

# ANANDA VARTA

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

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Merely to assume the robes of a Sadhu while the spirit of renunciation is lacking will not do. Taking Sannyasa and becoming a Sannyasi spontaneously, are certainly not one and the same thing.

**Shree Shree Ma Anandamayi**

Nama is the highest gift, Nama is the best of all actions, Nama is best of all Dharmas and Nama is the best result.

**Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath**

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## Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

Ma says, "He is the only Being existing all. There is no second besides that One. In all circumstance, even in disease and the pain of bereavement, one should contemplate *Him* only, and do His japa, at all moments.

Visitor : "Ma, I see so many terrible dreams. What are all these ?"

Ma : "Karma gets attenuated even through dreams. Do you realize how many karmas of how many births of yours are thus getting exhausted ? Otherwise you would have had to take more births in order to exhaust those *bhogas*."



About disputes and quarrels, Ma once observed : "Stop quarrelling. Quarrel (*Vivada*) means that doctrine (*Vada*) by which one does not realize Him. Awaken *sattvika bhava*, the pure state of mind. God is present; verily, He is present."



A brahmachari once wrote to Ma that he had performed various *kriyas* during the *Navaratri*. Ma dictated the following in reply :

"The *kriyas* of *Navaratri* have been well done; He who is the objective of these *kriyas* has Himself made them done—it is a matter of joy."

In fact, for Him each and every day is *Navaratri*—newer and ever newer *kriyas*. For the revelation of the Infinite Unity—only *that*, only *that*, only *that* ! In this life one should try to be always engaged in His work, at all times. In order to become steeped in His *rasa*, so that the mind does not get diverted towards the pleasures of the

downward path, one has to keep the mind eagerly turned upward. Only the acts conducive to eagerness for Brahman (should be performed).

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**PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES**  
**July 1995 to November 1995**

1. Guru Purnima — 12th July, Wednesday
2. Shree Shree 1008 Swami Muktananda Giri's (Didima) Tirodhan Tithi — 18th July, Tuesday
3. Bhaiji's Samadhi Utsav — 8th August, Tuesday
4. Jhulan Purnima — 10th August, Wednesday
5. Janmastami — 17th August, Wednesday
6. Radha Astami — 2nd September, Saturday
7. Shree Shree Durgapuja — 30th September to 3rd October
8. Shree Shree Laxmi Puja — 8th October, Sunday
9. Shree Shree Kali Puja — 23rd October, Monday
10. Annakut — 24th October, Tuesday
11. Sanjam Saptaha — 31st October to 6th November, Tuesday to Monday

# Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Volume VI

(Translated by Tara Kini)

(Continued from previous issue)

## March 26, Saturday

Today Ma looks better. Turiyananda Swami from Puri and Ramratan Babu from Calcutta have arrived. In the morning a gentleman asked Ma, "Ma, why is it that this place was named Brahmakunda when a drop of nectar fell here? It should have been named Amritakunda." Ma replied, "*Amrita* (nectar) cannot live without *Brahman* (the Supreme Soul). Everyone has to dip into the Brahmakunda in order to obtain the flow of nectar." So saying she laughed.

The process of taking Ma's hand and foot prints has been on for the past two or three days. Yesterday when the print was being taken both her palms had been painted thoroughly and Ma had made the impressions. On observing Ma then it appeared as if she was deeply engrossed in the job. Many impressions were taken on paper. When making the prints Ma had said, "Let me see how many more prints you will take?" And as she said that she made print after print.

We know that sometimes when we start on a certain job Ma cooperates in such a fashion that it appears that she is involved in the work day in and day out. She does not appear to have any other thought. After some time, however, when the job is halted, a hundred pleas may not result in our being able to make her do the job even once. And it is also necessary to explain that at present this *kheyal* to give impressions is going on. Casual observers may surmise that Ma is eager to make the prints. But a closer look would reveal the inner condition prevailing within her. As Ma made the prints she said, "See, may be some people feel embarrassed to make prints. They may

even fell shy. But what is this body doing at present ? You can see it, can't you ? It is as if I have discovered a game. Why should there be any embarrassment or shyness ? You want an impression made by this body ? Take it. You people watch and so will I." Saying this Ma made many impressions with both hands. Whenever Ma does anything her whole body expresses its involvement in the work. Today I observe the same phenomenon. This is yet another aspect of Ma's wonderful being.

This sport continued for some time. Ma then said, "But everything has its own allotted time. After the allotted time is finished that job will not be accomplished again." Ma explained further, "Just as I sit and speak or listen to *kirtan* so also is this yet another form of *kirtan* that goes on. You people must spend your time in doing good work."

The same topics came up when Ma came down after lunch. She said, "Alright, about these imprints that are being made—do not think that Ma is very keen to make imprints to further her fame." So saying she laughed very softly. I said, "Ma, an opinion has to be expressed only after viewing all characteristics. It is not right to draw conclusions after viewing just one fraction of the subject's characteristics."

Ma was quiet for awhile. Then she said, "See, there are many kinds of *bhava*. It is difficult to recognize them all. Do you know what happens at first ? The *sadhaka* (one who is attempting spiritual practices) is full of humility—he feels, 'I am so insignificant, why do people give me so much respect?' And in this *bhava* he is embarrassed by the respect shown to him by people. If anybody does anything in his honour he naturally feels shy; some such people do not even mix in society as a consequence. The feeling that prevails is, 'What will people think ?' Then again there are some who go to any extent in order to acquire fame. These are all levels of a

*sadhaka*. The characteristics manifested may be beautiful, but the feeling of humility is necessary otherwise the bondages will not be severed.”

“Then again, do you know what yet another stage of a *sadhaka* is like ? It is like that of children who paint their own bodies and then make impressions on the wall. They are not bothered whether anyone sees them or not. They just laugh and play, immersed in their own *bhava* as they paint. If someone catches them doing mischief, they feel no embarrassment or a sense of guilt; their *bhava* is unaltered. There is no covering anywhere within—it is all open. Such a *bhava* is a little difficult to understand. Like you people see someone in trance during *kirtan* and think it is *samadhi*.” She smiled, looked towards us and then continued, “It is difficult to understand *bhava*. It is not possible for an ordinary person to all who is at what level, therefore he commits mistakes.”

By the time this conversation was concluded it was twelve o'clock; Ma immediately assumed silence and lay down. The devotees departed and the doors were shut. Actually if Ma had not herself assumed *mauna* between twelve and four in the evening and also after ten at night, it is difficult to say how long this practice of shutting doors would have continued. Ma said, “You people have accepted this rule laid down by the Doctor and this body also does sometimes listen to what everyone says. But then again at times it refuses to obey. As long as it has to be observed it should be done methodically.”

This evening Ma went up to the terrace and at dusk she went into the room upstairs. A young man arrived and questioned her about incarnations and Brahman. Ma replied, “Look, it is all a matter of experience. It cannot be explained in words and even if it is explained you will not be able to accept it implicitly. Therefore try to experience these matters within yourself.” After discussing one or two other topics the young man left.



Ma told Ramratan Babu, "Do you know how this conversation proceeded ? I have not even passed the matriculation examination and I went to understand a complicated subject at the M. A. level. How would he understand ? So it is better to meditate. All this exists and can be understood, but without first hand experience all doubts are not cleared."

Then Ma spoke about the real essence of Krishna — "Krishna *tattva* (real essence) lies beyond the senses and man wants to understand it with his senses. It is not an object that can be grasped with the senses, so how can be understand ? So people interpret it according to their capability." Saying this Ma laughed lightly and then fell silent. After eating at nine p.m. Ma strolled about a little and then sat on her bedding. All the people sat around her till ten p.m. When Ma lay down they did *pranama* and left.

### March 27 Sunday

Last night again Ma's body was unable to calm down for a long time and she could not sleep at all. But Ma says, "When ordinary people sleep their bodies become still and when this body assumes that kind of stillness you observe it as being at rest. But this body's condition is unchanged whether it lies down, sits, or walks about." This morning Ma got up at eight a.m. After making her drink some milk I began taking imprints of her hands and feet. Ma appeared to treat this as a new-found game. She made impression after impression on quires and quires of paper sheets saying, "Bring more paper, bring more ink."

People who had come for *darshan* became extremely eager to meet Ma and so the doors were opened. As the people entered Ma's *bhava* was disturbed and so even after the doors were shut once more and the job of taking impressions was resumed, the imprints did not turn out properly. Ma said, "Now the mood is gone. Having been obstructed it seems to have changed." After Ma's meal

some more imprints were taken. Then Ma lay down and the doors were closed as usual.

At four p.m. Ma rose. A person from Dhaka who sings *kirtan* very well had come to sing for Ma. Many people had come. Ma sat on the terrace. Then the *kirtan* was started and it went on for nearly two hours.

At eight p.m. Ma sat down to eat. In the course of conversation with Ramratan Babu and others the topic of taking imprints came up. Ma said, "Look, all this that is being said — 'Bring more paper, bring more ink' and this imprinting on sheet after sheet—it is not as if I am doing this of my own will. This just happens. When Khukuni took those prints on the first two days, such a *kheyal* did not arise. From the third day when she started to take the impressions this *kheyal* arose. In spite of bringing more paper and ink repeatedly she was not able to meet the demand. Such a situation arose earlier in connection with food. On being coaxed to eat and when the feeding started, the *kheyal* that, 'I would eat more', 'bring more food', would arise. As people kept feeding me I would eat it all up."

Ramratan Babu asked, "Cannot such a grace be aroused?" Ma assumed a grave posture and replied, "I cannot say that it cannot be aroused. It has happened sometimes—these people have seen it. If the *kheyal* is there it can happen." Saying this she pointed towards us. Ramratan Babu said, "Alright Ma, then let the *bhava* of grace be aroused." Ma said, "What happens is what you people get done. Khukuni got paper and ink and took the footprints and handprints of this body. At that time there was no *kheyal*. Only on the third day when the job was resumed did the *kheyal* to make the prints arise. If you people can induce such a *kheyal* by dint of your actions then a similar thing can happen. I do nothing by my own will. Whatever you people get done, happens. Everything is alike to this body. Whatever happens at any time is

alright." Observing Ma's *bhava* and the manner in which she spoke, all those present gazed at her face.

Ma continued, "Listen further. Do you know what happend earlier ? When some unusual *bhava* occurred, then the face also assumed an unusual expression. Everybody discerned it. But now it all happens most naturally and no one can make out anything by looking at my face."

Yesterday at four p.m. we took in to the banks of the Ganga. Suddenly she said smilingly, "Look, do not trust me. I may just start walking in the river. I can see the other shore and I am standing on this shore. The fact that the river lies in between never enters my *kheyal*. Such a *bhava* has occurred earlier but then an unusual *bhava* also occurred within this body. And watching the expression on my face people were forewarned. But now that does not happen. I speak and laugh in an ordinary manner and an extraordinary rhythm begins simultaneously."

After this conversation Ma came downstairs. People sat around her till ten p.m. Then they did *pranama* and left for the night. The doors to Ma's room were closed and the light was extinguished.

### March 28 Monday

This morning the person from Dhaka sang *kirtan* till about nine a.m. Then Ma's face and hands were washed and she was made to drink some milk. People sat surrounding her once again. Women living here perform Ma's *arati* almost everyday, with incense and camphor. Today again they did so. At eleven a.m. Ma was offered *bhoga*. Ma then conversed for some time and at twelve the doors were shut.

One incident that occurred when Ma's hand prints were being taken is as follows. On the third and final day when I went to take Ma's hand and foot prints, the whole exercise had become a kind of game for her. I conjectured that she would probably let no more prints be made after

this and that it would, therefore, be best to make as many as possible straight away. Ma started making print after print on quires and quires of paper as if she could think of doing nothing else. she did not even bother to notice which imprint had come out well and which had not. She just made prints one after the other just like a child who had discovered a new game of colours. She went on in this manner most eagerly. Ma had explained ever so often earlier, "You people come to this body with some emotion and just like a mirror reflection, the same emotion blossoms within this body." I seem to be responsible for having concretized the *kheyal* to make prints for I had been taking the prints for the last two days. The third day when Ma's *kheyal* was roused she made prints continuously as if it was a great job. The *bhava* was manifested in her whole body. Hand and foot prints were made with black and red colours and Ma was delighted to see these colours. I was interested in getting the imprints of the lines on Ma's palm. The lines were not clearly visible on all the prints, but Ma just did not notice. She seemed greatly delighted to see each print. As she continued to make the imprints a strange *bhava* manifested within Ma's body. Looking at the black and red prints of her feet she suddenly commented, pointing towards her own body, —"Oh god ! You have made an excellent decoration—you have made half this body Krishna and the other half, Radha." With this comment there was a sudden change in her demeanourshe fell silent.

When the imprints were done Ma came downstairs. Seemingly a bit flustered she said to me, "What did I blurt out ? That day I made Gola and Godavari perform ten thousand repetitions of japa to atone for their mistake. Today I too should do *japa* because I mentioned Krishna and Radha in connection with the imprints. That was wrong on my part and it is necessary for me to atone for this by doing japa. But I will not be able to do so much

japa-perhaps it will cease as I start doing it—or then again it may go on throughout the day. As the body has been unwell you people want to feed it and rest it at specified times, but it may not be so, for the *japa* may continue ceaselessly and the *bhava* to lie down may not exist at all. What can I do in such a situation ?”

I replied, “Ma, a representative can do the job.” Ma said, “Will you do it ? Then you do ten thousand *japa* for my sake.” I said I would do just that.

I saw this as one more of Ma’s sports. She played it for the benefit of the people. For otherwise, why was there anything wrong in what she said when she was in that mood ? But for the benefit of others she arranged for the atonement.

In the afternoon Gopinath Babu and some others arrived. A girl called Shobha from the Raha family of Kumilla, is a disciple of Santadas Baba. We heard that she is in an exalted state. Today one of her brothers came for Ma’s *darshan*. His name is Shishir Kumar Raha. He narrated several stories about Shobha. He is also a disciple of Santadas Baba and has lived with him for a long time. The *brahmachari* is very simple and straightforward. He wished to speak alone with Ma and that was arranged.

In the night Ma told me a number of things about *samadhi*. From what I understood of Ma’s words, the gist is this. *Samadhi* is of many kinds. Yet again *samadhi* is unique. In between there is only mention of some direction. A gross state may be reached by concentration on an idol. But that is not *jada samadhi*—it is forgetting oneself. Then rising from that *bhava* the *bhava* of that idol is acquired. This is just the state of that *bhava*—it cannot be called *samadhi*. A kind of *samadhi* state can be achieved. The *brahma bhava* could blossom in the *bhava* for the idol and that could be called a kind of *bhava samadhi*. This is the form manifested prior to *savikalpa*

*samadhi*. Again, when embedded in the *brahma bhava*, there may be a *bhava samadhi*—like manifestation.

Ma said, “When the sadhaka reaches a state of truth then what you people call *savikalpa samadhi*—that is what it is.”

“This body never had a chance to hear the different names of *samadhi* for it is not literate. Hearing whatever you all say, I repeat a little here and there. Ofcourse if the *kheyal* were to occur, everything would appear for sure. The fact is that if you people sit nearby and think about *samadhi* then this body resolves the subject to some extent. You know already that whichever *bhava* you bring forward, this body reveals something in the same *bhava*. And then again, sometimes, nothing at all is said. May be then there is no use for it at that time.”

Saying so much, Ma again revealed, “You people mention so many names like *nirvikalpa*, *chaitanya*, *samadhi*, *mahabhava* and *mahashunya*. Their radiance is wonderful.”

Once a gentleman questioned Ma, “How is it that *leela* (divine sport) can occur after *Brahma bhava* (realization of oneness with the Brahman) ?” Ma replied, “Did you not understand that ? Unless that *Brahma svarupa* (nature of Brahman) or that *Atma svarupa* (nature of Atman) is not experienced, how can one enter the realm of *leela* which lies beyond the senses ? It can happen only if the former has been attained. Just as water turns into ice and ice turns into water, so that ice lies in water and water lies in ice—so does is *leela*, His sport, manifest in an expressly unique fashion. Where do *Nityadham*, *Nityaleela* manifest ? Tell me. You have perhaps understood it to be the unbroken, unmanifest Brahman. That is something that lies in that direction. That which is within a form (*Sakara*) also resides in the formless (*Nirakara*). He has to be attained in all forms (*Sarvakara*). Is he not unbroken (*Akhanda*)? Just as innumerable (*ananta*) seeds and

innumerable trees reside within one seed. Then again, within that countless (*ananta*) entity, there is an end, only One. He has to be reached from every direction, in different aspects. Then one has to go beyond the many—all forms, all directions. He has to be attained in all parts—outside, inside. Whatever you perceive, that is whatever you see, is from within your spectacles. Therefore it is not quite correct. Do not keep your goals limited. Keep your sight on that supreme state. You have to attain that which is replete with all forms (*sarvangina*) manifest, unmanifest, unbroken and complete.”

“Do you know how that is? In between there are many states, many details, their description is endless. It is just like climbing from one step to the next in a stair—for a moment you are in space and yet there is a joint between the step you just left and the one you are about to mount. One matter is to climb on to a stair, the other is to remain there. In between these two, again there are innumerable states. Look, at first, the identification with the idol arouses the grosser *bhava* but it later leads to the higher *bhava* yet it may appear to be the gross *bhava* with its associated restlessness.”

“This is very difficult to understand. So many points are left out. However much I may say, there is always still more to be said. Nor can it be understood properly. Just as it is impossible to describe the beauty of a flower in words—it remains unexpressed—this too is just like that, what else? And, do you know? I do not understand the language of your scriptural texts and therefore it cannot be explained in that language though in truth it cannot be explained in any language. Only a mere sign can be made. Therefore I say that much has been written in the scriptures. Without understanding all that do not mistake the forcefulness of *bhava* to be *samadhi*.”

In this manner Ma spoke at length about *bhava*. I listened and mused that all this is *ananta* (endless).

# Sai Ram Sahay

## Part - I

### **Philosophy - Spirituality**

Philosophy means the pursuit of wisdom of knowledge. Philosophy in action is religion i.e. the practical side of religion is philosophy.

### **Hindu Religion**

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions of the world. Many thinkers have tried to define Hinduism but, it is true that it is extremely difficult to make clear what Hinduism is ? Is it a way of life or is it a school of study? What can be defined as Hinduism in the modern sense all these have made the problem more complex. If it is a religion what is religion ?

Hinduism is not a bundle of superstitions as many of us are asked to believe or are forced to believe by the practices of some people who claim to be Hindus. There is hardly any scope for superstition in the text accepted as authoritative by the Hindus. The traditional school of the Hindus accepts the Vedic authority and Upanishadic values for leading their life. The various schools of Hindu philosophy show that Hinduism was not accepted without any serious analysis. Its secular concepts are well known.

### **Philosophies and Religions : (Philosophy or Siddhantha) :**

From the very beginning of creation learned men have been trying to investigate the truth behind the creation, namely, the creator of the world, the relationship between men, world and God, the aim of life and so on.

Several great sages and men of extraordinary calibre in ancient India observed severe penance and sat in meditation for years in silence, and with the Grace of God



realised some truths each one in his own way and gave out what they realised. Their experience and realisation go by the name of philosophies or darsanas or siddhantha. Six of such darsanas were considered important. They were :

1. Charvaka
2. Sankhya
3. Yoga
4. Nyaya or Viseshika
5. Purva Meemamsa
6. Vedantha

In addition, there were others like Jaina, Bouddha, Pasupatha etc.

It is not intended here to go into the details of all these philosophies except the last two of the six, namely purva-meemamsa and vendantha which have a bearing on our subject.

Purva-meemamsa is the karma kanda of the vedas dealing with rituals. Vedantha or the upanishads deal with the God-knowledge and salvation.

A religion may be defined as a combination of a philosophy and sanathana dharma codes of conduct adopted by any sect of people. Each religion has (1) a philosophy of its own : (2) a general code of conduct and (3) a religions code of life, special for each religion. The general code of conduct is more or less same for all religions. The religious special code for each religion is so framed as to adopt the life of the people of each religion to blens harmoniously with their philosophic belief.

Every religion aims at people of various casts and creeds living together in perfect harmony, develop a high sense of moral character and devotion to God, and obtain spiritual development. If any one hates other religions and their God it indicates that he has not understood his own religion properly.

We have in India Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians,

Buddhists, Zoroastrians etc. Each religion calls its God by its own name and give it some form. It has its own philosophy and mode of worship, prayers, religions customs etc. But the code of Sanathana Dharma is such that they have all been able to live as one society.

Our Hindu religion consists of different sects of people with different philosophies and a common sanathana dharma. With regard to philosophies in India we have Adwaitha, Dwaitha, Visishtadwaitha, Saiva, Jaina, Bouddha, etc. In spite of so many different philosophies and different modes of living food habits etc., the Hindu religion has been one of the most tolerant of all the religions of the world. Even during the life time of the religious leaders like Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa there have been tough arguments between them and leaders of other faiths. But there has been no personal hatred. There have been instances of the leaders who were defeated in the arguments and got convinced having accepted defeats gracefully and some of them having become the disciples of the victors. (Basis Suplagiri).

I am a simple and humble devotee of Shiradi Sai Baba. A question may arise to what school of philosophy Sai Baba belongs? Ordinary men as well highly advanced souls like Baba have no school of philosophy and can be said that he belongs to no school or to all schools.

What is Babas teaching? It is the same teaching in his Gitas, The Arjun Gita and Uddhava Gita. What are his margas? The same margas as are advocated in the above two. That is practically all the margas. All roads lead to Rome. All margas lead to God is the object of all teaching. Sai devotion means tolerance, towards all faith in God and in Sai as Guru and acceptance of the basic principles found in all religions.

Writing a forward to the book life of Sai Baba by H.H. Narasimhaswamiji Volume I His Holiness Sri Swamy Sivananda says. He (Sai Baba) lived his saintly life of

tyaga and seva. He has created a powerful centre of spiritual awakening and Divine Life in the holy precincts of Dwaraka Mayee and the Samadhi Mandir in Shirdi. He taught people to overcome meaningless barriers of separation between man and man and made them realise the brotherhood of all humanity.”

Spirituality means state of being spiritual concerning with spirit or soul.

Spiritual life is conscious life. In fact, spiritual life is nothing but a struggle for higher consciousness, and this is what distinguishes it from ethical life and ordinary conventional religious life. The central process in spiritual life is the transformation of human consciousness. All spiritual disciplines, all yogas, are special techniques which transform the unconscious into the conscious and the conscious into the superconscious. This was what yajna did for the Vedic man. Yajna was the yoga of the Vedic Age. In the hands of unworthy people any spiritual endeavour may undergo degeneration. As yoga was misused for the acquisition of occult powers, as the Tantras were misused for the enjoyment of sense pleasure, so too yajna was in later years degraded by ignorant people into a ritual for the attainment of heaven. But during the early Vedic period it served primarily as a spiritual discipline, a yoga, a technique for the transformation of consciousness.

In order to know how yajna brings about the transformation of consciousness we have to understand three principles on which it is based: ritualism, symbolism and the connection between thought and action.

Vedic yajna was centred on the external fire ritual performed every day in every home. It was a simple rite of offering milk or ghee or cakes into an altar containing one or three or five fires. The whole life was regarded as a yajna, and the ritual was only meant to serve as an aid in the concentration of mental energies and in under-

standing the nature of the universe. The fire altar acted as a physical frame of reference for the working out of certain mental concepts. It was a kind of mandala or yantra. In his auto-biographical work the great psychoanalyst Dr. Jung mentions how he came to an understanding of mandalas. In his own personal life he used to visualize his mind as a circle and, whenever a conflict or tension arose, he would diagram it as a projection or distortion of the circle. In due course he found that this diagrammatization of his mental life had assumed a complex symmetric pattern, which, as he later on discovered to his astonishment, had a striking resemblance to the Chinese and Tibetan mandalas. A mandala is thus an externalization of a person's intuitive understanding either about his own psyche or about the nature of the universe. A yantra is a specific type of mandala associated with a deity a pattern of the deity's power-structure.

The Vedic altar, was a three-dimensional mandala or yantra. It was the external projection of a mental construct or paradigm of Reality, which the *rsi* had developed through deep contemplation. the inner mental construct was called vidya and the external physical construct was called yajna (In later upanisadic literature yajna came to be designated avidya). The external ritual was only an acting out and reinforcement of the inner meditation. By externalizing our inner thoughts we can study and control our mental life and our relationship with the world around us more easily. The fire alter served the same purpose to the Vedic *rsi*—it enabled him to anchor his life in the real world, to concentrate his mind and energies, and to orientate himself to life and reality. Above all, it served to remind him of the unity and dynamism of life and that all life is one, that the entire universe is alive as one organism throbbing with divinity, that life is a constantly self-renewing steady-state system which every living being has to maintain through constant giving

up and self-sacrifice.

In fact, the Vedic altar was the concretization of Vedic meditation. The real power lay in meditation, not in the external ritual—in the mind of the *rsi*, not in the altar.

'I want peace of mind', we frequently hear people say. What do they mean by peace of mind? Life is full of uncertainties, conflicts and day-to-day problems, and by 'peace' most people mean a life without these difficulties. But polarity (that is, the occurrence of all experiences in pairs: joy and sorrow, good and evil, love and hate, etc), impermanence, and ignorance are inseparable attributes of life and, as long as these persist, troubles and afflictions are unavoidable. True peace is not a form of enjoyment, nor is it like sleep. Rather, it is a state of transcendence, remaining unaffected by the polarity, impermanence and ignorance of the world and the pleasures and sorrows that spring from them. Real transcendence is not seclusion or escape, but is the attainment of a higher state of consciousness which harmonizes all polarities and integrates individual life with universal life. Real peace is thus a state of transcendental harmony.

Peace is not something we get by shouting I want peace or by worrying about peace. It is one of the paradoxes of life that peace eludes the person who hunts for it. Peace is a result, an effect, that follows sincere effort and fulfilment. When we hear the call of the ideal or duty, we cannot get peace until we have responded to it in the best way possible for us. This is all the more true of spiritual life. Supreme everlasting peace is the result of higher spiritual experience which can be attained only through intense effort and struggle, and until it is attained, one of the first things that a spiritual aspirant should do is to sacrifice that illusory peace of mind that mundane life offers. (Basis Prabuddha Bharata 1983)

### **Sai Baba's spirituality**

Sri Sai Baba who identified himself with God had the same observation to make. He was treated as the Ishta Devata by many devotees as Rama, Datta, Vittobha, Khandoba, Ganapati and Maruti, and was approached as a great saint by Hindu philosophers and saints, and as an avalia by Muslims, and as a weird person by the ignorant outsiders. To each he gave the response suitable to him or her.

Baba's teachings are so common that when set out they may look like copy book maxims, and some may wonder why these should be set out at all, as everyone knows these moral teachings. What Baba taught was not something new and strange. It is the old, old truths of morality and spirituality that have to be rubbed into each soul and lived up to, and, therefore, Baba would place these truths before the devotees when the appropriate occasion offered itself. Anyhow, in order, that a curious reader, wanting to know what sort of teachings Baba's were, might get some satisfaction, we shall give below a few of his teachings and hope that the reader will not stop with more curiosity but really proceed to read, digest absorb, and live upto them and make them part of himself. For instance, about contentment and surrender, Baba used to say, 'God is great. He is the Supreme Master'. (The Arabic equivalent of it is "Allah Malik", which phrase was constantly on Baba's lips). Baba also said occasionally. When people thought that he was great, "How great is God? No one can compare with him. God creates, supports and destroys. His lila (sport) is inscrutable. Let us be content to remain as he makes us, to submit our wills to his'. This is the most important doctrine, the doctrine of submission and surrender. Baba said, 'Allah Rakega Vahisa Rahena'. This means 'As God places us, let us remain'. Baba also said, 'Take what comes. Be contented and cheerful. Never worry. Not a leaf

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moves but by His consent and will. We should be honest, upright and virtuous. We must distinguish right from wrong. We must each attend to his own duty. But we must not be obsessed by egotism and fancy that we are the independent causes of action. God is that Actor. We must recognise his independence and our dependence on Him, and see all acts as His. If we do so, we shall be unattached and free from karmic bondage.

This is the most essential point in all religions. Baba's whole life was governed by it. He appeared to be ever active. But throughout he knew that God was acting, and he was merely an instrument in the hands of God. He said at times, 'God has agents everywhere, and they have vast powers; and I also have vast powers'. But abhimana, the idea that I am doing, has to be completely suppressed in order that one may really have spiritual elevation, peace and happiness. (Basis Sai Baba's life by H. H. Narasimswami)

Sai Baba said,

"I always think of him who remembers me. I have to suffer for my devotees. Their difficulties are mine. Worship me always who is seated in your heart".

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# Holy Reminiscences

Swami Joyananda Giri

*(Continued from the last issue)*

## **4. Mother's Birthday Celebrations, 1958.**

Soon after the Darshan of Grace, Ma's birthday celebrations began at the newly acquired Ashram at Agarpara. Now, I was in Calcutta on official duty to relieve Sri S. K. Sen, the officer-in-charge of the Calcutta Branch Office of the Indian Standards Institution (ISI), who had suddenly fallen ill. Since the Branch Office was near Esplanade, not very far from Ballygunge where Ma had been staying prior to the celebrations, I was able to go there for Ma's darshan and satsang in the evening after office hours. But Agarpara was a long way off, and if Ma had not wrought another miracle, it would have been impossible for me to participate fully in the birthday function.

### **Participation With Ma's Grace**

Since it was Ma's kheyal\* which had brought me to Calcutta, I could not be deprived of such participation. But for that I had to live at Agarpara, which, in turn, could be possible only if Sri Sen were to relieve me of official work immediately and that was exactly what happened. He became fit enough to resume duty just in time for me to hand over charge and shift to Agarpara Ashram on Friday, May 2nd, 1958 the very day on which the celebrations began, But that was not all.

Since ISI works for 5 days in a week, the following two days, being Saturday and Sunday were available to me without leave. Further, the leave rules of Central Government by which ISI is governed, permit that officers on

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\*see Ananda Varta : Holy Reminiscences, Vol. 22, No.2.



tour can take casual leave up to one week before returning to headquarters. And since the celebrations were to end on Friday, the 9th May, before the week would be over, I was able to participate fully in the auspicious function for all the eight days and still go back to the headquarters at Delhi, performing the return journey as part of the official tour with all its concomitant privileges.

### **Ma tears Flower, Petal by Petal**

The celebrations went off as brightly as ever, with the usual kirtan, bhajans and discourses by leading Mahatmas, feasting and the life-giving Matri Satsang (question-answer hour with Ma). Then, after a couple of days, one morning, as I was seated in the front row along with other devotees in the pandal (large tent) I found Ma removing slowly but steadily one petal after another from a flower in Her hand. She did this till all the petals had been removed and the bare stalk remained. But what was remarkable about this incident was that my attention was so pin-pointedly drawn to what She was doing that it made a permanent impression on my mind. Although I did feel at that time that this small lila (divine play) must definitely have some significance, I yet failed to appreciate it then. However, when later on, I read the following passage in Bhaiji's book\* everything became clear.

“One day Mother took a flower in the Ashram and was tearing away all the petals thereof. She said to me ‘Many of your samskaras have dropped away and many more will fall away like the petals of this flower till I shall remain as your main prop, just like the only stalk of this flower; do you understand?’ Saying this She began to laugh. I enquired ‘Ma, how can I reach that state?’ She replied, ‘Every day try to live with this idea, you need not do anything else.’”

\*see ‘Mother as Revealed to Me’, Chapter : To Distant Lands

Later, towards the end of the celebrations, on the day previous to the one on which Kumari Puja was held and after a long session of Kirtan, Ma distributed prasada with Her own hands to a large number of devotees near the pandal. It was a wonderful sight—the divine motherliness in action, revealed through the description-defying tenderness in Ma's eyes and lips and the loving grace which accompanied the prasada as it was further sanctified by Mother's holy touch. After receiving my share, I had stood near by, watching the divine lila with a heart pull of deep gratitude for the privilege of its darshan. When the distribution was over, someone quickly brought a jug of water and Ma washed Her hands. But in the hurry, the towel was missing and I was seized with a strong desire to wipe Ma's wet hands with my handkerchief. But this could not be done as my handkerchief that day was not an unused one. However, as this thought crossed my mind, a lady devotee standing by availed herself of the golden opportunity and purified her sari by using it as a towel for Ma.

### **Ma fulfils My Wish**

The next day was Kumari Puja. After the function was over, Ma came out and repeated the lila of the previous day, though in another part of the Ashram, namely, the open sloping ground at the back, facing the Ganges. And, after the prasada had been distributed and Ma had washed Her hands, there was again no towel around. This time also I was nearby and, in addition, had a handkerchief that could be offered to Ma. Overjoyed at the situation, I lost no time in taking Ma's supremely blessed hands in my own and wiping them dry. Mother, too, not only permitted me to do this, but even significantly left Her hands freely in mine, as if telling me graciously thereby "Well, you wanted this, so fulfil your wish to your heart's content." In this connection, I recall

an assignment which Ma had once given to brother S. N. Sopory of Bombay, an old and very valued devotee of Ma. Once, on having darshan of Ma's lotus feet in Her room, Sri Sopory had a strong desire to touch them. And soon enough, the karunamayi (Compassionate one) graciously asked him to feel Her feet to find out if there was a thorn in them anywhere.

While wiping Ma's hands, I had noticed that they were practically boneless and as soft as butter. Years later, I heard from the lips of revered Rehana Tyabji, the famous Krishna bhakta and the author of the celebrated book 'The Heart of a Gopi', that Ma's body is very different and not a mere combination of gunas (the three attributes of matter) like ours.

### **Ma's Body and the Universe**

Regarding Ma's body, it will be relevant to quote from Sri Ganga Charan Das Gupta's article which appeared in Ananda Varta four years ago.

"On 3rd August, 1944, the Jhulan Purnima was celebrated at Navadwip. On receiving the news that Ma was very unwell, Sri Das Gupta had gone there to see Her. But entering Her room at 11 p.m. on that night, he had found "Mother seated smiling, beaming with joy. Her whole body shone like a ball of dazzling light, making the electric bulb look almost pale and red. Such wonderful radiance from a human figure was beyond all our conceptions. Her body shone with such an intensely light that the whole room appeared to be filled with some divine ethereal presence." When subsequently asked as to what made Her body look so bright that night in spite of Her serious phasocal illness, Mother had said with Her characteristic smile : "Didn't you see how the many gods and goddesses in the temple of Navadwip were nicely dressed and illumined for the Jhulan Purnima celebrations ? Don't you think it proper that this body, too, should put

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forth some lustre and grace.”

Further, in the same article, Sri Das Gupta has recorded Mother's own highly significant words about Her body while answering questions as follows :

Question : People say you are Mother. Where are your sons and daughters ?

Mataji : Here (pointing to Her breast).

Question : Where is your husband ?

Mataji : Here (with the same gesture).

Question : Where are your parents ?

Mataji : (With a smile) Here, within this heart.

Question : Your home ?

Mataji : (With the same gesture) Here.

The lady who was putting these questions looked completely puzzled, failing to comprehend what Mother had said. Mother noticed it and in Her usual soothing, convincing manner said, “Here in this body lie all things in the universe—father, mother, son and daughter—all created beings. From this One, all have come into being. In the One all exist, all persist and finally merge.”

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## Pundit bags Monoj Mody Foundation Award

Pundit Dr Rabindra Nath Bhattacharya a dedicated research scholar in the field of Vedic studies formerly student of Banaras Hindu University and Professor of Naimasaruya Anandamoyee Ma Institution received the Mody Foundation Award, 1995 at a ceremony of the 76th Installation meeting of the Rotary Club of Calcutta held at Ball Room, The Oberoi Grand Hotel, Calcutta on 4 July 1995. The award, which includes Rs. 11,000 and a citation was instituted by Monoj Mody Foundation to encourage the studies of Sanskrit specially Vedas. While delivering the Presidential lecture the well known Industrialist Sri H. S. Singhanian praised the work of Dr Rabindra Nath Bhattacharya, Dr Bhattacharya was specially requested to start the function with his invocation which completely changed the ball room atmosphere for some time. Later 500 Rotarians and their wives were entertained to a candle light dinner.

But as it is the habit of Dr Bhattacharya to prepare his food by his own hand he was the solitary exception who did not care to attend the grand dinner in gorgeous ball room.

# Prayer always has an effect and Practical Advice

Brahmachari Atmananda

Someone asked whether the sraddha ceremony which is performed for the dead, benefits a man even if he has taken birth in another human body.

“It does,” replied Mataji, “I have heard the following story : A man in a certain village in Bengal was very friendly with a fakir. One day when the fakir came to see him, he said: ‘How lucky that you have come. I am greatly puzzled and perhaps you can solve my problem. Since this morning I have been getting a strong scent of jackfruit and even the flavour of it in my mouth. I have looked everywhere in the garden and in the neighbourhood without being able to locate the source of this sensation. I cannot discover any ripe jackfruit anywhere. Besides it is not the season now, although there are trees that bear all the year round. Neither can I get rid of that flavour, nor take my mind off it. I wonder whether you can help me with an explanation.’ ‘Come with me’, replied the fakir.

He took his friend across the river by boat and after walking some distance they came to a house where they saw a very old man performing sraddha and offering jackfruit to his deceased father. ‘This was your son in your previous birth,’ explained the fakir. ‘You used to be very fond of jackfruit then, so he has managed to procure some for the ceremony although out of season. Now you understand, don’t you?’

“This story illustrates how prayer offered up for a person will certainly have its effect, although he may have taken birth in another body.”

Question : If someone has no relatives at all and nobody therefore performs sraddha for him, how will he progress?

Mataji : If a man endeavours to attain the Supreme

Goal of human life his progress depends on his capacity and on the intensity of his efforts. It is the son's duty to perform sraddha for his father so as to make his path smooth. In case there is no son, another relative may carry out the ceremony, as for instance the husband for his wife, and so forth. If a person does not get married and regards the Almighty as his one and only support, leaving all matters to Him. God Himself will draw him towards his goal. Do not forget one thing : in actual fact nothing exists but the ONE. If you think, without a wife or son or husband you will miss all the good they could have done for you, you are greatly mistaken. He, who is the Creator of all, has made perfect arrangements for His creatures. Keep in mind : 'Thou art father, mother, friend and master' — there is no cause whatever for worry.



In February 1955 some Italians had come to Varanasi for Mataji's darshan. "Which is right for me," asked one of them, "to live an active life in the world or a contemplative life in seclusion?"

Mataji : To whichever of the two you can give your heart and soul, that is right for you.

"Have you anything to say to me?" questioned a young woman who had travelled all the way to India to study Buddhism.

Mataji : Live the teaching that you profess.

"How can I avoid saying the wrong thing at the wrong time?" a third person wanted to know.

Mataji : By waiting before you speak. If you pause for a little while, you may think better of it and never say it at all.

"I know that certain people have a bad influence on me, yet I fall a victim to it. Is there a way of saving myself from it?"

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Mataji : Curtail to a minimum the time you spend in their company.

The questioner happened to be an American film actress.

“How can I,” she said, “my work forces me not only to be with them, but also to eat and live with them.”

Mataji : How then can you save yourself from their influence? If you go near fire, won't you feel its heat? If you put ice on your hand, won't it freeze?

Mataji : ‘Honoured’? When you meet another you may feel honoured, but when you come to your own self, there is only joy and happiness.

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# “Mother” as I know Her

Professor (Dr.) Amal Chandra Roy

I have had the privilege of having holy darshan of Sri Anandamayi Ma on four occasions: in 1965 and 1975 at Varanasi, in 1978 at Delhi and in 1980 at Brindavan. At Varanasi Mother's darshan coincided with the darshan of two other spiritually powerful personalities like Mahajogi Kalipada Guha Roy and Mahamahopadhaya Shri Gopinath Kaviraj.

But years before, in the late thirties and early forties, I very much heard of Shri Shri Ma when she was a spiritual craze at Dhaka. Men, women and children of different ages and positions in like from far and near used to flock at her Shahbag Ashram and also at the Ramna Kali Temple to have darshan of the mother and receive her blessings and listen to her honeyed yet meaningful words. One thing which struck me then and lingers in my mind even now is a gramophone record in which we heard in the whole disc only a 'divine giggling' of the mother interspersed with only one word or two. This matter, outwardly insignificant, put me to thinking and lasted in my mind a long time thereafter. Ultimately, an idea has been imported into my mind that these were an inexhaustible fountain of spiritual joy in the Mother's whole being which trickled out through her smiles, sweet and consoling words and in the out-powering of the essence of our Shastras in the simplest and most commonly understandable form. Mother's whole being, physical and spiritual, seemed to be beaming with radiant joy. Not for nothing, therefore, 'Bhaiji' one of her greatest devotees, named her as 'Ma Anandamayi'.

Mother was a great attraction for whoever met her, talked with her, or even had just a glimpse of her. Unlettered in the usual worldly sense Mother was the wisest of the wise and an enigma even to great intellectuals who were spell-bound by the wisdom inherent in her simple yet

most meaningful replies to their spiritual queries with an effortless ease. I have seen that in most of the gatherings in which she, usually shy of speaking, was prevailed upon to speak a few words, she would just say — “Hari Kathai Katha, aar Sabi-Britha-Byatha.” Great personalities like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter Srimati Gandhi’s respect for and attachment to Mother was well-known. Mother considered her as her daughter and referred to her as “Indu Ma”. Mother made a gift of a “Rudraksha Mala” to her to protect her from danger. When the news of Mother’s passing away reached her she was reported to have burst into tears and a few days later rushed to Kankhal to see Mother’s Samadhi-Stupa.

Mother was ever self-effacing and denied that she had any existence, separate from the ‘Param Atma’. During most of her conversations with people she would invariably refer to herself as everybody’s “little daughter”. This appears to me quite significant. She perhaps tried to emphasize that we are all children of ‘Parampita’ and again, Parampita is present in everybody.

She was conscious that not she but the Almighty was bringing out every word that came out from her mouth. She had no desire of her own, no power, in fact individual existence, other than as a part of the ‘Paramatma’.

Mother’s utterances here and there heard from people who have had the fortune to meet her and hear her tale, and also those scattered in numerous books written on her, bear ample testimony to the fact that she was really a ‘Devi’ descended on earth in a human form for giving Succour to the suffering humanity and knowledge about Almighty to the ignorant. Certain utterances which came out of the Mother are of special importance. For example — if one Chants ‘Nama’ as frequently as possible one is sure to merge into ‘Nami’, since ‘Nama’ and ‘Nami’ are one and inseparable. Chanting of ‘Nama’ is independent of any condition or restriction. It can be chanted by anybody, at

time and at all places. Shri Shri Sitaramdas Onkarnath too preached in the same vein. About the efficacy of 'Japa' Mother says that 'Japa' not only lifts us gradually towards the Paramatma, it also reduces our 'Karma'.

A certain devotee asked Mother as to the 'adhikar' of chanting 'Pranab Mantra' or 'Onkar'. Mother replied that this was an extremely restricted thing and should be left to the guidance of Sat-Guru. Mother analysed Sadhana as 'Swa-dhana' — search for the treasure that has no decay. She divides 'Ananda' into two parts — limited for fragmented Ananda and unlimited or eternal Ananda. Limited Ananda may be felt after attainment of mundane things which gives rise to craving for more and more mundane attainment and makes us ever restive. Only attainment of divine and eternal Ananda can take away all desires and restiveness from us and give us eternal peace and tranquility.

About piercing of 'Shat-Chakra' through Japa, Mother says that there are additional Chakras over and above what we commonly know as 'Shat-Chakra', which one faces as one passes from one Chakra to the other through Sadhana. About restiveness during Sadhana Mother says that it is not unexpected — it points to the existence of a stage when all restiveness will merge into eternal tranquility. Through Sadhana we can pass on from restiveness to permanent peace.

Once asked which was true — 'Jivatma' or 'Paramatma' Mother came out with the prompt reply — 'both are true, Jivatma is a part of 'Paramatma' — as a wave is a part of the sea. In the family, Mother says, 'Pati' (husband) of a married woman is the symbol of 'Parampati'. Devotion to her husband is sure to take her towards 'Parampati'. Worship of parents by children in the family will carry them on to 'Jagat Pita' and 'Jagatmata'. In the same way caring of children by parents will mean worshipping of 'Gopal'.

Mother revealed her 'Swarup' through many casual remarks and activities. Once she related an incident when a burglar entered into Ramna Kali Temple at dead of night and took away some golden bangles from the deity's hands in course of which one of the deity's hands was broken. Mother, away from anybody's sight, cut a very small portion of flesh from her hand, mixed the oozing blood with some mud and set right the broken hands of the deity. Mother declared that she had not de-sarctified the deity since the same blood was flowing in mother Kali's body as in hers.

There was a time when spiritual terms like "Anashakti", "Atma Ram", "Katyayani", etc. used to flow out from her lips unawares. Many people reported, especially one from Pondicherry, that often they would see the image of 'Ma Anandamayi' during "dhyana".

Ma Anandamayi very lucidly cleared the mist around many spiritual conception. A Muslim devotee questioned mother the utility of idol-worship and of the observance of Sradh Ceremony. Mother said that Hindus do not deny that God is one and Supreme, but when a Hindu Chants Mantras to an idol he does not actually worship any clay structure : he worships the spirit behind it. Of course, each religion has its own mode of worship, even though each aims at the same Supreme Power. Mother elucidates the efficacy of Sradh-ceremony through an anecdote. Once a Sadhu and a Brahmin were sitting together when they got the smell of ripe Jack-fruit. The Sadhu then took the Brahmin with him and got into a boat sailing over the Ganges, from where at a distant 'Ghat' they saw a young man performing the Sradh-rites of his deceased father. Among the fruits brought for the Puja there was a ripe Jack-fruit. The Sadhu startled the Brahmin by saying that the latter was the father of that young man in his previous life. The young man was performing the Sradh rites of his father with Jack-fruit since his father was very fond of it.

The fact is that apart from any other spiritual significance in the observance of 'Sradh', it delights the deceased forefathers who bless their descendants.

Mother seldom asked her devotees to come away from worldly life and lead the life of an ascetic. She told them that they could live in their families, perform their normal house-hold duties but always keep the light of 'Nama' burning in their minds. They should think that nothing belongs to them. God is the owner of everything, they are all 'Yantras' and God the 'Yantri'. It should be remembered that Mother was an advocate of Vamashram, since it is sanctified by the Shastras, to facilitate and accelerate the progress of the devotee towards his "Ishta". The same principle was advocated by Shri Shri Ramakrishna and Shri Shri Sitaramdas Onkarnath. One thing should not be lost sight of in this connection. Avatars like Shri Shri Ma, Shri Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansadeva and Shri Shri Sitaramdas Onkarnath were far above all worldly conditions and taboos. What they sometimes might have practised were never meant for their disciples. Each Avatar represents divinity itself, who descended from heaven direct, with a human body, with the mission of lifting darkness from the face of earth and taking humanity towards salvation, as Lord Shri Krishna uttered in the Gita — "Sambhabami Yuge, Yuge."

I shall bring my devotional Scribblings on 'Mother' to a close by showing an analogy between Ma Anandamayi and Shri Shri Sitaramdas Onkarnath. Shri Shri Thakur and Mother were contemporaries and almost of the same age in the worldly sense; Thakur was older by 3/4 years. Even though I had the fortune of getting 'Diksha' from Shri Shri Sitaramdas Onkarnath, I came to know of 'Mother' when I was a mere boy. From what I have seen or heard about these two supremely divine personalities I have somehow developed a feeling that some secret and inexplicable thread binds them together. There was a deep

spiritual hankering in the minds of each to come close to each other. Whenever Thakur walked into meet 'Mother' she would always rush forward and welcome him with the words 'Namo Narayana', "have you come to give darshan to this 'little daughter' of yours"? In the same way whenever Mother came to meet Shri Shri Thakur, Thakur would immediately rush to her with the words — 'Ma - Ma', and would not take his seat until Mother has been properly seated. I know of an occasion, at Hrishikesh, when mother was staying at her Ashram, Shri Shri Thakur without taking even a drop of water walked all the way leading to the Ashram to welcome and personally escort Mother to Thakur's Ashram. He kept standing all the time under the scorching sun until Mother came down to meet him.

On occasions when both of them happened to stay in the same town, each sent offerings of flowers and fruits to the other.

I also remember that as soon as Thakur was informed that Mother was about to leave the mortal world. Thakur, then in Kanyakumarika, immediately flew down to Mother's bed-side and was with her for a considerable time.

In my mind some feelings about Mother Anandamayi and Shri Shri Sitaramdas Onkarnath still linger. To me it seems that both of them were "Purna Brahma, descended on earth in human forms for the salvation of humanity. Both of them appeared in this mortal world with 'Purnatta'. They had not to wait for acquiring it through Tapasya. Both of them were 'Karuna Ghana' — imparting love and kindness to everybody who came in contact with them — far and near. Both of them had a magnetic attraction which drew unto them men, women and children of their country and many from outside. Both of them were practised in their own lives whatever they preached to the people. Both of them believed in the efficacy of 'Nama' as the easiest and quickest way for Salvation of all humanity and themselves felt ill-at-ease without 'Nama'. Both of them liked to chant

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and directed the devotees to Chant 'Gopal Jaio Jaio, Govinda Jaio Jaio, Radha Ramana Hari Govinda Jaio, Jaio. Both of them believed in the efficacy of 'Mouna' and 'Japa', and advocated brahmacharya, select food (Aharshuddhi), Sadachar and (Aharsuddhi) Satsanga. Mother and Shri Thakur were almost always on the move and towards the whole country, sometimes in schedule and often out of schedule; in a hurricane speed to give darshan to all sorts of people, conspicuous and inconspicuous.

I have read in a book on Mother that she told here devotees that her existence was not confined only to her body in flesh and blood, 'she was present in every body's innerself. Similarly, during the last hours of Shri Shri Thakur's stay in this mortal world — he told one of his disciples present near his bed — Take me, take me into — The disciple replied — Pray, father, where, where? Thakur's reply - "Antare".

Mother is no more with us in this mortal world. But she is present and will ever remain present in the hearts of her innumerable devotees.

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# Mahanam Procession

It was 18th May, 1995. The night was quite matured to give birth the new Sun. The earth was still in deep sleep at the loving lap of night. Suddenly breaking the silence of night crackers began to explode one after another. Being bewildered, all came out from their doors to know about the sounds and the flashes.

It took little time for the frightened faces of Ballygunge Circular Road and Southern Avenue to know that it was nothing, but the signal of the most holy moment which indicates that just 100 years before at this particular moment Her divine Shree Shree MA Anandamayee stepped into this world. They also realized that all these outbursts sprang out from the enchantment and love of the devotees for Her Divineship. All the atmosphere filled up with the sweet sounds, " MA..... MA.....MA.....".

Near Baikuntha Dham at Southern Avenue crackers were exploding. The atmosphere was getting intoxicated with the Nam Kirtan of thousands of devotees who gathered at Lake Maidan from different towns and villages all over West Bengal. Some are Vaisnabs, some are Saktas, some are Saivas, but all assembled there spontaneously at the divine attraction of MA.

The Sun began to spray red in the eastern sky. The initiative to start the holy procession began. It appeared that the new Sun was coming to bow down his head on the feet of Her Divine Shree Shree MA Anandamayee to get **HER BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS.**

The procession started. An well decorated chariot containing the portrait of MA pioneered the procession.

A number of decorated chariots containing the portraits of Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnathji, Shree Shree Pranabanandaji, Shree Shree Sankaracharya, Shree Shree Ramkrishna, Shree Shree MA Sarada, Shree Shree Ram Thakur and other divinities followed the procession.



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A well disciplined queue of about fifteen thousand devotees with almost three hundred vehicles containing trucks, trollies, private cars etc. moved through the main arteries of Calcutta chanting Harinam. The spontaneous chorus of Mahanam from such a large mass created a hypnotic effect on all passers-by and those who were residing at both sides of the roads. The impact was so enormous that at some places, people from both sides had thrown flowers, fruits and sweets on the moving queue. The sound of conches and other holy sounds had also come out from the lobbies and verandhas of the houses at the both sides of the roads.

At every moment every participants felt that MA was walking with them side by side with all HER Love, Glories and Divine Beauty.

An obsession of divine feelings was dominating all which drove them to forget their natural thirst, hunger, and other physical pains.

The procession finally reached Mahamilan Math near Dunlop where the chorus chanting of Harinam Kirtan turned the entire atmosphere into a divine look. All felt that MA had come to meet Baba Shree Shree Onkarnathji. At noon Maha prasad was distributed among all the participants. The Sun began to touch the western margin. All began to move towards their home preserving a sweet divine memory in their hearts.

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# OM MA

**Diana Rodriguez**  
San Sebastian, Spain

I came to know about Ma through the teachings of Late Antonio Blay of Spain, who had lived in Ma's Presence in the 70's. Back from one of those trips, he presented me with a photograph of Ma. Through it, I received the impact of HER GLANCE; it has stayed with me ever since. It has never abandoned me !

In the year 89-90, I was in Varanasi, in "Ma's Abode" (Shree Ma's Ashram), where I met Miss Krishna Banerjee. Later on, I was in Haridwar for a month, where Her Direct Presence at Her Samadhi was a transforming experience.

At this Ashram, I received immense help from Mrs. Melita Mashman and Swami Vijayananda, the French doctor. He had also helped Mr. Antonio Blay in his conversation with Ma.

I participated in all the programmes during the month I spent there and the help of these two persons was unconditional, and it made me feel the LIVING PRESENCE of MA.

On the other hand, the daily experience was quite hard. There were difficult tests through which I had to pass, some of them extremely difficult to accept. Some of them had their beginning and end then and there; others took their own time to develop slowly.

Today, I am still learning from them !

During this journey, there arose in my heart the resolve to live in Ma, and to share it with all those who would so wish. At "Ma's Abode", in course of the conversation held by us, that is, Miss Krishna Banerjee, my spouse Mr. Jorge Castellote, and myself, there occurred the decision to translate in Spanish the teachings of Ma.

Miss Krishna Banerjee as much as Mr. Jorge

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Castellote, dedicated much time and labour to this task, in which I had a little collaboration, together with Mr. Blas Macias, our friend and follower of Ma.

There were several difficulties in the way of publishing this work, which were finally resolved to yield the first abridged edition.

For the illustration of this book, Miss Krishna Banerjee sent us a few photographs of Ma. Among them, there was a photo of Ma looking with a full glance. This photo as well as the words of Ma in Spanish gave a fresh impulse to the experiences mentioned above. This impulse I offer each day to Ma with all my gratitude, sincerety and faith, so that She may continue to guide my footsteps forever.

In Ma !!

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## How Could We Fully Realise God

The Mother — If you are in tears for Him you will get Him.

Question — I can not cry.

The Mother — Those who cry keep close company with them. (Everybody broke in laughter)

Question — To get hold of God how much should I try myself and how much to depend on Him ?

The Mother — You can depend on Him only when He wishes to do so. What is 'Purushakar' (will force) ?

Question — Why we feel attracted to these temporal objects and not to the eternal object ?

The Mother — These are all God's 'Lila' (inexplicable act) — He Himself is playing with Himself. But in the 'Chandi' there is — 'Vrantirupen Samsthita'. It is He who is in the form of 'Vranti' (illusion). Nevertheless, what happens is that the mind is downgraded if there is material attachment. On the other hand if you feel attracted for Him then there is joy and liberation. Material attachment implies return ticket meaning entangled in the cycle of birth and rebirth.

She stopped for a while and again started, "Everything is unending eternal. The end ends. Hence it is advised that you should not stop chanting His name. It is never to be exhibited to others and maintain secrecy. Having endowed with this rare human life is it wise to let it go astray ? As the breathing goes on keep alive the chanting of 'Name'. The body is in evertransition. The body was small when born but now it has developed so much. This motion of development is to be channelised towards good and benevolence, otherwise, it tantamounts to committing suicide."

"This little girls capriciously insists you to keep com-

pany always with this 'Name' of 'God', the Mother added.

Question — The body grows up but why does not the mind remain ever-like a child ?

The Mother — why do you like to be a child of this kind? Be such a real child so that you need not change. The childishness changes because of desire. It is only upon upholding Guru's advice and engaging in holy concourse that the real child-like mode emerges out.

Question — Mother, why a count of the telling of beads is required ?

The Mother — Some obvious reasons are there. It is better to maintain a count. Because who can predict at what count you will feel His grace. There is a speciality in keeping the count. But if one become wholly engaged in meditation while chanting 'Name' in mind then there is no need of keeping the count. Otherwise, one might fall asleep while chanting 'Name' in mind. Generally, for this particular reason it is advisable to tell beads keeping a count.

Question — But 'Dhyan' (practising concentration) impedes chanting of 'Name'.

The Mother — If concentration on one's 'Istha' precedes chanting of 'Name' then the mind comes in unison with the image of the syllable of the 'Name'. Hence the feat of concentration is accomplished. That image of the syllable of the 'Name' is but His own image. On continuous chanting of 'Name' the mind becomes concentrated. Try to fix your mind at the syllable of your mantra (Name).

Question — Mother what is the easiest way of chanting 'Name'?

The Mother — Simply by chanting 'Name' with the rhyme of breathing.

Question — Is it designated as 'Ajapa' (spontaneous or automatic chanting of 'Name').

The Mother — No father, 'Ajapa' is effortless and

spontaneous.

Question — What to perform for achieving the state of 'Ajapa'.

The Mother — Go on chanting 'Name' and recall God as I said earlier. This 'Name' will spontaneously befall the inevitable.

The Mother soliloquized one day — 'Sadhan (austere ascetic practice). 'Sadhan' means 'Sadha' (to offer). Hence 'Sadhan' means offering to take oneself. That means appealing to God by offering — take me, take me".

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## A lovely tree that I saw

Niti Chatterjee

A lovely tree  
With beautiful leaves—  
Admiring it  
I fell asleep.

The shade of the tree  
Was appeasing in Sun,  
With lovely flowers  
based on it.

In it's own seasonable time  
It gives us fruit—  
Which we are fond of eating  
A friend Like him  
Is a precious thing.

# Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma and the Great Tradition

Professor Debiprasad Bhattacharya

In many respects, among the great spiritual personalities of modern times in India there exists a variety that is almost bewildering.

Let us take for instance, the incredibly wide differences in the cultural and academic attainments. Some among these great men and women are distinguished by a very high level of academic learning; some others, though not as learned, had, nevertheless had acquaintance, in varying degrees, with our Shastras (sacred texts) in translation, if not in the Sanskrit original, there are yet others who can hardly be called educated or even literate. And yet, in spite of these wide differences in their academic attainments and other respects—language, for instance, or sect—they have, all of them share a common feature. It is this : All of them, without exception belong to a great Tradition, and by the Great Tradition I mean the immemorial *spiritual* tradition of India. This contention, I suspect, will raise many eyebrows, especially among our scholars and cultural historians. They will perhaps remind me stemly and caustically, that many of these great spiritual personalities were far from being unquestioning followers of what I have called the Great Tradition; on the contrary, they were avowed and uncompromising nonconformists, if not heretical rebels against this tradition. To these modern scholars my affirmation is likely to sound strange, even perverse; possibly it is worse: A clear contradiction of patent facts.

I can perfectly well understand the powerful appeal, to many of us of these heretical rebels against tradition, particularly for progressive minded intellectuals of our modern India, they are more pleasing to contemplate

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than the others, who, lacking lamentably in originality or novelty of thought and vision, blindly follow a dead tradition.

I have no intention to confute these champions of innovation; by all means let them feel thrilled at the spectacle of a bold challenge—challenge against tradition; I am also ready to admit that for certain temperaments there is an intrinsic merit in rebellion, no matter against what.

But we are dealing here with facts, not temperaments. And the fact is that those who are either condemned by the orthodox as heretics or acclaimed by the modern — minded as bold innovators are in reality nothing of the kind; what makes them appear to be such is that they are men, great men, who were born with a specific mission; and to fulfil this mission they had to concentrate on a particular as part of the Great Tradition to the deliberate exclusion of others. These latter were ignored, or even repudiated by them because during the period in question they had begun to be spiritually harmful through fanatical overemphasis or distortions or misconception. In their heart of hearts they know very well that the aspects which they do not stress are quite as important as those they do. It is all a question of emphasis — and the emphasis is determined largely by the need of the time. For doing this they didn't need to break away from the Great Tradition; indeed the very thought of doing so would have shocked them profoundly. Not to challenge our immemorial spiritual tradition but to strike a balance by stressing certain aspects of it — this is what they aimed at. What appears therefore as reformist zeal to superficial observers was in reality something very different; it was an intense concern for the preservation of the Great Tradition in its pristine purity. The truth is — they were out to demonstrate that certain thing that were assumed to be an integral part of the Great Tradi-



tion were really not so, that these were aberrations; and what they rebelled against were these lapses, these monstrous misrepresentations of the Great Tradition. But this is only by the way; I only wanted to point out, in passing, that even the so called nonconformists and reformists among the great spiritual masters of modern India were really not repudiators but firm upholders of the Great Tradition; but only in a negative way. The reason why I dealt at some length on them is to show that even their existence does not invalidate my contention — and my central thesis — that the great spiritual masters of India in modern times belong, every one of them without exception, to the Great Tradition of Indian spirituality.

My chief concern and primary object in this essay, however, lies elsewhere; and that would take us back to where we started. I may remind the reader here that in making my central contention at the outset I referred to the incredibly wide differences in the academic attainments among these great spiritual figures. At one end stand some who are distinguished by a high level of learning. By learning here is meant primarily sound knowledge of Sanskrit and the sacred texts (Shastras); but there have been quite a few among them who were thoroughly educated in the modern Western style. At the opposite end stand those who can hardly be called educated either in the modern Western manner or in traditional Indian. Between these two extremes, there are of course others who, though not learned, had a modicum of education with some access, direct or indirect, to our Shastras.

As living embodiments and transmitters of the Great Tradition, the better educated and learned among the saints of modern India have a special value and importance in that they are notably fitted not only to represent this tradition, but to confirm, through their recorded

discourses and writings, the revelation of the scriptures. This is of great importance for average educated Indians, and for foreigners as well, especially when this knowledge of the Shastras is combined, in the ideal instance, with sound education on Western lines. Of course, it is hardly necessary to add that this knowledge is confirmed and fortified by direct spiritual experience without which they would be no more than scholars and intellectuals, and not saints.

Now let us turn to the other pole, our last mentioned category; namely, those among our modern Indian saints who had no formal education, no academic attainments of any kind, indeed in some cases they would hardly be called literate. Vedantic sense. And it is significant that in referring to the ultimate Reality, she uses the two Vedantic terms signifying it, namely, Brahman and Atman more often than the more familiar Isvara and Bhagavan. No, even this statement is not quite correct, for the term that she uses to indicate the Supreme most often, more often even than Brahman, is simply "That" or "One". And this mode of designating Reality — a mode that seems closest to the heart, is essentially Vedantic, it is Vedic as well; for in the Upanisads (and even sometimes in Rk-samhita) the supreme Reality is often referred to simply as "That". But the key-word. The one word that lies in the very heart of her teachings as we shall see later on, is : "One".

Incidentally, it is remarkable how often the word "Jivanmukta" — another Shastric and Vedantic term — comes up in her discourses; and whenever she speaks on this subject, the picture she gives of the Juvanmukta (liberated even while remaining in this body) it is extraordinarily clear and vivid; and the subject is so close to her heart that sometimes it seems to come-up almost out of context. I give below an example of this, her unmistakable fondness for the subject — almost at random.

It was Almost, in 1937. A visitor asked, among other questions, why it is that we become so involved in the Cosmic play. She replied; "The reason is, we don't really understand; if we did, we would participate in the game, but couldn't be lost in it. The Jivanmukta purusa (men who are liberated even while alive) too are found to play the game, but without bhoga (enjoyment). So, no fresh Karma is generated. The play goes on for sometime on account of prarabdha karma (that is, the karma that gave birth to the present bodies and operates till death); it ends when prarabdha is exhausted. It is just like the potter's wheel, which continues to rotate for sometime even after the potter withdraws his hand". —(Vol IV - Page 227).

This is only one example and these words were altered by her when she was forty one; that is, less than half way through her life : Strewn throughout the momentous memories by Gurupriya Devi there are innumerable passages dealing with the state of the liberated soul in this body Jivanmuktabastha. The clarity, vividness and precision of these passages strikes me as profoundly significant in view of the fact that these were uttered by a person who had never read the shastras where the state of the Jivanmukta has been described. The conclusion is, therefore, irresistible that what she said on the subject was based on personal experience. As a matter of fact, whatever she says on whatever subject relating to the life of the spirit produces an overwhelming impression of directly felt experience, and her utterances on the state of the Jivanmukta constitute no exception.

In describing the operation of prarabdha karma of the Jivanmukta, she uses the metaphor of the potter's wheel; elsewhere, she employs a more modern image — that of the electric fan for which goes on rotating for sometime after the switch is turned off. To discuss the splendid vividness and marvellous aptness of the similes and metaphors will demand a separate study by itself; I just

mentioned the two metaphors in passing. It is you who make this body (meaning herself) say all these things you hear". This apparently enigmatic, indeed hardly intelligible statement has in reality, a profound significance (Many of her statements, as a matter of fact are of this kind). This is not it must be made clear — the spiritual passivity I have mentioned above; it is something quite different. What she actually intended to convey by these strange words is this : The answers came naturally and spontaneously if the questions were of the right kind and asked by right persons. And this is in complete accordance with the Great Tradition. It is in other words, the immovably old Indian concept of adhikari — bheda. There are innumerable examples in our sacred texts of this phenomenon, namely, right response coming out from the lips of great sages when faced with the right questions from the right persons.

From what has been said above, two things deserve to be noted for their direct relevance in our present context. The first is her extraordinary etymological ingenuity displayed by the way she interprets words. We have found an example already in her derivation of the word "tapasya" as tapa + saha (enduring heat, that is physical hardship). Another example of sadhana as Sva + dhana (=One's own treasure, inalienable possession). There are many other examples of this such as samsara (where feigning or make — believe is the main thing) and "Duniya" (=that which is concerned with "two", that is the world of duality) of these the first three tapasya, sadhana and samsara are Sanskrit words. Needless to point out that these derivations, notwithstanding their remarkable ingenuity, are not grammatically impossible (unassailable). Here, it may be pointed out is an outrage on Sanskrit grammar, and as such marks sharp departure from the Great Tradition.

This however is not true. So far from being flagrant

violations of our ancient philosophical tradition, such grammatically indefensible and etymologically dubious derivations of words has been an old and established practice in our sacred texts right from the Vedic times. The Brahmanas abound in such constructions; and examples are not altogether lacking in the Upanisads. Even the derivations of the word Brahman (brhanto guna yasmin iti) seems to be dubious etymology. So is purusa (puri sete iti Purusa). So, even here, that is in the way in which she makes familiar words yield a new and deeper meaning by a subtle etymological twist — she is not flouting tradition, but unwittingly and brilliantly continuing it.

Now I came to the second point, which is of utmost importance from our present standpoint. It is the use by Sree Sree Ma of a large, incredibly large number of technical (Sanskrit) terms of Indian philosophy. Even if she just made use of them in her discourses, it would have been surprising enough, considering her total ignorance of Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy, but when we remember that she used these terms in a clear luminous comprehension of their meaning we are struck with amazement. (Here, too, she bears a striking resemblance to Sree Ramakrishna).

We have, for instance, heard her mention the words — nama and rupa — words that occur many times in the Upanisads (that is Vedanta); and she uses them in the correct automatic phenomena; her own will had nothing to do in the matter. She did nothing, as she herself has said so many times; things just happened to her.

Now this totally unmediated and spontaneous action amounting almost to a kind of automatism is passivity carried to a fantastic extreme, and as such it can have, so it may be argued, hardly any need for us who are free agents having a will power of our own. The life of Sree Sree Ma, in so far as it is dominated by automatism and

controlled by sudden playful whim, can therefore convey to us no message. All we can do is, at best, to marvel at it, and with silent reverence, pass it by and turn to something more tangible and familiar from which we can receive practical spiritual benefit.

This line of argument, though is irrefragable at first sight, is really untenable for more than one reason. First : If we are to reject as impossible a particular quality or excellence moral or spiritual, because it is carried to an extreme, we shall never be able to derive any benefit from the lives of great men.

Secondly, the extreme passivity that is so astonishingly manifested in the life of Sree Sree Ma is neither a morbid aberration nor unattainable impossible state of spiritual perfection which can have no real relevance for us. For, according to the spiritual tradition of India, automatism of the kind manifested in the life of Sree Sree Ma is not an abnormal or supernatural phenomenon; it is universal. In the Bhagavad Gita, for instance, Lord Krishna tells us that the enlightened yogin (tattvavit) knows that even while he performs all natural acts with his body—seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing and so on, he does nothing (naiva kimcit karomiti). Exactly the same is true for all persons and all living beings, the only difference is that the enlightened soul, the tattvavit knows it, while the others do not. And accordingly to the Upanisads (or Vedanta, which is another name of Upanisads) Brahman, who as the absolute is devoid of all attributes and activities is, as the omniscient and omnipotent Iswara, the ultimate and only source of all movements and all activities in the Universe. Hence the Upanisads declare that Brahman is “Sarvakarta” — the agent of all actions. Calm but alert passivity in the midst of all activities, which are often various and intense — this, therefore is our essential and unfailing characteristic of the life divine. And the au-

tomatism we have noted above in connection of the life of Anandamayee Ma is supreme example of this vital aspect of the life-divine.

To cultivate this “alert passivity” (I am using again this marvellous phrase of Aldous Huxley) is no easy task; indeed it is very difficult. The fact that it came so naturally to her did not make her try to represent it as easy. Though she earnestly and persistently argued every person who came to her to turn to this Divine and take to the spiritual path, she never for a moment tried to render it attractive by representing it as easy. (No great teacher in the Indian spiritual tradition ever did that) Hence her repeated and emphatic insistence on tapasya.

She would sometimes explain this Sanskrit term by giving it, as she often did, an etymological interpretation. She would divide the word in this way : Tapa + Saha = Tapasya our own, that we hardly recognize it as human. And as for the personality — it is as enigmatic, as elusive, as inscrutable as the Divine; tender and compassionate and at the same time serenely unconcerned and aloof to the point of appearing heartless; intimately, sometimes deeply involved with the lives of others and yet calm and detached; full of brisk even hectic activity while remaining inwardly and passive; meticulously particular about apparently trivial details of this world and yet remaining, on another level, ethereal and other — worldly; playful yet serious; uttering the most profound truths in an apparently light—hearted, even jovial vein; simple natural, and charmingly candid yet impenetrably subtle; now communicative and delightfully affable and expansive; now silent and withdrawn avoiding society and seeking seclusion, bewilderingly unpredictable and capricious, moving about incessantly from one place to another without any assignable motive — yet never doing anything without a clear reason, docile and gentle with an unfailing smile on her lips, but really and invariably, firm

and quick in her decisions.

There cannot of course be any question of following her example in this latter aspect which is more divine than human (incidentally, every spiritual personality of a higher order has both the aspects — human and divine); any attempt to do so would be sheer madness. All we can do is to wonder and adore as we do before a divine presence.

And yet we have, confronting this stupendous spiritual phenomenon—namely, the life and personality of Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma, we have no reason wholly to despair; her life and personality have close links, though not discernible at first sight, with the Great Tradition which is all—embracing, encompassing within its fold an inconceivably wide range of spiritual possibilities, of course — ways that lead to the final goal of man.

I would like to mention in particular a remarkable and profoundly characteristic aspect of her life which is very relevant for all who care for and aspire after the life of the spirit; for it is a phenomenon which has the utmost importance in spiritual life. It is passivity. Needless to say, by this term I do not mean the inertness or inactivity that is due to dullness or *tamas*; what I have in mind is something utterly different. As a matter of fact this spiritual passivity (Aldous Huxley aptly calls it “alert passivity”) is possible only for the purest of souls that have achieved a very high degree of spiritual development.

In the life of Sree Sree Ma this passivity is a phenomenon of the very greatest importance. So some understanding, however inadequate, is absolutely necessary; hence we can make nothing of her life; it will remain totally unintelligible.

Throughout her life, ever since strange things began to manifest themselves in and through her body, Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma said, on innumerable occasions “I



never do anything on my own — through my own will”.

A little after she attained the age of twenty, various yogic postures, asanas and mudras began to appear in her body; some of them were uncommon and difficult. Later, strings of mantras and stotras (hymn in a language resembling Sanskrit — but not exactly the Sanskrit we know) - streamed out of her mouth. These were, wholly and literally, And as for samadhi — She describes and analyses all the various stages of both savikalpa and nirvikalpa samadhi (she uses these two terms instead of the older and traditional samprajnata and asamprajnata or nirbija presumably because the latter one is less known to the general public) with a thoroughness, subtlety and wealth of significant detail that is possible only for a person who has personally gone through them, and when we first hear her speak on the subject she is not more than forty.

I have mentioned above, stages of samadhi. It is remarkable and very characteristic of her that in replying to questions she often categorizes a state of consciousness or a spiritual activity into several level in an ascending order. To illustrate this, I choose an example among many others. She is speaking (in 1955) on the subject of prayer. I cannot quote the entire passage for lack of space, but content myself to the last paragraph (Her teachings (Upadesa) do not, it should be noted in passing, lend themselves to compression; they must be either be reproduced *in toto* or left alone : they cannot be summarized, for the subtle nuances — and her statements are full of them — will be lost). After distinguishing with characteristic thoroughness and precision, for levels of prayer, she defines the fourth and the highest as follows.

“There is a further state when one does not pray at all. One feels, “God does all that is necessary, so, for what am I to pray ?” then in the firm belief that He provided for all the needs of his creatures, one becomes free from worry

and remains absorbed in deep meditation.”

—(As The flower Sheds Its Fragrance — Page 92).

Now this again, is in complete consonance with the Great Tradition, for the great sages, the rsis of old not only classified concepts into clearly defined categories, but carefully distinguished states of unconsciousness of spiritual states, into several stages or levels in an ascending order. (Here too, it may be noted in passing, the all-important concept of adhikara becomes relevant). To cite an example, I take a well known passage in the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, the classical and supreme expression of the Great Tradition. The Blessed lord first tells Arjuna to meditate in Him with one pointed concentration. Failing this, one should resort to “Abhyasa-Yoga” which means — constant, sustained effort for meditation. If one is unable to do that one should perform all works for God. And, He adds, finally, “If you cannot do even that, try to perform all acts renouncing all hopes for the fruits (results)”. Hence the division into four distinct categories (or levels) is made clearly according to one’s capacity or adhikara. Distinctions and classification of this kind, according to one’s respective capacity or adhikara are to be found everywhere in our Shastra and demonstrate the wisdom of the ancient sages of India. In her clear and subtle distinctions between spiritual stages Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma, though born in modern times, shows in a supreme measure, this wisdom of the ancients, I would like to mention in this connection one more little detail, it is both relevant and most interesting. It is regarding the state of sleep of an illumined soul, a Jnani. “Does a Jnani, sleep like the rest of us ?” She was asked about half a century ago. Her answer was, “No”. Then, she went on to explain, as she always did. The Jnani, she said, never sleeps. He is always wide awake, even when to all appearances, he is asleep; for once a man is established is the consciousness of the Self (Atman), his

state of knowledge never deserts him even for a moment. Sleep, therefore, in the sense in which we use the term, does not exist for him.

This again, is wholly in agreement with the revelations, in our Shastras. A look at the Yoga — Shastras of Patanjali will confirm this. According to Patanjali, sleep (Nidra) which is one of the five mental phenomena (Cittva-Vritti) is suppressed (Niruddha) along with the others in the highest samadhi. Establishment in the Atman-Kaivalya — is a higher stage even than samadhi, he has attained the highest state attainable by man, namely the state of the Jivanmukta. True, he has no needs to suppress. Anything, including the cittva-vruis (mental Phenomena), even when they arise, he does not reject them, nor does he welcome them, as the Gita says about the gunatita purusa (the man who has risen above the three gunas). He just looks on remaining a detached and indifferent (Udasina) spectator of all his mental goings as including sleep (nidra).

Whenever any one questioned her on the truth or validity of any of our old religious belief and traditional concepts of Indian spiritual philosophy, her answer would always take in the affirmative. If someboty asked, for instance, is performance of sraddha ceremony necessary and beneficial ? She would answer. "Yes". Is a Guru necessary for the secker of Truth ? "Absolutely so". (By a Guru she meant of course, a real Guru as opposed to a false one. She repeatedly warns us against the latter. A wrong choice here, she tells us emphatically, may lead to disastrous consequence.) Are there really spirits ? (Disembodied souls) ? The answer again is a prompt "Yes" Do the six centres (Satcakra) along the central channel of spiritual ascent (Susumna) really exist ? "Certainly".

*(to be continued)*

## Matri Lila

Evern since Mataji returned to Kankhal on April 10th after Her strenuous trip to Agartala and Calcutta, Her body seemed to be ailing although nobody could diagnose Her illness. She would take neither solid food nor milk or milk products. Even liquids only in tiny quantities and those also were vomited almost daily.

For the first time in all these years, She did not take part in Didima's *Sannyasa Utsava* on April 14th, neither did She attend any of the functions of Her birthday celebrations from 3rd to 11th of May. During the evening *Arati*, which was the only daily public *darsana* of Sri Ma, we invariably found Her reclining on Her couch on the veranda. To greet visiting *mahatmas* She would occasionally sit up for a short while and again lie down. We have reported about all this in the July issue, but perhaps it was not clear how frail Her body had become.

It is well-known to Her devotees that Her body rejected every kind of medicine. Many years ago, Ma once for some reason agreed to take Dr. Pitamber Pant's medicine. It cured Her high fever in no time but this was followed by severe heart trouble that caused much anxiety for several months. For many years now, it had been known that Mataji's *kheyala* alone could cure Her from any illness. On former occasions She had also made it clear that we could help by doing *japa* and keeping our minds concentrated on God. So, whenever She was not keeping well we used to perform extra *japa* and *kirtan* and pray to Her to cure Herself. This time however, whenever She was requested to get well, She would consistently reply : "*Kheyala nahin, jo Bhagavan Hare.*" "*There is no Kheyala, Whatever God does (is all right).*" When during his visit to Ma at Kishenpur, His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Sringeri Math on July 1st requested Mataji earnestly to get well soon, She replied:

*"Baba, ye sharir ka koi bimari nahin hai. Yeh Avyakt ka taraf khinch raha hai. Jo kutch dekh rahe ho usiki anukul Kriya."* "Baba this body has no illness at all. What is happening is due to the pull of the Unmanifest. All that you notice is due to that."

Here we have to apologise for reporting incorrectly in the July issue, due to wrong information, about Sri Sankaracharyaji's conversation the next day, July 2nd, when he took leave. He asked Ma to come to Sringeri for Durga Puja. Ma replied : *"Baba, agar ye sharir rahe to is sal Kankhal mey rahne ka vachan diya."* "Baba, this year, if this body remains, it has agreed to be at Kankhal for Durga Puja." When Sri Sankaracharyaji before leaving, again repeated his request that Mataji should visit Sringeri, Mataji said: *"Yeh sharir Atma rup se hamesha tumare sath rahega."* "As the Atma, this body will always be with you."

Mataji had arrived in the Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun, from Kankhal early morning on June 26th to be present during the *Bhagavata Saptaha* although She had told Sri Vishnu Ashramji Maharaj that She would have to listen from Her room upstairs. When the *Bhagavata Saptaha* was successfully completed on July 4th, Mataji, on July 5th, moved to Her cottage at Panchavati in the compound of Sri and Srimati M. L. Khaitan next to Kalyanvan. There She stayed in great quiet and solitude in Her lovely, large room overlooking the hills. Yet no improvement could be noticed in Mataji's health.

On July 6th, Guru Purnima was celebrated very beautifully. Puja was performed by Br. Bhaskarananda to the accompaniment of sweet music on the terrace adjoining Mataji's room. Mataji was lying on her bed. Her *darsana* had been fixed from 9 to 11 A.M. Two long queues were formed in the spacious garden and devotees could enter Sri Ma's room by one door, do *pranama*, place their gifts on the carpet near Mataji's bed and after

receiving *prasada* from the attending girls would file out by the other door. A few devotees who had arrived later in the day from other towns were allowed to approach Ma in the evening. The following day also there was *darsana* since many people were leaving for other towns.

Mataji Herself then declared that henceforth *darsana* would be only on Sundays for half an hour in the evening. Ashramites, however, and those coming from far off places for short visits, were allowed to see Ma on week days also for a few minutes in the evening.

Already for several months Mataji had refused to listen to letters. Occasionally very urgent messages were conveyed to Her, such as when someone passed away or had an accident. She would then either reply by a few words or ask the person who brought the news to reply himself. However, that Ma invariably responds to sincere prayers inwardly has been experienced by many. Here is a striking example : a devotee from a very distant country wrote an urgent letter to Ma, requesting an ashramite to read it to Her. She wrote : "I am going through the most difficult time in my life. I need to hear from Ma so desperately." The ashramite informed her that Ma was not attending to correspondence anymore and therefore advised the devotee to pray to Ma and try to receive replies in her meditation. The following is quoted from the devotee's answer : "My answers are indeed coming from within more and more. Everything you wrote was as though Ma wrote through you... I have received comfort and blessing from Ma within when I meditate. It is stronger than ever before and I am feeling all the sorrows and burdens being taken away by Ma. She *is* with me always and I remember that more and more through Her grace. I have prayed fervently and She has come to me ! Jai Ma !"

Private interviews had stopped completely already at Kankhal. In very exceptional cases, Br. Bhaskarananda

would ask Ma a question and then convey the reply, if any, to the questioner.

This is how compassionate Ma weaned us very gradually from Her physical presence. We now understand that this was Her Divine Grace (*ahetuk Kripa*) to accustom everybody to seek Her *darsana* and Her guidance in their hearts.

Every *Gurupurnima* letters, wires and gifts arrive from devotees who are unable to be present in person. Ma usually would give a message that was sent to everyone in reply. This year also Br. Bhaskarananda succeeded after about seven days to get one sentence from Ma's mouth: "*Sri Gurudeva kripa varshan purna howar prarthi howa.*" "*Become a supplicant for the fullest outpouring of Sri Gurudeva's grace.*"

On Sunday evening, July 11th, was the next public *darsana*. A large crowd assembled from Dehradun, Mussoorie, Rishikesh and Hardwar.

Early that afternoon, the Prime Minister, accompanied by her son, daughter-in-law and grand-children paid a short visit to Ma, having heard about her indifferent health. They had flown by helicopter to Dehradun via Mussoorie and came from there by car. Mataji sat up for a few minutes and talked to them a little bit. This was the last time She sat up of Her own accord and gave *darsana*.

On July 20th, Ma Yoga Shakti accompanied by two attendants came from the U.S.A. to see Ma. She had dreamt that Ma was not well and so hurried along. She appeared to be greatly moved and concerned.

Quite a number of devotees arrived from distant places just to get a glimpse of Ma. Mataji said very little and that only occasionally. Everyone had to wait for the appointed time in the evening and then sit in silence at a distance for a few minutes in front of Ma.

One evening two Indian devotees who had come all the way from London were invited to have their meal in

the house where Mataji stayed. When they were called, Ma asked : "*Have you done your sandhya (evening prayers)? Don't eat without performing it !*" They went outside and obeyed. To Her last breath Ma taught : "*Bhagavan ke niye thako*" "*Live in God's presence !*"

On July 23rd at about 9 P.M., Mataji called Her hostess and said to her : "Tomorrow morning this body will shift to the Kishenpur Ashram." She gave no reason. Later we came to understand what the main reason had been.

Two days earlier, Mataji had called Panuda in private and said : "*Ei shorir ki awastha to dekhte patcho. Ei shorir ke ekhane rakha thik hobe na.*" "*You can see in what condition this body is. It will not be right to let this body remain in this place.*" When Panuda inquired whether Ma would like to go to Kankhal, She said : "*Kankhal ke niye jete parbe ?*" "*Will it be possible to reach Kankhal?*" Then Ma kept quite and after a while said : "*Take me to Kishenpur.*"

On July 24th at about 9-30 A.M. Ma was brought to the Kishenpur Ashram by car. In the courtyard She was put on Her chair and carried straight to Her room upstairs without stopping to visit the Ashram temples as she had usually done on all former occasions. She never left Her room at all until Her body was carried downstairs in the morning of August 28th.

For several years Ma had always slept on a veranda, never in a room. But this time, already for a few days before moving from Her cottage at Panchavati, She had not been strong enough to walk the few steps from Her room to the covered terrace.

No sooner Mataji had taken up residence in the Ashram than a period of ceaseless religious functions and activities began in the Ashram Hall. A poster with "*Susvagatam*" ("*Hearty Welcome*") embroidered in gold on bright red silk was placed above the main entrance to the



hall. On July 26th, *Akhanda Ramayama* (Uninterrupted recitation of Tulsidas' Ramayana) started. It continued until after midday on the 27th, which according to the Bengali calendar happened to be the anniversary of Didima's *mahasamadhi*. (It had actually occurred on Aug. 8th, 1970.) This was commemorated by a special puja in the Matri Mandir and a feast for all present.

On the 30th evening the *Jhulan* (swing) festival started and was celebrated in the hall every evening until quite late accompanied by kirtan. Many had come from Kankhal Ashram for the occasion. But Mataji's condition was far from satisfactory. On some days She would not even drink water until the evening. On August 2nd fell the anniversary of Bhaiji's *Tirodan* (passing away) at Almora in 1937 (Which was then August 18th). This too was observed by special puja and sadhu feeding. *Jhulan Purnima* which fell on August 4th is also the festival of *Raksha Bandhan*. The question of tying *rakhis* (bracelets) to Mataji's hand in Her condition did not arise at all. However, although it happened to be Thursday, not Sunday, there was a short *darsana* from the veranda adjoining Mataji's room. Devotees handed their *rakhis* (bracelets) to the two girls that were guarding the door to Ma's room. They touched Ma's bedsheet with the *rakhis* and returned them as *prasada*. At midnight silent meditation was observed in the hall for half an hour, preceded and followed by kirtan which continued all night.

Four devotees had with considerable difficulty come from Bangladesh in the hope of receiving *diksa* during those auspicious days. At first they were told that it was impossible, but at the last moment their wish was fulfilled on the day before *Purnima*. The daughter-in-law of Justice Banerjee of Allahabad High Court had also the extreme good luck to receive initiation on full moon day itself. Mataji said to her. : "This body gave itself *diksa* on this very day." (Namely on August 3rd, 1922.) This was

the last *diksa* that Mataji gave.

On August 12th *Janmastami* (Sri Krishna's birthday) was observed by midnight *puja* and *kirtan*. Mataji, always lying in Her bed, at times seemed far removed, and then again fully attentive, observing everything and everyone around Her.

Already some months back, whenever someone tried to convey a message from a letter to Ma, She would reply "*Bhagavat Smaran*" "*The remembrance of God*" or "*Remember God Constantly!*" This has always been the pivot of Ma's teaching. Some years ago, when She visited Bengal after a long interval, many came who had passed through very severe trials and were in great distress. Mataji said to them : "*This body tells of one sovereign remedy for all ills : God. Put your trust in Him, depend on Him, accept whatever happens as His dispensation, regard what you do as his service, think of God with every breath, live in His presence. Leave all your burdens on His hands and He will see to everything; there will be no more problems.*"

On July 29th, Dr. Udupa, the famous surgeon of the Medical College of the Benares Hindu University arrived. He had been sent from France by Swami Chidnanda, the Head of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, whom he had met in France and who was feeling concerned about Mataji. Dr. Udupa examined Ma's body and gave some advice as to Her diet, since medication was out of the question. Mataji took the juices which he prescribed until the end, with one or two exceptions.

Dr. S. C. Seth, the renowned physician of Nanavati Hospital, Bombay, who had treated Gurupriya Didi, was summoned twice by Sri B.K. Shah who also came himself. The first time Ma had still been in Kankhal. On that occasion, Dr. Seth, after examination declared that none of Ma's organs were diseased. Thus he had confirmed what Mataji said afterwards to Sri Sankaracharyaji.

However, when he arrived for the second time on August 23rd, he found Her condition very serious indeed. He asked Mataji whether She suffered much. Mataji replied : "Not at all." There was not the slightest identification with Her body. She watched it as an unconcerned spectator. Of course, some people who saw Mataji in the last days had the feeling that She was suffering. Since Ma is in Oneness, anything and nothing can be said about Her. "...the veins are myself, the nerves are myself, the movement is myself, and the witness of it all is also myself. Of course the word "myself" is used only because some language has to be employed." (Matri Vani, II, 351.)

When Dr. Seth took leave of Ma on the 26th night, he prayed to Her to have *kheyala* on Her body. Mataji said in reply : "*Paramananda ko samalna!*" "*Take care of (Swami) Paramananda.*" This was the last instruction Mataji gave about anything. She did not leave any instructions about the running of the Ashrams, since She had never had anything to do with the organisation.

Uninterrupted *japa* had already been kept up from the time when Mataji moved to the Kishenpur Ashram. From August 9th, Tulsidas' Ramayana was chanted in the hall continuously day and night without a break until August 27th evening. Devotees from Dehradun would come every day at the appointed hour, and ashramites as well as neighbours during the night, and recite with great zeal. The principal of a college, ten miles distance from the Ashram, would arrive daily without fail on his scooter, chant enthusiastically and loudly "so that Ma could hear it" from 6 A.M. to 9 A.M. and then ride back in time for his office. This is just one typical example.

None of the people who took part could go upstairs for Ma's *darsana* but everyone felt Ma's benign presence. The weaker Her body the more powerful and tangible became Her presence. "*Darsana* is not with the eyes," a great *mahatma* has said. Before taking *Mahasamadhi*, Mataji

taught us this great truth very effectively without saying a single word. In fact, whatever Ma does or leaves undone at any time, in the past, present or future is invariably a blessing; notwithstanding appearances to the contrary on rare occasions, this is nevertheless a supreme fact.

The hall remained open day and night and several devotees, Indian and Western, availed themselves of this opportunity to sit in meditation in such a hallowed atmosphere, some for hours on end.

Any number of religious functions were performed for Ma's health, such as *Maha Rudrabhisheka*, *Satchandi*, *Mrityunjaya japa* etc. etc., not only in Kishenpur but also at Kankhal, Varanasi, and other towns, even Madras. But it seems to have been Ma's *kheyala* to give up the body at this time.

About the middle of August, the Governor of the U.P., Sri C.P.N. Singh and the Health Minister Sri Lokpathi Tripathi, both devotees of Ma of many years' standing, sent a team of highly experienced Ayurvedic physicians from different parts of the U.P. to examine Sri Ma's condition and prescribe some herbal some herbal juices which She might not object to. Out of this team, two renowned Ayurvedic physicians, the Principals of the Govt. Ayurvedic Colleges at Pilibhit and Hardwar remained at Dehradun until the end. One of them took up residence in our Ashram and was available day and night, whenever his services were required. We wish to offer our sincere thanks to them. They were feeling helpless because Ma would not take medicines of any kind.

On August 19th, on hearing about the condition of Ma's health, Dr. Channa Reddy, Governor of Punjab, came to see Ma. Before he left on the 20th afternoon, Mataji said to him : "*Jaisa hamesha ate ho, vaisa apna samajkar ate rahna.*" "*Just as you always used to come, keep on coming, considering this (place and these people)*

*your own.*" We feel that this was Ma's last injunction to all devotees : to continue the activities that were started while Ma was still visible to our eyes.

On August 23rd in the afternoon, Sri Swami Krishnanandaji, General Secretary of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh came with two Swamis and Dr. Aruna Mudolkar to pay a visit to Ma. They had to wait for a whole hour before it was possible to let them enter Ma's room. Swami Krishnanandaji had an inner urge to perform Ma's *puja* as Radha on the occasion of *Radhastami*, which fell on August 26th. The 23rd was Rishipanchmi, a Monday, so even more auspicious. He personally performed *arati*, which he never does, and offered a costly blue silk sari, a large basket of fruit, etc. to Ma. He repeated several times : "Ma, what service can we render to you ?" Ma said three times "*Narayana*", and then : "*Jo andar se aye*" "*Whatever comes from within.*" Thereupon some religious functions were started the next morning for Ma's health in Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh.

We are told that when Swami Krishnanandaji left Ma's room, he had the feeling that this was his last visit to Ma. His *puja* was the last *puja* done to Her before She breathed Her last. Immediately after returning to Rishikesh, the Swami spontaneously wrote the article : "Anandamayi Ma Enters the Cosmic" published in this issue.

For the last four or five days Ma's vomiting stopped, but She had severe breathing trouble for the last three nights. On August 25th at about midnight She told some of the attending girls : "*Je jekhane achho bose porte bolo.*" "*Tell everyone to sit down wherever they may be (for japa and meditation).*" Thereupon all the girls sat down to obey Ma's order. Ma inquired several times on which day the anniversary of Didima's *mahasamadhi* had been observed this year. It had been on July 27th.

On the 25th after midnight Mataji suddenly said :

“*Namo Sivaya*” and then repeated “*Brihaspativar*” (Thursday) three times.

On the 26th morning Mataji looked comparatively better. But in the night the breathing difficulty became acute and everyone felt concerned. After 2-30 A.M. Her condition became alarming. The Ayurvedic doctor was called and advised massage which was continued all day long on the 27th. Hands and feet became warmer and the breath somewhat quiet. On Friday the 27th morning the girls heard Her utter “*Narayan Hari*” several times in almost a whisper. These were Her last words. After 3-30 P.M. She suddenly opened Her eyes and gazed with full attention for about a minute. At about 7-45 P.M. She opened Her eyes again and gazed upwards. Within a few minutes She took Her last breath.

Kirtan was started immediately and was continued all night, interrupted only by the recitation of the entire Bhagavad Gita.

When after a while the girls dressed Her in a silk dhoti that She used to wear for puja and put a mark on Her forehead, Mataji's face became young and radiant as it had been until Her body became frail recently.

The District Magistrate of Dehradun and other high officials rushed to the Ashram immediately, reaching there by about 8-30 P.M. In their presence it was decided to take Ma's body to Kankhal the next morning after 10 A.M. They very kindly offered to make all necessary arrangements for the journey. They also took the responsibility of sending radio messages to the Prime Minister's house and to other important persons. Due to their immediate action the news was flashed through the T.V. from New Delhi already at 9.15 P.M. and broadcast by the All India Radio at 11 P.M. and again the next morning several times, also through the B.B.C. This enabled many devotees to reach Kankhal in time for the *Samadhi* even from very great distances. Some took the

night planes from Calcutta and Bombay and reached Kankhal already on the 28th afternoon.

The Prime Minister returned to New Delhi from her trip abroad on the 27th midnight. She suggested to send a helicopter to Dehradun to take Ma's body to Hardwar and offered to reach Dehradun herself on the 28th morning. This proposal was later dropped for various reasons and it was decided to take Ma's body in a van to be supplied by the Police department.

On Saturday, August 28th, after 7 A.M. Ma's body was carried downstairs and made to lie on a wooden coach on the front veranda of the Ashram. Everyone was allowed to approach for *darsana*, do *pranama* and offer flowers. An enormous crowd assembled, from all over Dehradun. Kiran was kept up all along. The first car from Delhi, carrying Mataji's only brother, sister-in-law and others had already arrived at 6 A.M.

At about 10-45 A.M. Ma's body lying on the wooden couch was placed into the covered van which was open at one end. Several of Ma's girls and 5 or 6 devotees accompanied Ma in the van itself, singing kirtan all along. The van was followed by a special bus, two station wagons and several cars. Many people stood on the road everywhere. From Hardwar onwards crowds were waiting on both sides of the road and many were greeting from every roof. The whole procession had to stop every few yards to allow people to do *pranama*. At about 1-15 P.M. the van reached Sankaracharya Chowk at Kankhal where sadhus from all *akharas* offered garlands and from there accompanied the procession. Many people joined on foot.

At about 2 P.M. the Kankhal Ashram was reached. Mataji's body was taken to the hall and placed on an elevated couch in front of Adi Sankaracharya's Mandir within the enclosure. Soon the hall was opened and everyone was allowed to approach Ma's body, do *pranama* and walk around it. Many people remained in the hall

throughout the night keeping vigil and meditating. *Darsana* continued without interruption until Sunday, 29th August at about 2-00 P.M., when Ma's body was laid in *samadhi* in the courtyard near the Sadhus' building, just where the banyan tree had been.

It is interesting to note that over a year ago the tree was leaning over to one side so that the adjoining buildings were in danger. Therefore large branches had to be cut off. Then Mataji had the *kheyala* that the tree should be cut down and the roots removed. She said that the wood should be used for *havan* (fire sacrifice) and that the site could be used for functions and ceremonies. The *Samyam Vrata* last November was held in that courtyard and it was also the site for the *Rasalila* during Ma's birthday celebrations last May.

Mataji's body had been in lying position until Saturday midnight, when according to the wishes of the *mahatmas* of various *akharas*, Mataji's body was put into a sitting pose, so that *samadhi* could be given strictly according to the injunctions of the *Sastras*. Strangely Ma's body was very soft and flexible even after 28 hours, so it could be made to sit quite easily. At 3-00 A.M. several sadhus, led by Sri Mahant Girdhar Narayan Puri arrived and performed the *Panchamrita snana* (ceremonial bathing in milk, curds, honey, *ghi* and *gangajal*.) Then Ma's body was dressed in new clothes and given new bedsheets and a new *asana*. Mahantaji himself and the sadhus performed *arati*.

Devotees kept on arriving in large numbers by cars, trains, buses and aeroplanes literally from all over India, even Madras and Travancore, including several foreigners who happened to be in India. A continuous stream of people from Hardwar, Rishikesh and other nearby places for several hours on Sunday morning entered the packed hall by one door and after *darsana* and circumambulation filed out by another door. A large consignment of police



including a few women police made elaborate arrangements also in the hall and especially on the road, as the Prime Minister and several other dignitaries were expected. At 1 P.M. a specially beautiful huge wreath of flowers was offered on behalf of the Governor of the U.P. Sri Govind Narain and Dr. Channa Reddy, the Governors of Karnataka and Punjab had also arrived with their families to pay their last homage to Ma. At 1-15 P.M., the Prime Minister arrived straight from Delhi along with the Senior A.D.C. of the President of India and a host of high officials. They offered garlands also on behalf on the President.

At 1-30 P.M. Ma's body was lifted up high so that every single person in the hall could have a last *darsana* and was then carried by mahatmas to the *samadhi* ground, where final *puja* and *arati* were performed by them amidst chanting from the Vedas and the singing of kirtan by Ashram girls. Mataji's body was thereafter put down inside the *samadhi* pit which was lined with white marble slabs. Five hundred pounds of rock salt were put into the cavity and afterwards a marble slab was placed on top as a cover.

Hundreds of devotees were weeping at the thought that they would never again be able to see or touch Mataji's divine body. The Prime Minister and some top V.I.Ps. also were found shedding tears. As soon as the function was over Srimati Indira Gandhi did her last *pranama* and then left. One by one all the devotees performed *pranama*. This continued for hours. Then the *samadhi* ground was enclosed to preserve the sanctity of the place. A solid enclosure was built within a couple of days and a temporary roof of silk and canvas above it was provided.

Most ashramites and some devotees had fasted since the 27th.

On Aug. 30th early morning the girls spontaneously

started an elaborate programme of religious functions, somewhat similar to what Mataji had devised after Didima's *Mahasamadhi* in 1970. From 5 A.M. to 9 P.M. satsang was held daily without interruption near the *samadhi*. It started with *Mangal Arati* and *Usha Kirtan*; at 10 A.M. *Gita*, *Chandi*, *Vishnu Sahasra Nama* was recited, in the afternoon *Stava* and *Ramayana patha*. In the evening elaborate arati was performed by one of the brahmacharinis accompanied and followed by exquisitely beautiful kirtan led by Km. Chhabi, Puspa and other excellent singers. In the intervals "Om Ma, Sri Ma, Jai Ma, Jai Jai Ma", was sung throughout. Simultaneously Siva Purana and Ramayana were recited in the hall by different people taking turns day and night and *akhanda japa* was being performed as well. After the Siva Purana, other Puranas were read one after the other. All this continued without a break until September 22nd.

Video films of Ma's *Mahasamadhi*, 1981 Birthday Celebration, *Ati Rudra Mahayajna*, etc. were shown in the hall from 8-9 P.M. for several days, over and above the other functions that went on simultaneously.

From september 11th evening till 12th evening a *Nama Yajna* was performed round the *samadhi* with : "Om Ma, Sri Ma, Jai Jai Ma." The women sang all night and the men all day. It rained for some time in the night which the canvas roof could not stand and we got quite wet. The kirtan of course went on without interruption. Ma's blissful presence was so palpable that it was impossible to deny it. Although, Ma's presence is no unmistakable that everyone feels irresistibly attracted. One has to literally tear oneself away from the vicinity of the *Samadhi*.

On September 13th morning an elaborate *puja* which continued from 7-10 A.M. was performed by Brahmacharini Chandan. It was accompanied by Km. Chhabi's enchanting singing. This was followed by short talks of Mahamandaleshwaras and other leading Mahat-

mas who offered *Shraddhanjali* (homage) to Ma. Some of the talks were very inspiring. The number of Mahatmas was larger than ever before.

According to Sastric rules 16 leading Mahatmas were offered special puja. (In 1950 Mataji had had the *Kheyala* to have a similar puja performed at the conclusion of the *Savitri Yajna* at Varanasi.) Each Mahatma was presented with a set of silver utensils, a set of silk clothes, a rudraksha mala, a basket of fruit and cash. Forty-one special Mahatmas were also offered sandalwood garlands, silk clothes and fruits. At about 1 P.M. the Mahatmas were entertained to a feast in the hall and thereafter also all the assembled devotees and guests. About 600 devotees had come from all over India.

Although Sri Ma was not a *samnyasi*, all the rituals connected with Her *Mahasamadhi* had been performed according to the wishes of the heads of various *akharas*, strictly following the Sastric injunctions observed when a *samnyasi* leaves his body. It is important to note in this connection that Ma had not, at any time, left any instructions or even hints about what should be done with Her body. Here also Ma's maxim : "*Jo hoye joy*" (*Whatever happens is equally welcome*) was in force.

Some devotees had thought that Ma would not leave Her divine body like any ordinary mortal but would just vanish. However, this would not have been in keeping with Ma's ways. All Her life She had, as far as possible, kept concealed Her divine powers. In fact, many years ago, She had once said that She would leave Her body in "the most ordinary of ordinary" manners ("*sadharan se sadharan*") and so it happened.



(to be continued)

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## Ashram News

On Friday, the 14th April, 1995, on the occasion of Maha Chaitra Sankranti, Sannyas-Utsav of 1008 Swami Muktananda Giriji was observed at various Ashrams of Shree Shree MA. On this occasion, special Puja and Kirtans were performed. In some Ashrams, Sadhu Bhandara was also organised. On Tuesday, the 2nd May, 1995, on the occasion of Akshay-Tritiya, special Pujas were performed at different Ashrams.



On Wednesday, the 3rd May, 1995, the Birth centenary celebration of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee was formally inaugurated at the Siri Fort Stadium, New Delhi. A number of saints, dignatories and devotees assembled at the function to pay their deep homage to Shree Shree MA.



A special function was held in the birth-place of Shree Shree MA at village Kheora (Now in Bangladesh at district Kumilla) to mark the opening of the year-long Birth-centenary celebration of Shree Shree MA. On this occasion, a large number of devotees from India gathered there to pay their heart-felt tribute to Shree Shree MA and HER birth place. At Kheora, the function started with Adhibas (inaugural rites) on Monday, the 1st May, 1995. On 2nd May, Nam-Kritan from dawn to dusk was performed. The participation of local Kirtanias gave a divine touch to the entire atmosphere. On 3rd May, 1995, in a public function held on MA, Justice B.B. Roychowdhury of Bangladesh Supreme Court and other distinguished dignatories had taken part in the function and offered their views on Shree Shree MA and HER relevance in present world. At 3. P.M.

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special Puja was offered in the birth place of MA by Nirvananandajee.

After celebrations at Kheora, on 6th May, 1995 a large procession was organised which moved through the streets of Dacca — the capital of Bangladesh, encircling Sahabag and Ramna — the holy places that got the divine touch of Shree Shree MA. The Procession terminated at Holy Kali temple at Siddheswari.



In Calcutta, at Agarpara Ashram, a grand festival was organised and observed from 11th May to 19th May, 1995 to celebrate the birth centenary of Shree Shree MA. On this occasion, some most reverent saints from the different parts of India participated and delivered religious discourses. Some famous singers and Kirtanias also performed kirtans and devotional songs on this occasion. Special Pujas and Kirtans were performed and Mahaprasad was distributed among the participants. The presence of large number of devotees and their spontaneous Jubilation gave the entire atmosphere a festive look.

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# Obituary

Sri Shib Kali Banerjee, an ardent devotee of Shree Shree Ma, breathed his last on Wednesday — the 8th March, 1995 (afternoon) at his own residence. We pray to MA for the eternal peace of the departed soul and also pray to HER to grant strength and peace in the heart of the members of the bereaved family to stand the loss.



Late Sudhanshu Basu—one of the ardent old devotees of Mother passed away on 13th February, 1995, to take eternal rest in the lap of our divine Mother. Shree Shree MA Anandamayee. May Ma grant peace to the members of his family.



Major Somnath Bandopadhyay an an ardent devotee and one of the most favourite sons of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee, left his mortal coil at the age of 75, on Friday, the 23rd June, 1995 — at Birla Heart Research Centre, Calcutta. 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 with his absence.



Late Swami Prakashananda — one of the old saints of our Ashram and a favourite son of our MA, breathed his last on 30th May, 1995 at Kankhal for ultimate union with MA.

For his wisdom and simple behaviour, Swamijee was loved by all. May MA grant us the strength to enable us to

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keep his ideals alive.

One of the most brilliant scholars of our times and in charge of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee Ashram at Puri, Dr. Jayadeb Mukhopadhyay lost his life within the Ashram complex in a most strange circumstances. A Brahmachari throughout his life, Dr. Mukhopadhyay, apart from his versatile brilliance, was respected and loved by all for his childlike and most amiable behaviour. Like us, any one who ever came across him, will certainly feel deep pain in his heart.

He came off in a rich family and passed his early life in affluence. In spite of such wealthy background, his humble and simple ashram life moved us all. May his devotion to divinity and sublime wisdom finally, unite him with his idol — Shree Shree MA Anandamayee.

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