirect initiation from Shree Ma. Swami Bhaskaranda was also present on the occasion.

After thinking over this again and again, I have come to the conclusion that it was a case of Shree Ma's ahetuki Kripa (grace without reason). I am not a gyani nor a learned person, nor a great bhakta nor a yogi. I am a housewife who does little social service. I have intelligence a little above average but many failings. I am not regular in the morning time reserved for meditation and japa. Yet Shree Ma, in Her boundless compassion, took me under Her shelter. I had walked a few feeble steps to-

wards Her and She traversed miles towards me. Words are inadequate to express Her love and compassion. I am reminded of the following verse in Sanskrit.

“Mukam karoti vachalam  
Pangum langhayate girim  
Yat kripa tamaham bande  
Paramananda Madhavam.”

I salute Paramananda Madhav Shree Krishna by whose compassion the dumb can speak and the lame can cross mountains. It aptly illustrates my case.

The Samyam Saptah week passed in peace and joy. The hardships were small compared to the darshan and company of Shree Ma and the sages. I felt as if I were transported in an ancient hermitage and living in Satya Yuga. Ma would be present during the periods of collective meditation—8 a.m. to 9 a.m., 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. and some time during Mahatmas' lectures. From 9 p.m. to 9-30 p.m. was the daily time for Matri-Satsang. It was a joyous time for drinking the nectar falling from Shree Ma's lips. She would answer questions put forth by various vratis. As for myself, I could not and would not tear my gaze from Her except during meditation. Ma looked like Maha Saraswati in Her spotless white cotton saree and towel wrapped around in a unique way.

On the last day of the twenty-fourth Samyam Saptah, we had the great fortune of a special darshan of Shree Ma who seemed to be 'God-in-man one with man-in-God'. Anil Ganguly, in

his famous book 'Anandamayee Ma the Mother Bliss-incarnate' says "The interplay between Her 'outer-manifestation' and 'inner being' seemed to have reached the acme of perfect synthesis. The 'outer manifestation' was the role of both a loving friend full of concern for the well-being of the vratis and an ideal guide or guru to help them attain their cherished goal. The 'inner being' ever in unison with the One, was apparently oblivious of our seperate existence."

Ma declared that She was a 'beggar woman' and asked the vratis for alms ; "Fix a definite time every day for praying to God and dedicate that period to Him for the rest of your life." This was said with the humility of a beggar as well as the love of a mother. Shree Ma even told us what was the prayer to God to be like. "Lord, I am Thine. Thou art my refuge. Have mercy on me and show me the path to Thee." This is an English translation. Ma was speaking in Hindi. After a while, Ma seemed to be completely merged in Herself oblivious of our presence and yet residing in the hearts of all. Even now, after so many years, when I remember that moment, I am moved from the care of my being.

This is my memoir of my first darshan of Shree Ma. By Her grace, I was re-born in the Spirit. Regarding Shree Ma, I do not like using the past tense. In my humble experience and no doubt in the experiences of countless other devotees, Ma is still a guiding force. She has withdrawn Herself in an abstract form but if we pray

to Her sincerely, She communicates with us in various mysterious ways.

At first, when Shree Ma left Her body, I felt forlorn. But Ma has given many indications that She is still looking after Her children. About my various visits to other Samyam Saptahs and Shree Ma's darshan, I shall write later. I would like to request the readers of this article to write about their own experiences with Shree Ma. I find great delight in reading anything about Shree Ma and Her devotees. Now I would like to conclude with this prayer: "May my head be always touching Shree Ma's lotus feet and may I be blessed with the company of saints and Shree Ma's devotees either directly or indirectly (reading). Jai Ma! Lead us from the Unreal to the Real! Thou art my sole refuge! Make me an instrument of your kheyal."

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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

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SAI RAM SAHAY

# Chanting of God's Name

M. Rama Rao

( *Continued from previous issue* )

## PART—II

Let us see what other scriptures, saints and sages, say regarding chanting of God's name.

(i) Veda says as follows :

### **Yogic Element in Meditation**

MEDITATION on the name of God with a fully concentrated mind is verily the royal road to the attainment of God. The wavering mind becomes calm when it contemplates continuously on the name of God. When united with the name of God, the mind is bereft of all other ideas.

“From the sea of clarified butter swells up a stream of sweet nectar. Let it reach Agni and attain immortality. I know the secret name of this clarified butter, which becomes immortal it is ‘God’s tongue’; the navel of immortality is its other epithet. We are repeating the name of clarified butter in this sacrifice. We continue to offer oblations in the sacrificial fire so that this four-horned, white ox in the form of sacrifice will vomit the clarified butter. Listen to me as I chant the name of this clarified butter with utmost devotion (Rig Veda IV. 58, 1-2).

Sayana understands by clarified butter (ghrta) as Brahman and the 'name of the clarified butter' as the Pranava or the sacred syllable Om. In his highly ingenious commentary on Taittiriya Aranyaka X. 10.2 where the same Mantra occurs Sayana says that herein is stated unambiguously the efficacy of Om in the attainment of Brahman when uttered at the time of meditation.

Sayana further explains as the whey Om or the Name of God is regarded as God's tongue. He says that the gods are constantly uttering the name and, therefore, the name has, as if become in their mouths, a co-tenant along with the tongue. The Om is next given the epithet, 'the navel of immortality' because, comments Sayana, it is the support of total liberation as the navel of a wheel is the support of a chariot.

In the mantra, the Ox is referred to as vomiting the clarified butter meaning thereby that the sacrificer gets back the fruit of his sacrifice. Thus this Mantra is explained the power of Om for leading us Godward.

The sweetness of the name of God is described in another Rik. "Who is that God whose charming name we should always remember? Who will take me to Aditi so that I can see my father and mother? We should meditate on the name of Agni who stands foremost among the gods. He will lead me to Aditi so that I can see my father and mother" (Rig Veda I. 4. 1-2).

Constant remembrance of the name of God must be resorted to in order to be free from the



bondage of this world. Madhva in his Rig Bhashya points out that Sunassepa did this in order to free himself from the pillar. This helps the aspirant to have a vision of Vishnu and Lakshmi the father and mother of the universe.

The chanting of God's name with one-pointed devotion yields its fruit though it may not be backed by solid intellectual understanding. "Oh! singers of God's praises, propitiate with adoration from the depth of your being, God Vishnu, the primordial substance, the omnipresent lord and the originator of the moral order. Even though you understand him partially, narrate His glorious deeds as much as you know and utter His name which carries spiritual power. This is the way by which we may become worthy recipients of His abounding grace" (Rig Veda I.156.3).

What is really important is to make the mind steady. Then it works wonders. "Oh! Indra, right on being born, you made your mind steady and firm. Though you were alone, you slayed many an enemy in the battle. You destroyed mountains and won an unsizable number of cows" (Rig Veda V.30.4).

Meditation on the name of God implies that one is always 'awake to God'. In fact, wakefulness is remembering God while sleep is forgetfulness of Him. "There are seven Rishis in the body. They are always alert and they protect the body. When a man goes to sleep they are absorbed in the Atman. At that time, Prana and Apana that are the clan vital and that know no sleep, are perfectly

awake in the body” (Yajur Veda XXXIV 55). The seven Rishis are said to be the nose, tongue, eye, skin, ear, speech and mind. The protectors are Prana and Apana.

(Bhavan’s Journal Jan. 15, 1985)

In Gita Lord Krishna Says as :

FROM JANANESWARI (50)

(Commentary in Marathi on Bhagavad Gita)

By Sri Janandev

(Rendered into English by Late R. K. Bhagwat)

Bhagavad Gita Chapter VIII : Verse 7 :

“Therefore, at all times, do thou direct thy thought unto Me and fight ; with thy mind and thought dedicated unto Me, thou wilt, without doubt, attain to Me exclusively”.

Sri Krishna said : “In the same way, whatever desire remains unsatisfied while alive, that very desire gets strengthened at the time of death and the rule is, whatever is uppermost in mind at the time of death, that very thing, the soul is reborn into, and therefore, you do always keep steady in your mind your thought on My Supreme Essence. Whatever you see with the eyes and hear with the ears, or think in the mind or speak with the tongue, should all solely be in regard to Myself, through and through, and when this is secured, it will be an established truth that I abide everywhere at all times. When this is secured, O Arjuna, you have nothing to fear from death, when your body gets destroyed. Then what is there for you to fear in the war ? If you dedicate to the Supreme Spirit of My Divine Being, both your mind and the intellect

you will yourself be one with My Divine Being and this is My word of promise to you. Were you still to feel doubtful as to how all this would take place, you first try and have experience of it by study, and then you may be all wrath towards Me, should you fail in securing the fruit of it”.

(The Vision Dec. 1986)

How can we keep our thoughts on God is a question? The answer is that we can keep our mind steady on God by constant singing of His Glories, hearing His Leelas (Stories) and by chanting His holy name day and night.

Swami Ramdas of Anandashram S. India once told a devotee that he did not practise any Sadhana but he Chanted his Guru Mantra (Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram) constantly day and night. God stood before him.

He also hinted to an aspirant as :

The more you tune your thought with the almighty Divine dwelling within you, the more of self-control Purity and peace you will attain. Don't be daunted by obstacles. By the Power of God's name you can conquer anything and every thing”.

(The Vision Nov. 1986)

Tyagaraja the Saint Musician was born in 1759 in Tiruvanur, on the bank of the Kaveri river near Tanjavur (Tamil Nadu). He was renowned even for spirituality. He was staunch devotee of Sri Rama.

On 6.12.83 I visited the Saint's Samadhi Mandira—on the walls his Kirtans in Telugu lan-

guage were written. Two out of those Kirtans attracted me.

1. Yendaro Mahanubhavulu Andariki Vandanalu,

“There are countless great souls, I salute them all”. He shows his humility though he is himself a great saint.

2. Yanta, Vedina Yintena Ramaih, Chintalami Bapaessa. Is this much your response Rama for my so much (Countless) prayers. Please remove all my worries”.

Tyagaraja was called Nada Yogi. He did not consider music as a fine art but as the easiest Path to salvation.

I would like to quote one more of his Kirtan as noted below :

It is the snare trapping the deer unawares. I have been following You faithfully ; kindly hasten to remove this curtain of arrogance (mada) and envy from within me.

An interesting anecdote is related in connection with the above Kirtana. It is said that when Tyagaraja arrived at the famous temple of Venkateswara at Tirupati, it was time for food-offering to the Deity and the curtain was drawn across. Pained and dissappointed at not being able to see the Deity, Tyagaraja burst forth in allegorical song, depicting how it is not any physical barrier, but the six enemies within that obstruct man's vision of Truth.

God does not appear easily even before a devotee of Tyagaraja's eminence. The Saint prays plaintively for the removal of this grief of his.

Lord, reposing on the milk-ocean (Ksirasagara-Sayana), should you subject me to such worry? ..... Chanting of Your holy name brings redemption, do have mercy on me !

By referring to Rama as the Lord reposing on the milk-ocean, Tyagaraja avers that Rama is Visnu Himself, the Supreme Godhead. In many kirtanas he refer to Puranic itihasah (history) when the Lord came to the rescue of Prahlada, Draupadi and the elephant-king Gajendra, and who is ever-ready and alert to save the devotee.

In Bhavan Journal April 16, 1984, under Bhakti movement Sri K. K. Shular writes Sofism is Bhakti movement in Islam. A Muslim Bhakta is a Sufi.

Sufism also arose out of a reaction against Prophet Mohamed's immediate followers who lead a very ostentatious life. Again the social upsurge among the Arabs after the Prophet's passing away led many Muslims to an "inner life of escape". A Sufi is one who possesses nothing and whom nothing possesses. It was this inner life around which Farid built a whole philosophy in India :

Why do you wander in the forests, O Farid.  
Treading thorns and thistles under your feet.  
Seek the Almighty within thyself.  
Not in woods and waste lands.  
Cut into fragments, this body, O Farid.  
Not a drop of blood shall ooze  
A body drenched in God's name  
Is bereft of blood.

In Prabuddha Bharata March 1985 Under

## THE PLACING OF MANTRA

SWAMI SHARADDHANANDA States

An aspirant who has received an Ista-mantra from a qualified Guru should strengthen the faith that the holy name of God is one with God. Spiritual Reality is condensed in the Mantra. The Mantra is Sabda-Brahman, declares our scriptures. When the Mantra is practised with great intensity of love and faith, it becomes awakened and opens up amazing vistas of Vedantic knowledge.

The Mantra Sabda-Brahman will transform that material segment into spiritual radiance.

Thus, knowing the holy name of God as God Himself, we can apply the power of the Mantra inside and outside of us and bring everything to a sublime unity of Sat-Cit-Ananda. So long as the Ista-Mantra is with us, God will be with us; wherever the Ista-Mantra is placed, the Divine is revealed there.

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.

(Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi)

A pertinent question noted below was put to Sri Ma.

Why is joy not experienced during the singing of Nama.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ma : Of course.

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

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

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

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

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



(Ananda Varta October 1988)

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu got God realization by singing constantly His holy name.

The emergence of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is an epoch making instance in the religious, social and cultural life of Bengal and India in the late 14th and 15th Centuries. To his ardent devotees, he was Krishna reborn ; to most he is the father of the Vaishnava school of Bengal ; to all he is a great saint who taught that Godhead can be achieved by sincere and devoted naamsankirthan (singing of the name of the Lord). Chaitanya Mahaprabhu taught (to quote his own words) "... The name of Hari, the name of Hari, O ! the name of Hari alone and nothing else in Kali yuga, can lead one to the sum-mum benum of life ..."

He began to realize that in Kali Yuga, the sole means of achieving the desired goals of existence was the constant chanting of the name of Krishna. To quote Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (as Nimai was to become later) "...What was obtained by meditation in the Krita Yuga, by offering sacrifices in the Tretha Yuga and by worshipping Vishnu in Dwapara Yuga, is obtained by Krishna naama sankirthana in the Kali Yuga ." Yet again, he was to proclaim "constant chanting of Krishna naama roots out all the evil influence of lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and prejudice. Constant chanting of the Nama is far superior to making crores of pilgrimages ...". Nimai felt that the time had come to get initiated. He went to Iswarapuri at Gaya and got initiated into the Gopala mantra.

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

At a later point of time Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was to say “ this is the Mahamantra for the invocation of Sri Radha Krishna. This is the means as well as the end ”. It is necessary to add here that it was not really necessary for the Lord, who had come down to the earth, to be initiated by a preceptor. This was only to point out all prospective aspirants (who were seeking emancipation).

(Sapthagiri November 1989)

In case of Mantra Yoga or Nam Yoga we have to repeat Nama of Mantra with a single pointed faith and devotion. But it is not so easy as noted below.

Next comes the application of the mantra to the cittavrttis (mental waves). Endless thoughts and emotions are constantly arising in the mind. It is indeed difficult to stop them. In the Gita (Chap. 6 V. 34. 35), when Arjuna mentions this problem to Sri Krishna, the Lord replies :

Doubtless, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless and difficult to control ; but, O son of Kunti, through practice and dispassion (renunciation) it can be conquered.

The practice of Mantra-Yoga in this context is to communicate the great power of the Holy name with faith and love to the mental waves. In this practice there is not a bit of the toughness or

aggressiveness that is required to challenge the mind directly. The distractions of the mind become naturally calm by the divine influence inherent in the mantra.

Lastly we have to pray to God for His grace by forgiving our mistakes.

करचरणकृतं वाक्कायजं कर्मजं वा

श्रवणनयनजं वा मानसं वापराधम् ।

विहितमविहितं वा सर्वमेतत्क्षमस्व

जय जय करुणाब्धे श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ १२ ॥

All mistakes arising from my action performed by my organs of action (such as hands or legs or organ of speech) : by my sense organs of perception (such as ears or eyes) : and by my mind—O Lord ! all omissions in performing the good and commissions of pursuing the bad, all of them. O Paramesvara forgive me forgive me fully.

To save me from my own mental entanglements, forged by my own lustful identifications, I need your forgiveness and blessings, O Lord I glorify you and invite you into my heart.

Glory, glory ! O Ocean of Mercy Lord of Lords, the one from whom comes all auspiciousness ! Forgive me. Help me to save myself from my own delusory attachments !

(It is daily chanted in Shirdi Sai Mandir)

This verse is a very popular one as we meet it in almost all hymns of Lord Sankara.

# Shaktivada

(The doctrine of power)

Dr. Mahanambrata Brahmachari

( *Translated by Smt. Manjulika Chowdhury* )

A unique treasure of Bengal is the cult of Shakti (power). In modern times the way of conducting this cult—Tantra—which is but another name of Gauria Vidya, rarely comes up for discussion and research. The self-forgetful Bengalee race is indifferent to its own acquisitions and wealth ; yet the cultivation of Tantra can not be taken as a thing of the past. Within our living memory Ramprasad, Bamakshyapa and Ramakrishna Paramhansadev practiced the cult of Shakti and gratified by attending the Summum Bonum of life.

The great gift of the Science of Tantra is the doctrine of Shakti (power) which is not philosophical such as Pluralism, Dualism or Monism. Its method is scientific as against speculation and logical reasoning which constitute the method of philosophy, perceptions and feelings compendiously termed 'anubhuti' has a twofold character—individualistic and universalistic. In order to establish one's own perceptions and feelings one has to judge, argue and reason, that which is universal. Universal is independent of the individual and does not require any proof, it is axiomatic and therefore irrefutable. The cult of Shakti is one such irrefutable doctrine.

The first axiom of Shaktivada is that 'Shakti' (Power Energy) exists. It is universally perceptible. Brahman, Soul and God are beyond the comprehension of them. One may try to establish the existence of such entities by logical reasoning which remains open to refutation by a superior reasoning. On the contrary, the doctrine of Shakti is irrefutable. None can deny the existence of power, energy, force. The very denial of power. To deny existence one must depend on the powers of intellect, reasoning and speech. One may deny the existence of God, but not of power requires power. The very instrument which is indispensable for refuting the doctrine of power is itself power. Hence its existence is undeniable.

The line of argument may seem to be a repetition of the argument put forward by the great French Philosopher—mathematician Rene Descartes to arrive at his first principle 'Cogito Ergo Sum'. But it is not so.

Descartes rightly arrived at the conclusion that Thought (cogitation) exists and therefrom he jumped to its conclusion that every thought must have a thinker and that Thinker is 'I' or 'myself' which must be 'thinking substance'. He overlooked the fact that thinking is an activity and every activity depends upon a power. The present writer's argument is in the line and accordingly his first axiom is "power exists".

That 'Power exists' is not the final word of Shaktivada. The inner truth of this doctrine is that 'only power exists, nothing else exists.' Every

object in this universe is a conglomeration of energy ; every object is nothing but power. Each and every individual object is a typical manifestation of power. In the hymn (Sri Sri Chandi—Uttar Charitra—chapter V Sloka 34) ‘Ya Devi Sarvabhutesu Shaktirupena Samsthita’ etc. (the goddess who permeates through all objects of Nature in the form of power), the worshipper is loud and clear to proclaim the truth enjoined by the Tantra that the goddess represents the totality of all powers and is all-pervasive. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the similarity between the discovery of the true nature of Reality as made by the Western world of Science and the view point is amazing. Ever since the days of Newton, the onward march of science through a period of 300 years has led—the scientists to arrive at a conclusion which fully endorses the view-point of the Tantra. With the advancement of scientific knowledge we have come to know that a punctual entity such as ‘atom’ is the store house of power ineffutable. Accordingly our conception of matter has undergone a revolutionary change. Today there is none to doubt that every object of Nature is an organisation of energy and energy alone. Matter is no more an inert and dead substance, but a living force whatever its state—static or dynamic.

The third point about Shaktivada is that there is only one all-pervasive power in the universe. What we perceive as heat, light or electricity has only illusory existence. Scientifically all these are manifestations of one and the same power. Not

long ago Scientists believed that atoms are independent ultimate entities constituting the world, but this view has since been rejected. Now it is a universally accepted proposition that everything is a transformation of one and the same power. It is now well-established that one and the same energy is at the root of light, heat, electricity and all other elements of Nature. What the accidental Science has established after long years of research, the Tantra of India unhesitatingly proclaimed long long ago and that proclamation is this : One and the same power is working at the root of the Universe.

Although the Scientists of the West have now admitted power as the ultimate Reality, they can not be regarded as worshippers of power. To know power is one thing and to be worshippers of power is another. In India power is worshipped, but in the Western countries the case is different. In fact, there is a fundamental difference between the viewpoints of the Western World of Science and that of the Indian Science of Tantra has been discussed above. It is worthwhile to note the difference between them which will help to understand why the Science of the West does not teach us to worship power.

There is no difference of opinion as to oneness of the fundamental reality underlying the Universe, which is power. But the Scientific world of the West views this power as a non-living force devoid of consciousness. On the other hand, the Science of the Tantra believes that power is living entity and in no way devoid of consciousness. In every

respect power is a conscious entity. In the Sri Sri Chandi the goddess representing power is described "its abhidhiyate" (Chapter V sloka 19). In other words, the goddess representing supreme power permeates through all objects of Nature in the form of consciousness (Chetana).

However, vast a material object may be it does not deserve any respect. None hesitates to walk over the gigantic Himalayas, but it is impossible to tread on the tiniest ant unhesitatingly because it is a conscious being consciousness attracts respect. If the Western people come to realise that consciousness is inherent in the power, they may introduce power ..... in their social system. The victorious march of Science has not only secured the admission of power as a real entity, but has established its nature as being akin to consciousness. Great Scientists such as Eddington and others have characterised the ultimate reality as being the "mind stuff" of the Universe. According to Sir James Jeans, within the ultimate reality at the root of the Universe there is a clear indication of the play of mathematical knowledge; otherwise, this diversified gigantic creation could not have gone on in such a disciplined manner. In his view, there is no trace of a single error in mathematical calculation anywhere in the Universe. Mathematical knowledge is dependent on intellect and power of judgement which latter is dependent on consciousness. To admit the mathematical knowledge of the ultimate power is nothing short of admission of power being a conscious entity. This apart, we may mention



some of the mysterious findings of modern physics.

One of the principles of modern physics is the Law of Indeterminacy. Every atom is a miniature Universe. In this Universe the Sun is at the centre and the planets are revolving round it. Similarly, in an atom proton is at the centre and electrons are revolving round it. The only difference between the two organisations is that in the case of the Universe, the planets are moving round the Sun along their respective orbits while in the case of an atom the electrons are changing their courses from moment to moment, not by way of smooth running, but by jumping from one orbit to another without halting at any stage. So far all attempts have failed to determine the orbit from which one electron passes to another and the velocity of its movement. It is impossible to determine the position and velocity of an electron at any given moment. Even if the position of an electron at any given moment can be determined correctly its velocity remains unknown and vice versa. This is the finding of Heisenberg which is known as the Law of Indeterminacy from which premise the freedom of electrons can be inferred.

In 1947 the world-famous Scientist Einstein, started from the premise that spontaneous internal explosion takes place in the atoms of radio-active substances such as Uranium, Radium etc. and arrived at the conclusion that the electrons in crores of atoms in the wires of electrical lamps enjoy the liberty of leaving their own courses

without any influence whatsoever of light and heat.

Having observed this peculiar behaviour of electrons Eddington and other top-ranking Scientists inferred the existence of consciousness in the interior energies of atoms in as much as exercise of free-will is impossible without conscious thinking. Therefore, it is clear that, at the highly developed stage, Science has reached the threshold of admission of consciousness as a real entity in all terms of energy. Nevertheless, currently it is just an inference of the scientific world that Power is a conscious reality. Through observation and experiment this proposition has been inferred. On the other hand, for the advocates of Tantra this proposition is not merely an inference; it is a matter of feeling and perception too. For them it is not a truth realised through research and experiment, but a truth realised directly through meditation and rituals.

However, it will never be possible to realise the conscious nature of the Supreme Power through the search of consciousness in material objects. To know the Supreme Power which is consciousness incarnate, one must be self-composed. It does not seem impossible that in the near future Scientists will address themselves to that business.

The object of the Tantra is Super Power which is one having no second and pure consciousness. This is not the final word about that Power. In the nature of the goddess representing absolute consciousness there lies hidden an infinite store of

compassion. We can have a glimpse of that great wealth of compassion only through Her grace. Although on war-path, outwardly she is cruel, but Her heart is full of kindness. From her engagement to destroy the demon, we can not gauge the store of Her infinite compassion. Even it is impossible to determine the exact nature of Her Kindness. Transcendental Sciences have described Her as Mother. Everywhere in the Universe this motherly touch can be felt—"Ya Devi Sarbobhutesu Matri-rupena Samsthita" (The Goddess whose motherly existence can be felt in every object of Nature)—Shri Shri Chandi—Uttar Charita—Chap. V Sloka 73. The tenderness and compassion of the goddess, (should we call Her the 'greatest conjurer') surpasses all earthly tenderness and compassion taken together.

One of the scientific theories about the creation of the Universe is that for some unknown reason a sun larger than the sun around which our earth revolves, forcefully made its way in the space not far from our Sun. The gravitational pull of the larger sun established the structure of our sun with result that nine parts of it were separated from the main body. These nine parts are the nine planets which were not lost altogether. Because of the gravitational pull of our sun these planets are since then moving round the sun in their respective fixed orbits. As our sun has been holding the planets by its gravitational pull, and none has been allowed to be lost, so this Universe too originated from the Supreme Power and is safely resting thereon. The

insight of the Tantra has revealed the truth that we are being held and protected against destruction by that great power with motherly affection of which we are unaware. In fact, compassion can not be seen, but can be felt by the enlarged heart. Science of the West has a head but not the heart. In the Science of Tantra the emotional aspect of the heart has combined with the head, and that is why what the material science has failed to see, has been noticed by the Science of Tantra.

Science views power as lifeless and so the scientist's aim is to control and utilize it for the benefit of mankind. On the other hand, the Science of Tantra being the believers of consciousness as the essence of power, does not favour the idea of controlling power and using it for the happiness of mankind. No conscious entity submits itself to the authority of others. Any attempt to subjugate it yields unfavourable results. If a boy comes to know that someone is trying to subjugate and use him according to one's own whims, he refuses to submit to such subjugation. According to the Tantra, if our aim and object be to control and subjugate power which is the fundamental reality of the Universe and is all pervasive, the result is bound to be disastrous. On the contrary, if we try to know the goddess representing the Supreme Power and worship her, Her goodness and blessings will enable us to acquire all the riches of the world.

In the Chandi there is mention of Shumbha and Nishumbha who heard of the beauty and tenderness of the goddess and desired to marry Her and enjoy

Her passionately and as a result thereof they lost their lives. Power is not for enjoyment. She is the Supreme Mother and is to be worshipped by all the gods and men of the world. It is through the worship of the Mother that the worshipper elevates himself morally and spiritually and attains peace. On the other hand, when the Society becomes vitiated and there are attempts to enjoy the Mother who is the source of all powers the results are bound to be malificent. According to the Tantra, such attempts are devillish. Ravana detracted the powers of gods and employed them for his personal pleasure and enjoyment. Indra, Vayu, Agni and Varuna obeyed the orders of Ravana to please him as servants do to the masters. But secretly they always planned to kill Ravana. With the appearance of Shri Ramchandra, the hopes of the gods were fulfilled. When human civilization addresses itself to the only task of increasing the material wealth and luxuries of life to satisfy the sensual pleasure of life in complete disregard of the spiritual values and other great contributions of humanity, then there remains no doubt that devillish civilization is on the threshold of total destruction.

After the discovery of nuclear power, the whole world has been terrified to observe its destructive power and the preparations that are going on all over the world to use that power against humanity. It will be impossible to protect human civilization unless some World Board constituted by men endowed with high moral sense, and intelligence and benevolent to mankind, is authorised to control

the use of nuclear power. This is the view of the Science of Tantra.

It is possible to enjoy happiness, peace and wealth if one associates oneself with the Supreme Power. Association brings about misery and loss of mental peace. When misery befalls the life of the individual, it is to be understood that the life of such individual is dissociated from the Mother and as such he has become powerless. According to the Tantra the only way of connecting oneself to the Supreme Power is to worship her in order to secure her blessing.

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“After a time of decay comes the turning point. The powerful light that has been banished returns. There is movement, but it is not brought about by force.....The movement is natural, arising spontaneously. For this reason the transformation of the old becomes easy. The old is discarded and the new is introduced. Both measured accord with the time, therefore no harm results.”

I. Ching

# Ma—The Omnipresent

P. N. Nagu

- I worship thee, but little
- I endeavour to serve thee through my actions
- I feel thy form around me
- But, I know thee, as one nearest to 'God'

These are my humble thoughts that inspire me from within, which make me feel, an aura of inner happiness and peace of mind attributed to thy glory. For you are not only my reverend 'Ma' but a shining path that can lead to the eternal force of truth to be transformed in righteous actions, with least desire of reward, but for your blessings and place at your feet and experience of Bliss from your Bhakti. Ma is fountain head of 'Shakti' which emanates out of her 'Darshan'. I have prayed in her serene presence to feel the Vibration of the Shakti, so that, should a need arise, I may not feel pain that comes out of so many factors in this world full of sufferings. I feel the 'chosen one' by 'Ma' as I have experienced pain and suffering that my destiny and 'Sanskar' have made me to face in recent years and borne with fortitude and courage. I am still full of joy and look forward to beautiful and meaningful things in life—All this because of 'Bhakti' and unclenching faith in 'Ma' and her protective umbrella of 'Ashirwad' over my head. 'Ma' is immortal. Her divine body, though rests

in peace but her soul is omni-present in 'Trilok'. If you want to please the soul—wake up to the realities of life—serve the poor and learn to give to the needy, for in it lies the real Puja, Bhakti and salvation and look for 'God in every human'.

- Ma—I am as much a sinner
- For I am not thy true Disciple
- But Bless me-Bless me-Bless me
- As you are the one and only magnanimous  
Ma—Ma—Ma
- True incarnation of Goddess Durga.

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The love of God is alone desirable for a human being. The One, whose offspring you are, who is your Mother, Father, Friend, Beloved, Lord, who has brought you forth, has nourished you with the nectar of mother's milk — by whatever Name you invoke Him — that Word you should keep in mind at all times.

— Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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# Eternal Farewell

Nihar Ranjan Chakraborty

Eternal farewell, it is eternal farewell !  
At the break of pleasant night  
He, who, will be the King of Ayodhya  
Who has cloathed him to a beggar ?  
Expel, instead of coronation,  
Immersion, instead of advent !  
Has anybody seen the full-moon darken ?  
Shree Ram goes to forest,  
Sita and Lakshman alongwith.  
The world stand still with grief,  
Poet word-bind that tear,  
Pain takes form of charming art—  
And flows from year to year !

Eternal farewell, it is eternal farewell !  
Hari left for Mathura with cruel Acrore,  
Being departed from her beloved  
Lover Radha weeps, rolling in ground ;  
Shok-shari ceased singing,  
Restless feels yamuna water !  
Shyamali and Dhabali refuse grazing.  
Finding the Tamal-dence empty  
The milk-maids weep.  
Their pitchers are floating away  
They are not aware, look not to those  
do not care !

Poet word-bind that tear,  
 Pain takes form of charming art—  
 And flows from year to year.  
 Eternal farewell, it is eternal farewell !  
 Budha left the place to gain the knowledge  
 How to overcome death, birth and oldage.  
 He felt the need of the world,  
 And became free from homely bondage,  
 When he came to know—he taught the true ;  
 “Non-violence is greater than all virtue”.

King Sudhadan weeped for his son,  
 Gopa weeps incessantly—

Weeps entire Kapilabasto

And role down in dust,

Poet word-bind that tear,  
 Pain takes form of charming art—  
 And flows from year to year !

Eternal farewell, it is eternal farewell !

Nimai left Shachimata,  
 Darkening entire Nadia,  
 Nimai left for Katoa—

To accept Sanyas,

The barber is able not to hold his razor—  
 To make the lovely young

A yogi, ball-headed one.

Stone melts by devotees' tear,  
 Tear-flood sweep away—

Shantipur cannot bear !

Poet word-bind that tear,  
 Pain takes form of charming art—  
 And flows from year to year,

Eternal farewell, it is eternal farewell !  
 Being oppressed by the Koras  
 Irammad Mohammad left them—  
 Went in divine light—

Long far from fear ;  
 To announce the holiness of Islam all over,  
 The world could not cognize him,  
 Who came for exposition !  
 Now they weep in Madina  
 For his blissful notion.  
 Poet word-bind that tear—  
 Pain takes form of charming art—  
 And flows from year to year.

Eternal farewell, it is eternal farewell !  
 They killed, putting him in Crush—  
 Christ, the forgiver Lord ;  
 Who came in human-form,  
 Now, is there a need of

heading him a crown,  
 Who has illuminated all over  
 and made his own ?

“Oh, father, excuse the unwise all”  
 Crucified Christ begged to Almighty  
 last of all.

Poet word-bind that tear,  
 Pain takes form of charming art—  
 And flows from year to year !

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(Translation of the poetic composition : “अमर विदाय”  
 Written by Kumud Ranjan Mallick, Born in 1882)

# The Development of Acintya

**bheda—bheda—vada**

**Dr. Rita Banerjee**

**Lecturer, Sanskrit M. M. V., B. H. U.**

The Indian soil is well-known as the seed-plot and nursery of a number of religious and a still larger number of the theological, philosophical and metaphysical schools owing their allegiance to the different religions. Among these different schools, the Vaisnavas, an important Hindu religious sect of India, have derived their inspiration from Visnu—a member of the Trinity worshipped by the Hindus. For more than seven centuries the Vaisnavas have been an active force both in North and South. The South Indian Vaisnava leaders like Ramanuja and Nimbarker were Vaisnavas no doubt. But under the strong influence of Vedanta philosophy they were led to give a clear Vedantic stand to their outlook and thought. Yet to them too the focal point was devotion—a continuous pondering over the essential Reality. Doubtless, the kernel of such worship was 'Bhakti'. To them, the significance of Bhakti lay in a completely submissive attitude. But in spite of the Vaisnavite faith that they held Ramanuja and Nimbarka were under the pull of the monistic metaphysic of Vedanta. This blend in them results in their worship of the non-dual entity (Brahman) of the

Upanisads as Lord Krishna, whose figure is seen as that of the four-armed Vasudeva. To them and their followers it is this divine figure which is the object of worship. The union of monism and Bhakti-vada was thus achieved by these leaders of religious schools, both of whom at heart were Vaisnavas. Apart from Ramanuja and Nimbarka, the Madhva school of thought accepted dualism in the form of two entities—Radha and Krishna. This had the importance of being a landmark. This was the first appearance of dualism as a departure from the already established non-dualistic thought.

Much after the development of these Southern Vaisnava schools, Sri Chaitanya appeared in Bengal. He gave Vaisnavism a revolutionary form, as a result of which a self-contained Vaisnava philosophy grew up round the Cocoon of the devotional ideal of which Chaitanya was the symbol. This was the genesis of the school known as Bengal Vaisnavism. The greatest contribution of Sri Chaitanya was to unite monism with dualism, which led to the development of a new thought and a new metaphysic known as "Acintya-bheda-bheda-vada".

There is certainly a reason behind the acceptance of the concept of divine power by the Vaisnavas. Due to their fundamental belief in duality, they establish two entities—the Lord and His Power. This is the reason why the Vaisnavas describe the divine nature a divine power.

Let us first see the Sakti theory of the Vaisnavas. According to the Vaisnavas there is a Supreme

Power which constitutes the intrinsic perfect selfhood (Svarupa) of the Lord Himself. This power is absolutely inseparable from the divine being, because of which it is said to be the intrinsic potency (Antaranga-Sakti) of the Lord. It is named as Svarupa-Sakti. Apart from it, two other divine powers are mentioned—one is Maya or extrinsic potency, and the other, Jiva or Tatastha Sakti. The Visnu-Purana is the authority from which the Vaisnavas have drawn the conception of these three divine powers. In this Purana—these three powers are termed as Para, Avidya and Ksetrajna respectively.

The inter-relationship between the power and the powerful is the pivotal point in Vaisnava faith from which has stemmed and evolved the most striking and important aspect of Vaisnava metaphysics i.e. “Acintya bheda-bheda-vada” which needs explanation.

It is impossible to identify these divine powers with the Lord Himself, from which it follows that there must be a distinction between the power and the powerful. But contrarily one cannot distinguish these powers from the Lord, they being *His* powers. From this standpoint there exists an identity between them. The theory of sameness in difference may be explained in another way—the power is the attribute of the Lord and so it is different from Him because the power has a separate existence and hence is apart from the Lord. Again, the power being the divine nature is identical with Him.

A common analogy will make the point clear. The burning power of fire is different from fire because this power can be felt in the hot iron rod though fire is not seen there. This means that the burning power is different from fire itself. Again, the power can not be separated from fire itself. To this extent, the power is identical with fire. It is this type of relation which exists between the power and the powerful (Lord). The theory of Acintya bheda bheda vada (the theory of inscrutable difference and non-difference) of the Bengal Vaisnavas has developed on the basis of this intricate relationship.

### AN APPEAL

To overcome the present financial crisis and for the development of the Society's projects, your heartfelt co-operation is solicited and we appeal to your goodself to come forward and to donate generously.

D. Pal

*General Secretary*

# The Awakening of the Truth

B. Indira Kumari

“O Mother Divine ; Thou art all Love and  
Kindness”

So praised art thou by one and all of Thy devotees,

“If such beset thou, I humbly Thee questioned  
Why Sweet is One’s life and some other’s with  
sorrow overwhelmed ?”

“Because of their past actions” So to me Thou  
whispered.

“Canest not Thou forgive Thy children Thine Own  
When with repentance they movingly beg Thy  
Pardon ?”

Was my next query. “I ever Do,” was thy answer  
immediate.

“If so why dost thou keep them weeping day and  
night” ?

To this my question Thou sweetly laughing, thus  
said,

“Poor Child ; The mother ever comes running at  
once

To the child, lifts it up, kisses and fondly hugs  
It to her bosom, only when the child for her cries  
out”.

Ah ; At this awakening of the truth I felt ashamed  
Of myself and then at Thy feet rested my doubting  
mind.

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# A Shower of Mercy

Ranadheer Dastidar

## I

“When the life is hard and perched, come upon me in a shower of mercy”—sang Tagore in one of his songs.

To Her countless devotees Sri Sri Ma Anandamayī came in an unending stream of compassion. To me also She came—Mother Eternal—when my need was sorest.

It was about 35 or 36 years ago that I had had my first darshan of Ma in Calcutta at Her Ekdalia Road Ashram. Draped in an immaculately white sari, of a very fair complexion, Her dark, glossy hair tied up into a knot over Her head, Her face radiating sweetness and light, She came in brisk, quick steps and took Her seat. A hush fell upon the assembled crowd. People approached Her one by one and bowed to Her. So did I. Spell bound I gazed at Her. In a trice, Her eyes, tender with love, took on a far-away look as though Her mind were attuned to a higher rhythm of eternity. Seated among the crowd, She was talking animatedly to some, answering questions of others, now bursting into ringing laughter—a fountain of joy sparkling in sunshine, now losing Herself in the depth of silence—an image of ineffable calm, scintillating in serenity. The fleeting moments of stillness seemed poised on perfect peace, vibrant with the silent

music of the spirit. Before my wondering eyes, Ma appeared like a luminous, impersonal entity, utterly devoid of ego, beyond reach and yet so very real that it could be felt like fragrance wafted by a breeze from afar. The subtle nuances of Her varying moods were very fascinating and seemed to hold in them a world of meaning. But who could read them? At once intimate yet aloof, near and yet distant, Her mind appeared to be soaring 'beyond life's arc in spirit's immensities'. I had had the good fortune of Her darshan many a time since, and every time I returned with the feeling that what I had seen was beyond compare.

## II

It was not the urge of religion that brought me to Varanasi. I was not particularly interested in spending my old age here, but I had a lurking desire to live the last days of my life far away from my near and dear ones, in a quiet place amidst pleasant surroundings. It was just an idea, vague as most ideas are, with no firm basis. But I loved to toy with it and my mind returned to it with disturbing frequency. When I was in this mood the call came from Ma, about 20 years ago. "Come to me", She said at Her Agarpara Ashram. "Come and stay with me. This body wants to stay with you, Baba." I was taken aback by this unexpected call and moved out of my depth. But I had misgivings about Ashram life to which I was an utter stranger, and my response was evasive. Perhaps the time was not yet.

Years rolled by, years of wearisome monotony. Though I had not yet cut myself off from my moorings, my mind was hovering between a sense of attachment and alienation, the one getting the better of the other. I grew restless and wanted to stretch my wings into the wider blue when the call from Ma came again. Towards the middle of December, 1972, I came to Varanasi with my younger brother and my nephew to see my ailing sister ( Puspa's Mother ). Ma was then staying at the Ashram and Puspa took us to Her. She received us very graciously and I was deeply touched by the kindly interest She took in us.

Later on, I had two private interviews with Her. During the first one, She repeated what She had told me years ago. "Come and stay here, Baba," She said, "it is good to spend one's old age in Varanasi. This is what our Sastras say". It was She who was talking most of the time, I being a silent listener,—She asked me if I had had diksa. On hearing my reply She said, "Bhagavan is your Guru". She spoke for a long time, mostly on things spiritual, some of which were beyond my comprehension. "I don't usually speak about these things to all and sundry", She said, and I was immensely gratified. A new light seemed to be on me, a new hope and the promise of a new life.

During the next private interview graciously granted by Ma, I freely unburdened myself and laid bare my heart before Her in a way I had never done before anybody. I somehow felt that I was talking to my own self. Ma gave me a very patient

hearing. Tears trickled down my cheeks. My talks were punctuated with frequent utterance of "Narayan", "Narayan" by Her, which sent a thrill through my body. I was as it were, in a dreamy stupor. "Come and stay here, Baba". She repeated. "Do some *seva* (service) here. Which *seva* can you do?" I told Her that I was not competent for any *seva*. She assured me that some duty suited to my status and temperament would be given to me. Her words carried such a certitude and urgency that I was shaken out of my complacency. I bowed down and took leave of Her with a light heart.

After a few days, Ma went to Kanpur on the occasion of the Bhagavat Saptah then being held there. On Her arrival there, She sent word to Puspa that she should go to Kanpur with us immediately. We left for Kanpur as desired by Ma and by Her grace spent some very happy days there. One morning Puspa came running to me to ask me in which subject I had passed my M.A. examination. I was surprised. "Who cares to remember?" I replied, "It was about half-a-century ago". "Please, *Bara Mama*", she pleaded, "Didi wants to know it". No sooner did she get my reply than she ran back as quickly as she had come.

We returned to Varanasi in the first week of January, 1973. Ma told me not to leave Varanasi without informing Her. As I was not keeping quite well, I sought Her permission to return to Hind Motor where I had been residing for the last

few years. Ma said, "Narayan is in your heart. Listen to what your mind prompts you to do. But if you decide to go now, don't fail to come back here before July when the next session of the Kanyapeeth begins." I made my *pranama* to Her and left.

### III

Some time during the summer of 1973, Ma had been to the 'Niramoy' Hospital in Calcutta. I went to have Her darshan and asked Her when I should go to Varanasi and where I should stay. She paused for a while and said "Don't go now. You had better go when this body would be there ; otherwise you might find it inconvenient. Make sure when this body will be there and arrange your programme accordingly." I was overwhelmed by Her kindness and forethought. Each of the steps taken by Her was well-calculated and meant to save me the least little inconvenience.

I went back home. An air of uncertainty hung over me as days wore on. All of a sudden, I got a letter from Puspa before Durga Puja, in which she wrote to say that Ma had asked her to request me to go to Hardwar where the Puja would be celebrated that year. Accordingly I left for Hardwar, where Durga Puja was performed in Ma's holy presence with great pomp and solemnity. Thereafter, under Her instructions, I went to Dehra-Dun to rest for about a fortnight and from there to Vrindaban during the *Samyam Saptah*. The solemnity of the week-long function, held in Ma's

presence, was heightened by the profound silence and the meditative calm which pervaded it. After the *Samyam Saptah*, I came to Varanasi as directed by Ma.

On November 17th,—I have a vivid recollection of the date—I went upto Ma's room on the 1st floor of the Ashram and after I had made my *pranama*. She told me that thenceforward I should teach the Kanyapeeth girls English. In reply to my enquiry when I should begin, Ma replied, "Today. Here and now." A senior girl of the Kanyapeeth was sent for and Roma, a little nervous, came with an English text book. "Start your teaching here", Ma said to me. Thus, at the feet of Ma, began my initiation in teaching. A unique event this, in the history of the Kanyapeeth.

I had so far been staying at my sister's house from where I used to come to the Kanyapeeth to teach the girls and have my meals there. After 3 or 4 days Puspa came and told me that Ma desired me to go to the Ashram next morning when She was due to leave. When I went there, I found Ma seated in the court-yard in front of the Chandi Mandap, all ready to start. As soon as She saw me, She got up and told me to follow Her. She entered the Kanyapeeth with me and went into the room on the ground floor facing the Ganga. She sat down on the cot on the southern side of the room and said to me, "From now on you will stay in this room". I was overwhelmed and bowed down to Her. I know the readiness with which the

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Kanyapeeth accepted me was solely due to this gracious gesture of Ma.

For nearly 2 years I stayed there. When Durga Puja was celebrated in Varanasi in 1975, I had to vacate the room as arrangements were made for a distinguished Mahatma to stay there. I shifted to the Guest House of the Ashram. After *Vijaya Dasami*, Ma sent for me and told me that in future when She would come to Varanasi, She would be staying in that room in the Kanyapeeth, and it would cause me great inconvenience to have to move every now and again on Her arrival; so She had arranged my stay permanently at the Guest House. Since then I have been staying there.

#### IV

Ma has given me shelter, peace and happiness. The opportunity to serve the Kanyapeeth was one of Her finest gifts to me. The Kanyapeeth gave an affectionate welcome, and my heart warmed up to it from the very start. Though my mental make-up stood in the way of identifying myself completely with the milieu of the Kanyapeeth, it approximated, in many respects, to the idea I had been nursing over the years of a resting place, from where I liked to embark on my final voyage. The boundless grace of Ma, the eternal beauty of the Ganga and the loving attention of the inmates of the Kanyapeeth—all these combined to make my stay there a continuous joy. What I have got from Ma is my treasured possession, and I have accepted it with humility and gratitude. What the girls have

given me is a precious gift which I fondly cherish. The weary moments of my last days will thrill to these happy memories.

## V

When I went to the Ashram at midnight on August 27th, 1982, a pall of gloom had descended on it and also on the Kanyapeeth—a weird silence born of deep anguish. The first outburst of sorrow of the grief-stricken girls had given place to an uneasy calm, too poignant for words. On seeing me Gita broke out in an agitated mood, “Mama, why have you come? it’s all false—this news.” She refused to believe that the worst had happened. Few were prepared to believe that the tearful prayers welling out of the depth of so many hearts had gone unheeded. Some of the senior girls were sitting in the court-yard, ready to leave for Kankhal. Jaya, our Principal, asked me, “Mama, (uncle) what should I do?” I told her that her duty was to stay at the Kanyapeeth and look after the girls. Very sensibly, she agreed.

Next morning some of the girls were in a flood of tears. They wanted to go to Kankhal to have a last glimpse of Ma’s mortal body. I told them that instead of going there they should hug to their bosom the memories of Ma’s last visit here and seek consolation therein. They told me that on the eve of Ma’s departure after Saraswati Puja in January last, they had made their final *pranama* to Ma who was seated in the car, and She had blessed them by touching their heads. “Treasure



that memory and you will find peace", I said to them. For a while they seemed to be quiet, but only for a brief while. Ranjana broke down again and said, "When Ma came here we used to blow the conch, offer garlands and bow down to Her, but now"—the rest of her sentence trailed off in a series of sobs. I could give no reply. I myself was in tears.

Since the morning of the August 28th. our girls, under the guidance of Jaya, had been doing *puja*, *patha* also *akhanda japa* and *kirtan* all throughout the day and night in Ma's room on the ground floor of the Kanyapeeth. After four or five days the venue was shifted to the Chandi Mandap where before the beautifully decorated portrait of Ma, *Akhand Japa*, from dawn to dusk, *puja* patha and *kirtan* went on with unabated zeal and devotion. I would add here that the quiet self-possession and the sense of dedication shown by Jaya in the discharge of her duties during those traumatic days deserve the highest praise.

On September 13th, Ma's *puja* was performed on a grand scale, the *pujarini* being Jaya. The air was charged with deep solemnity which could be felt by everybody present. During the evening *arati*, one of our girls remarked that it seemed as though Ma's birthday were being celebrated and She were physically present to receive our obeisance. Indeed it did. She had struck the right note which found an echo in every heart. Ma's Birthday Festival for ever ! This sentiment began to triumph over the mood of despair which had overtaken

everybody a few days ago. Slowly the dark shadow lifted. The gnawing pangs of separation gave place to a quite acceptance and an abiding feeling that Ma is enshrined for ever in every heart, shedding light and love, and guiding the steps of Her children.

In the wake of Ma's *puja* on September 13th, 16 Mahatmas were fed in the Kanyapeeth with appropriate ceremony and special offerings as prescribed by the Sastras; arrangements were made in the Gopal Mandir for feeding 108 Sadhus, and presenting *dakshina* and cloth. On the following day the *puja* of 108 Kumaries was performed in a colourful setting in the Kanyapeeth, where they were entertained to a feast. On the same day 108 brahmins were fed in the Gopal Mandir and given the usual *dakshina*. This was followed on September 15th by the feeding of the devotees, and the functions were rounded off with *Daridra Narayan Seva* (poor feeding) on September 16th.

## VI

To come back to Ma. But who can describe Her? "Measure not with words, The immeasurable". Ma was the supreme manifestation of the highest spiritual realisation that gave Her an unmatched splendour and lent an aura of divinity around Her. She did not have to acquire it by a long and arduous process of sadhana. She was born with it. From the very dawn of Her life, it blossomed within Her like a full-blown lotus. It was, however, Her motherly image, gracious

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and forgiving, that attracted me most. In Her there was ever an assurance of hope that lifted up one's heart. About three and a half years ago, I lost the sight of one of my eyes, and the light of the other might fade out any moment. But Ma said to me, "Don't worry at all. May peace and happiness be yours!" Her blessings brought me a sense of security which, I firmly believe, will last till the end.

Ma combined in Herself the grandeur and the profundity of an epic, the sweetness and the rhythmic play of a lyric and the inscrutable note of a mystic poem. She was a paragon of perfection. All Her actions flowing as they did from an illumined consciousness, were a thing of beauty marked by the bravura of a master artist. The artistry of Her manners was not a mere exercise in studied courtesy. It was a spontaneous expression of Her love, sympathy and understanding. It is not given to all to rise to spiritual height, but if we could only emulate a little of Her manners in our daily lives, the world would be a far better place to live in. Not by panegyrics alone, nor even by a mere repetition of rituals, but only by living up to Ma's teachings, we can turn our homage to Her into a real act of worship.

Emotional intensity in its purest form found expression in the ecstasy which made Her roll on the ground to the singing of kirtan and also in Her diverse activities meant to alleviate the pain of the lowliest and the lost. She bore the cross for us, regardless of Her personal comfort. Where

there was discord, She would strike a note of harmony. Where there was darkness and despair, She would shine forth like a blaze of light.

Not for Her was cloistered seclusion nor isolation in the ivory tower. She came down from the sunlit height to our level, soothed our fevered brows and brought Her healing touch to our anguished hearts. Despite Her strict adherence to orthodoxy which sometimes appeared anachronistic, She was catholic enough to help everybody to open out according to his own lights. Ever ready to minister to our needs, spiritual and temporal, She implored us to turn our gaze Godward, away from the trivialities of life to its eternal verities. She invited us to share the bliss and illumination in which She revelled.

Such was our beloved Ma. Everybody, irrespective of caste and creed, from the highest to the lowest could claim Her bounty. If only one was able to get over the hurdles occasionally put up by the gate-keepers, one would find that in Her heart awaited a warm welcome for all. Here was a place of pilgrimage. Here was benediction, joy and peace.

Indeed, Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi—a living image of beatitude ever dwelling in the realm of the spirit—was, as it were, a symphony of beauty, grace and sweetness : a symbol of faith, hope and charity. To Her we bow down in prayerful humility.

# Have and Have Nots

Shri A. K. Gupta

Plenty of material riches you have,  
but I have none  
although I am a happy one.  
I splash and shine,  
Ye only pine  
and make the cup of your miseries full.  
Oh ; how futile is thy ill conceited pull ;  
Deep, fathomless is your mundane desire,  
My wishes are but to kindle fire  
and dissipate darkness and all,  
not to stumble, nor to fall.  
Money, bountiful you have,  
but vacuity grips you tight with a stare,  
only to impoverish thee with abysmal despair,  
Happy I am, happy will you be,  
light will open up with a glare if ye crave to see.  
Should you keep to the luminous track,  
there is no chance of a crack,  
far less a hideous dent—  
in a serene mind, purely bent.

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# Ashram News

## **Kankhal**

On 14th April, 1994—Thursday, on the occasion of Sannyas Utsav of 1008 Shree Shree Swami Muktananda Giri Maharaj, Special Puja and Kirtan were performed. On this occasion a Sadhu Bhandara was also organised.

On 13th May, 1994—Friday, on the occasion of Akshay Tritiya Special Puja of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was performed.

On 18th May, 1994—Wednesday, on the occasion of the Birthday Celebration of Baba Bholanath, Special Puja and Sadhu Bhandara were organised.

From 21st May to 28th May, 1994—the 99th Birth Anniversary of MA was celebrated with great enthusiasm. During this week-long festival, various special pujas including the recitation of Shree Shree Chandi, Shree Srimat Bhagavat Gita, Ramayana, Matri Challisha, Hanuman Challisha, Special Puja, Yagna and Arati was performed at 'Ananda Jyoti Peetham'.

The Sannyas Utsav of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri and 99th Birth Anniversary of Shree Shree Ma were also observed with deep solemnity in the Ashrams at Delhi, Dehradun, Varanasi, Vrindaban, Ranchi etc.

## **Agarpara**

On 14th April, 1994—Thursday, the Sannyas Mahatsav of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giriji was observed with great enthusiasm. On this occasion

Special Puja and kirtan were performed. After offering Bhog and Arati, prasad were distributed among the devotees assembled in the Ashram.

On 27th May, 1994—Friday, the 99th Birth Anniversary of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was observed with deep solemnity. On this occasion special puja and kirtan, were performed. After offering Bhog and Arati, prasad were distributed among the devotees of the Ashram.

## **MATRI-MANDIR**

### **Calcutta**

(1) On 14th April, 1994—Thursday, the Sannyas Mahatsav of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giriji was celebrated with deep devotion and great grandeur. On this occasion Special Puja and Kirtan were performed. After offering Bhog and Arati, Prasad were distributed among the devotees assembled in the Ashram.

(2) The 99th Birth Anniversary of Shree Shree MA was performed at the Head Office of Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society at MATRI-MANDIR — 57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-700019 from the evening of 27th May, 1994—Friday to the evening of 28th May, 1994—Saturday with great grandeur. On this occasion Special Puja, Kirtan, Yagna, recitation from Vedas and other religious scriptures were performed. On 28th May, 1994 after Puja, Bhog and Arati, Prasad were distributed among the devotees who attended the function.

# Obituary

(i) Sri Prabir Kumar Bandopadhyay (Manada) —an ardent devotee and one of the most favourite sons of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee left his mortal coil at the age of 63 in a Nursing Home at Calcutta on 11th April, 1994—Monday at about 8 a.m. He comes of a reputed family of Kanpur. His parents were also ardent devotees of Ma. Since his boyhood Manada was closely associated with Anandamayee Ma and from thence he was destined to turn towards godhead. He tried to abide by strictly the 12 commandments of Bhaiji throughout his life. His amiable character and pleasant disposition charmed all.

May his soul rest in peace eternally at the lotus feet of Ma and may Ma grant enough peace and strength to the members of the bereaved family to bear up his absence.

(ii) Smt. Madhuri Chowdhury — an ardent devotee of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee left her body at her house at Lake Gardens on 20th April, 1994 at about 7 a.m. during the holy day of Ram Navami.

During the long span of her life she met Ma several times. She enjoyed enormous blessing of MA.