

# 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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# Reminder

**Re : Renewal of Annual Subscription of  
ANANDA-VARTA for 1996**

Dear Brother/Sister,

Kindly note that with this October, 1995 issue your annual subscription for ANANDA-VARTA ends. You are so requested to renew your subscription for the year 1996 and remit the required fees to reach this office *on or before the 31st of December 1995 without fail*—in order to enable us to mail your journal regularly from January 1996. Subscriptions are to be sent to the undernoted address either *by M.O. or by DRAFT only on any Calcutta Bank along with your Subscriber Number and present address.*

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In case, you have already paid your renewal fee in advance, please ignore this reminder which is being issued as a routine to all our subscribers.

This also carries our best of wishes and Vijaya/Diwali greetings to you. You are sincerely requested to contribute your experience when and how you came in touch with MA. We will gladly publish that in our English Ananda Varta.

**Sri Debabrata Pal**

Secretary

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Shree Shree Anandamayee

Charitable Society

“MATRI-MANDIR”

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October, 1995

# Matri-Vani

Man must aim at the superman, at real greatness. The traveller on the supreme path may hope to attain to the ultimate Goal. This is man's main duty.



At all times to be vowed to the search after Truth and consequently to be completely truthful in every respect is man's duty. God's grace streams forth at all times.



Man is born in order to experience the happiness and sorrow of this world. Those who have the good sense of wanting to go beyond happiness and pain must take their sole refuge in Him.



Pray for God's mercy. Under no circumstances must you allow yourself to be knocked down. It is God's law to end suffering by suffering. Your present condition is His gift of the results of your past actions. Bear in mind that it is because God will take you into Himself that He is purifying and cleansing you.



In wealth and property there is certainly no peace. What then does give peace? My own true nature is peace, knowledge, divine consciousness—unless and until this is realized, how can there be peace? In order to find your Self you must become revealed to yourself. How beautiful.

God keeps milk ready in the mother's breast before the baby is born; in Him put your whole trust; seek refuge in Him alone.



There is only one book and everything is contained in it. Once it has been mastered nothing else remains to be studied. Sadhana has to be practised for the sole purpose of discovering one's own true Wealth (Svadhana).



God is the breath of life, the heart of hearts, the Self. To find Him means to find one's Self. What is called the world is dragging man towards foolishness and misery — away from the Divine. Therefore, the only excellent path is the one that leads to Self-knowledge, Self-realization.



God is complete. Thus, for full revelation one has to come to Him. Only because of the notion of God's absence is there sorrow in the world. Where God is revealed there are no "two" — sorrow has no place.




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### Programme of Ceremonies

1. Sri Sri Durgapuja — 25th September to 3rd October, Kankhal (Hardwar)
  2. Sri Sri Laxmipuja — 8th October, Sunday (Hardwar)
  3. Sri Sri Kalipuja — 23rd October, Monday (Kalkaji, New Delhi)
  4. Annakut — 24th October, Tuesday
  5. Sanjam Saptaha — 31st October to 6th November, Tuesday to Monday
  6. Sri Sri Jagaddhartipuja — 1st November, Wednesday (Matri Mandir, Calcutta)
  7. Makar Sankranti — 14th January, '96.
  8. Swarasatipuja — 25th January, '96.
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# Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Volume VI

(Translated by Tara Kini)

(Continued from previous issue)

## March 30 Tuesday

Early this morning a gentleman arrived from Dhaka and began singing *kirtan*. Ma woke up even before he arrived. *Kirtan* went on for nearly two hours and everyone joined in. The local women performed *arati* for Ma and sang a song for the ritual.

Ganesh Babu's wife, Jatu and many others had come from Dhaka today. Yesterday Shankarananda Swami and others had come from Kashi. The whole house was filled with guests.

After the meal Ma lay down. I sat near her. Ma spoke softly. She spoke in detail about her earlier *bhava*. She spoke about the many states in a single *pranama*. Although we had seen all this her, we had not noticed anything particularly. With Ma's explanation our attention was attracted to many details. We realized that an entire book could be written on the subject of a single *pranama*.

There was a time when Ma bowed down to all — even to cats and dogs. Whenever she stepped on any object she would instantly do *pranama*. Ma said, "Ma had told me that if I touched anything with my feet, I should do *pranama*. Therefore in my childhood, whenever my feet touched any object I would bow down immediately. So much so that when I climbed on to a mattress I would do *pranama* to the mattress. Again before getting off on to the floor, I would now down to the floor. With the knowledge of That being all pervading I began doing *pranama* to all. Then it so happened that I would not accept *pranama* from anybody but would offer *pranama* to all. This was followed

by a phase when I could neither do *pranama* to anyone nor could I accept it from anyone. To whom could I bow down and who was to bow down to me ? Later all this ceased. People would bow down and so would I. You people have seen that sometimes. I would do *pranama* to Ma and Baba or to Bholanath and then touching my forehead to the ground I would bow to all. Then it so happened that for the next five minutes I would offer *pranama* to all and when suddenly cease to do so. All these are stages which occur in the lives of *sadhakas*. Joining these palms together happens in temples of Gods, it happens before you all as well. The *bhava* is the same everywhere. May be you have observed at times that my head has not bent down in a temple, yet this body has touched the feet of its parents and Bholanath."

When I asked what the reason for that was, Ma replied, "Whoever has been offered *pranama* has had the feeling to receive *pranama* in that spirit at that time. Whatever feeling arises in anyone at anytime, the *kriya* (action), in perfect response to that feeling occurs within this body at that very instant. You all have observed that happening all the time. Then again you may have noticed that my head has not bent down while doing *pranama*. Bowing or not bowing the head is one and the same thing. Again, the moment someone brings a hand forward to touch these feet, my head bows down at that person's feet. You all have observed that. These are all levels in a spiritual seeker's progress. Such sport has occurred within this body."

Therefore it cannot be categorically stated that Ma does not do *pranama*.

Ma continued, "Hands and feet are the same, wherever you may touch them. And if anyone were to do *pranama* to this body or kick it, it is all the same!" So saying she laughed.

In matters concerning diet, all that I have heard as 'divine *bhava*' and '*sadhaka bhava*' has been enacted in

Ma's body. When the prevailing rule was that she would not accept food from anyone, she accepted nothing from anybody. So much so that she could not even touch vessels belonging to other people. Ma explained it saying, "I could not use vessels belonging to others, because whatever wear and tear my usage would cause in the vessels, would be counted as my acquisition." In this manner all the levels of a spiritual aspirant manifested within her one by one. At one stage she could not eat anything tasted by others; not even a fruit pecked by a bird. If anybody's gaze full of longing happened to fall on any edible item, it would not be offered as *bhoga*. We had to prepare Ma's food with great care and until she ate it we feared as to whether she would accept it or reject it. Ma would eat with such strict rules of purity at that time. But within a few days she readily ate leftovers from anybody's plate. She even ran towards a dog to eat what it carried in its mouth. Such are the absolutely contrary emotions that mingle within Ma which we had witnessed earlier and which we continue to observe from time to time. The instances are simply innumerable.

At four p.m. the doors were opened after the noon's rest period. All the devotees gathered around Ma. In the evening Bholanath sang *kirtan* with all those present. *Kirtan* was being sung on the other side of the Ganga. Bholanath took everybody there and sang for some time. Bholanath enjoys singing *kirtan* greatly.

In the night Ma conversed at length about the state of *samadhi*. In connection with the *bhava samadhi* that occurs after the gross (*jada*) state and before the *savikalpa* (with form) *samadhi*, Ma said, "While worshipping an idol during spiritual practices the involvement causes the *jada* state. In that state sometimes a touch of the *Brahma bhava* is possible. That is also called *bhava samadhi*. It is one thing to stabilize in that state and quite another to experience its touch. It is very difficult to understand this difference."



Shantadas Baba's disciple Shishir asked Ma, "Alright Ma, can a spiritual seeker acquire the nature of the God that he is meditating upon?" Ma replied, "There are many explanations regarding this matter. Raise this topic some other time." Later Ma once mentioned to me, "Look, at some spots a *sadhaka* meditating on a form acquires a feeling of oneness with it. At that instant the seeker takes on the stance of the God he is meditating upon, be it Kali or Krishna; then the seeker walks and moves like his idol. But as soon as the *bhava* of being one with the idol disappears, it all ceases. There is yet another *bhava* — do you know what that is? Without any meditation the *bhava* of various gods and goddesses manifest in the body of the *sadhaka*. The difference between these two states is like the difference between night and day. As I said earlier — one implies stability in the state and the other merely a momentary experience of the state. As soon as the experience is over the seeker finds himself in the previous state. Why doesn't he acquire the form of that?"

The conversation again veered towards Gola's sacred thread investiture. But nothing could be finalised. Ma remarked, "Whatever has to happen will happen!"

### March 30 Wednesday

Early morning *kirtan* was sung. Ma had a wash and was then made to drink some milk. At noon when *bhoga* was offered she was surrounded by people. All were keen to have some *prasada* from Ma's plate but hesitated to voice their desire. Ma said "Will you all eat? I am receiving *prasada* — so must you all. All people receive *prasada*." So saying she laughed.

In the evening a *sannyasin* arrived and questioned Ma, "Ma, we have all come from the same place and will all return to the same place. All are one — then how did this feeling of difference arise?" Ma replied, "Actions cause this feeling of difference and actions will cause this difference to disappear." Again he queried, "Where is worry located?"

Ma smiled, stroked her head with her hand and replied, "It originates here." He averred, "I say it comes from the heart". Ma laughed and said, "Baba, the heart experiences joy and sorrow. God is to be installed there. Does not everything lie in the root? The head is the root of the body, yet again the root is present in all locations."

Another person asked, "Is it proper to maintain caste differences?" Ma asked in reply, "What is your opinion?" He replied, "In my opinion it should be observed." Then you must observe it, because it is not right to spoil one's belief. Whatever beliefs you possess because of your *samskaras* (past actions), you must behave according to their dictates. There is no one path which suits everybody. Just see, what a Hindu observes as pure and impure behaviour and thinking is not observed by a Muslim or a Christian. Because of this can you say that there are no great personages amongst them? Whatever be the *samskara*, each one should behave accordingly. Again one should also try to see how these *samskaras* arose. Sometimes it so happens that certain rules are not observed because of lethargy. Yet again some habits are inculcated from childhood and they continue later. But the *samskara* from within is of another kind. That *samskara* may cause doubts in your mind but habit does not allow you to function according to your *samskara*. Many other thoughts also prevail on this matter."

This evening *kirtan* was sung. At night Ma told me about *samadhi* in the course of conversation, "See, it is difficult to understand how many kinds of *samadhi* there are. Sometimes brass is mistaken for gold and at other times gold is mistaken for brass. "After saying so much Ma sat still for some moments and then proceeded to speak in detail. Finally she said, "Look, all the *bhavas* that you have now heard about, help to move along this path though they are not *samadhi*. *Bhava* manifesting restlessness and immobility does not appear in those within whom the

existence of the *atma* is illuminated by intellectual thought alone. *Bhava* may blossom to a greater extent in the feeling of *bhakti* (devotion) within some people, and in some people, according to their *samskaras*, the ability to maintain a sharp thinking attitude to reason out intelligently is limited.”

### March 31 Thursday

Shishir Babu was here today, he visits almost everyday nowadays. Dr. Pant returned from his home today. In his absence his servant Sur Singh had lost a *durree* in the Ganga while washing it. He was nervous about what the doctor would say about it on his return.

Meanwhile there had occurred another incident when Ma had come here and stayed at the *dharmashala* and was very unwell. At that time the doctor had told Ma, “Ma, today I have prayed to Ganga that you should have the *bhava* to get well. Ma you should get well and save my honour!” After this when the doctor took Ma to his house, Ma stood on the floor and changed the *dhoti*. She then had the doctor throw away the *dhoti* she had relinquished, in the Ganga.

Today when the doctor returned, Ma spoke to him alone and said, “Look, you had prayed to Mother Ganga to arouse the *bhava* of good health within me and had offered my cloth to Mother Ganga with your own hands to achieve that purpose. And then Mother Ganga also took away your *durree*.” Understanding the spirit in which Ma said this, the doctor replied, “That was just as it should have been Ma. The cloth was taken and the bedding was also desired. Therefore it was taken.” Ma laughed and agreed with him. On the day that the *durree* had floated away, at four p.m. Ma was strolling on the terrace. She said, “Mother Ganga took it away,” and smiled. I asked, “Did she say to you?” Ma replied in a low voice so that no one else could hear, “Absolutely clearly—just as you people speak, so did I hear her speak.”

Today Shishir Babu cooked a vegetable and fed it to Ma. Today was also the day of the new moon ritual bath. The *sadhus* took out a procession (*Shobha Yatra*) which was a wonderful sight. I commented that it appeared to be Lord Shiva's entourage. All the *sannyasins*, many of them naked, all besmeared with ash, yet without any shortage of horses and elephants and other decorations. We stood on the terrace and watched it all. The *sadhus* walked in a line on the banks of the Ganga. Some riding elephants, some seated in palanquins, some on horses with a band of instruments marching alongside. In between police officials walked about. This *shobha yatra* went on till five p.m., appearing like an ocean of humanity.

By ten p.m. the doors to Ma's room were shut as per the rule. For several days now Ma's body has been refusing to lie quietly.

The *sannyasins'* glory and esteem are revealed during the *Shobha Yatra*, enormous gather in Haridwar during this time to witness the Brahma Kunda bath and the *Shobha Yatra*. There is barely any space on the road sides to stand and watch. If a person squeezes into someone else's encampment, he does not then show any signs of leaving. A certain amount of aggressiveness is prevalent. What can be done? There is insufficient room, yet merit has to be earned. Therefore even when chased away, nobody wants to budge. That is the state of things. But at the same time each one tries to serve the travellers to whatever extent possible. Daily *bhandara* (feasts) for the *sannyasins* and donation of clothes goes on somehow, we hear. This festival takes place on a mammoth scale. The first ritualistic bath is on *Shivaratri*, the second on the new moon day and the third is the *Kumbha snana* which is on the *Shankaranti* day of the month of *Chaithra*. The mythological significance is that a drop of the immortalizing nectar fell on this spot and therefore the Brahma Kunda is a great pilgrimage spot for the Hindus.

Ma's devotees have been arriving group after group, in the event of the Brahma Kunda bath for Ma's *darshān*. But because of Ma's ill health the routine of keeping the doors closed between twelve noon and four p.m. and also after ten p.m. is continuing. Yet Ma's body does not recover at all. We cannot understand the reason for this. Ma says, "It is the feeling within you all that causes this." Tonight again the doors were shut at ten p.m.

#### **April 1 Friday**

Today Vimala Ma, Anandbhai, Sachidada's sister, Didima and others arrived. There was no incident particularly worth mentioning.

#### **April 2 Saturday**

Ma awoke at the crack of dawn — she did not appear to be in the mood for sleeping. Even when she is made to eat she seems to be least interested in eating and starts talking about other matters. Although this *bhava* is prevalent all the time, it is more noticeably manifest at some times. It is very difficult to feed her, she almost always wants nothing to eat. From many days she has been saying, "See Khukuni, forgetfulness — like illusions will be noticeable in this body during this time. "And in fact that is what I will perceive now. Referring to that Ma said, "Look, does the condition of forgetfulness usually occur within any body with prior warning? Do you know how it happens in this case? It is like the game of Holi. People play intensely, slapping on mud, ink and what not and turning themselves into demons. But they know that they are only playing and they keep water ready for a bath before they start. They know very well that after playing for awhile they will wash it all off. They do not hesitate to apply colours generously and also wear old, tattered clothes in preparation for the games. When the game is finished they bathe with soap and warm water and sit back as they were before. "Laughing, Ma continued, "It is just like that, what else!" It is just a question of a variety of *bhava* within Ma; these *bhavas* perform *kriyas* within Ma's body.

# Holy Reminiscences

Swami Joyananda Giri

(Continued from the last issue)

## 5. At Allahabad during Durga Puja

In 1958 Durga Puja was celebrated in the presence of Ma, at the residence of the late Sri Baleshwar Prasad, Advocate of the High Court of Allahabad, from the 18th to the 22nd October. Ma had gone from Varanasi to Allahabad on the 14th, but two days earlier, on Her way to Varanasi from Hoshiarpur, She had halted in Delhi for a day. The following morning I had gone to the railway station to see Her off, and when the train had just started moving, She graciously asked me to come to Allahabad for the puja celebration.

So I had gone there, accompanied by my second son Ajoy, then only fourteen, his three younger sisters and their mother. On arrival we had found a fairly spacious room reserved for our use in one of the houses nearby. Ma had just shifted from the Ashram of the late Sri Gopal Thakur, after spending three days there, to the residence of the late Sri N.N. Mukerji, where, in the midst of his beautiful garden, a separate small bungalow had been newly constructed for Her use. When we went there for Ma's Darshan after settling down in our new temporary home, She generously enquired about our lodging, showing thereby Her compassionate solicitude for the comfort of those, in particular, for whom She may, at any time, have the *kheyala* to ask them to come.

The Pandal (large tent) and its main entrance at Sri Baleshwar Prasad's residence had been artistically decorated, the general arrangements were also very good and by Ma's grace the entire function turned out to be a great success.

### **Caught and Brought**

One day, during the celebrations, when hundreds of devotees had gathered in the pandal for Ma's darshana and sangha, an exchange of ideas on our spiritual future had taken place among those in whose midst I happened to be seated. When many had seemed to agree that only a few among the thousands who come to Ma could hope to attain to spiritual heights, an old and well-known devotee, Sri S.N. Aga, from our group, suddenly addressed Ma loudly thus: "Ma, so many of us come to you. Are all of us going to pass, or will some fail also?" And Ma replied back immediately, "Do you come by your own free will? You are caught and brought here."

### **Mother's gracious Responses**

Another day, when we had gone in the morning for Ma's darsana, Ma was sitting beside the Durga Pratima (Image), which had been installed on a raised flooring at one end of the pandal. To prevent unauthorized persons from entering this sanctified area (puja mandap), a one-foot-or-so high latticed barricade had been put up above and along the lengthwise edge of the mandap, with proportionate pillars rising a few inches higher at intervals in between.

In this situation, since the devotees in general could not go very near Ma, they came up to the barricade, did pranama (obeisance) and such of them as had garlands to offer, hung them on the pillar nearest to Ma. Accordingly, when we came, we did the same except my eldest daughter Vijay Lakshmi, then just twelve years old, who, to our horror, threw her garland at Ma before we could prevent her from doing so. But to our sheer amazement, as the garland reached Ma, She burst out laughing. Disapproving of Vijay Lakshmi's action, I reprimanded her, but started smiling myself when I heard her say, with her characteristic innocence: "Everyone was garlanding the pillar as if it was for worshipping the pillar that they had

brought their garlands. But I had brought mine for offering it to Ma and not to the pillar." Evidently, Ma's gracious response was due to Her having been aware instantly of this delightful reasoning, while ignoring, with divine mercy, the child's consequent impulsive action.

The following small incident provides a glorious example of how Mother encourages struggling beginners like me. One day Ma was sitting in the pandal at a place where devotees could approach Her without any restriction. A couple of few yards away I was standing behind Ma at an angle from where I could see her but She could not see me. As usual, the devotees were coming to Her with fruit, sweets, flowers, etc., and were doing pranama, one after another. As I was watching them my attention was drawn towards a girl of about ten years or so. She had come to Ma and offered Her a flower, with a remarkably graceful poise and affection. In return, I noticed Mother giving her a richly-deserved full measure of gracious love and blessing. The sight thrilled me, fusing my entire mental and emotional being into oneness with the inspiring rare veneration of an innocent bhakta and the divine grace of Bhagavan. But just when I was thus lost in witnessing this purifying lila, Ma suddenly turned round and threw a garland at me.

In relating this holy reminiscence, I am reminded of what happened on another occasion at Delhi Railway Station a few years back. Ma had alighted from the train and was proceeding towards the main exit, accompanied by a large number of devotees. I happened to be just behind Ma, and after we had covered about half the way to the exit, the thought suddenly came to me that there had been a time when Ramaji lived on this earth and those with a rare-good fortune moved about with Him. And now Ma was here in our midst like Ram and we in this group were today as fortunate as they had been in the past. I remember clearly that as this thought crossed my mind, Ma turned Her head back and glanced at me without stopping. I am



sure this was not done just to tell me that She knew my thoughts, but, more important, to provide me with yet another gracious lila, by recalling which I could remember Her over and over again.

### **Darsana of Joyous Surprise**

Because of the four children in our party we took breakfast at our lodging before having Ma's darsana at the puja site. One night after dinner, I announced that I would not eat anything the next morning before having Ma's darsana. So, next day, when Vijay Lakshmi and I went out to buy something for breakfast, we purchased, among other items, just five pieces of a sweet, one each for the children and their mother. On our return trip, after we had passed by Anand Bhawan, the ancestral residence of the Nehrus, I thought of pointing out the building to Vijay Lakshmi, and so turned round in the rickshaw to do so. But when I did this, I noticed in the distance a car coming in our direction with a person in gerua sitting near the driver. Thinking that perhaps Ma might be in the car, I asked the rickshaw-man to pull the rickshaw aside to allow us to get down. He did that and we had an excellent darsana of Ma.

Afterwards, when we returned to our lodging this news was given to everyone. All the same, I failed to appreciate that Ma had graciously fulfilled my self-imposed condition for eating in the morning. For, in my mind the thought had been firmly planted that since Ma's darsana could be had only in the pandal in the morning, the question of eating could not arise before going there. And so I asked all others to go ahead and have breakfast without me. However, someone—perhaps my youngest daughter Jai Lakshmi—protested at once, saying “But papa, you have had Ma's darsana already”, and it was only then that I realized what Ma had done and so joined them with joyous remembrance of the welcome unexpected darsana. what was still more remarkable about this incident was that among the food

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articles bought we found six pieces instand of live of the particular sweet mentioned above — one extra for me — a moving token of loving omnipotence.

### **Nature's Fury Controlled**

On Ashtami (eight day of Durga puja) there was such a sudden and heavy downpour in the evening that almost the entire pandal was thoroughly soaked with water. A canopy of tarpaulin had no doubt been fixed to protect the Pratima when it had been installed a couple of days earlier. But the torrential rain produced a dangerous sag in the tarpaulin. The Brahmacharis responsible for the puja brought bamboos and tried to push up the sagging part in an attempt to empty it of accumulated water. But the moment Ma saw this, She asked them to stop that at once and directed them instead to "Pray to the Devi" (Goddess).

I was watching all this and when I heard Ma's directive, I felt quite sure that the rain would not continue and that no harm would come to the Pratima. Firmly convinced of this I even told my son Ajay, when we had returned to our lodging, that the rain would soon stop that night. And that was exactly what happened. Ajoy asked me next morning, "How did you know that the rain would not continue, Papa?" And I replied, "Durga Puja in the presence of Ma is not an ordinary affair. If the rain had continued, the canopy would have collapsed and the Pratima, when exposed to rain would have been runed. "This, I was sure, could never happen when Ma had directed us to pray and not to reply rely or our feeble efforts to save it."

And so, on the Navmi (ninth day), puja and arati were performed freely and final function on Dashmi (Tenth day) was also celebrated as if nothing of any consequence had taken place at all — a miracle of Ma!

Our memorable visit to Allahabad ended on the 22nd of October. We returned to Delhi having thoroughly enjoyed our participation in the puja celebration, in obedi-

ence to mother's command. Of course, the happiest in our group was naturally my second daughter, Ajay Lakshmi, who had been included in the group of blessed girls chosen for kumari puja and had thereby become a recipient of some presents and special attention of Ma.

## Notice/Announcement

We sincerely regret to inform our Subscribers that from the new-year 1996, the annual subscription of our quarterly journal ANANDA-VARTA has been increased from Rs. 30/- to Rs. 40/- only, though the actual cost of printing the journal is much more. We were reluctantly compelled to effect this enhancement to contain the mounting inflation in the cost of paper, printing, binding, postage etc.

Those who have already paid the journal subscription in advance at the old rate of Rs. 30/- may kindly remit the balance difference of Rs. 10/- now at their earliest. The life subscription for the journal in any language has also been raised from 500/- to Rs. 750/- with effect from January 1996.

Please do note in the front page the increased rates for the foreign countries.

**Debabrata Pal**

*Secretary*

Publication Division

1st October, 1995

# Mother Anandamayi

**Mahamahopadhaya Gopinath Kaviraj M.A.**

*Late Principal, Government Sanskrit College*

*Benares*

It was on a fine autumn morning in 1928 that I first came to know the name of Mother Anandamayi. I was getting ready to go to college, I had not then retired, when the late Mahamahopadhaya Pt. Padmanath Vidyavinoda, M.A. came and met me in my house and informed me that Mother Anandamayi of Dacca had come to Benares. He presented me with a pamphlet written by the late Mr. Kunja Mohan Mukherji alias Swami Turiyananda on Mother and on the miraculous deliverance of his son from an impending snake-bite through Her grace. He said to me that the sight of Mother absorbed in Samadhi was really an ennobling one and he asked me to go and see Her, if possible. This commendation from the lips of a person who was known to be a fastidious critic of men and things and who spared none from his attacks, seemed to me to carry special weight.

Mother was staying then in the house of Kunja Babu at Ramapura. I made up my mind to see Her there. Accordingly I went to Kunja Babu's place in the evening, where both Kunja Babu and his elder brother Sasanka Babu (the late Swami Akhandananda) very kindly undertook to help me in having Mother's 'darsana'. They introduced me to Bholanathji immediately and the latter took me to a small room on the ground floor where I found Mother absorbed in Samadhi surrounded by a number of bhaktas. Bholanathji was anxious to see Her come back to Her senses soon and made various unsuccessful attempts to that end. Knowing that a trance must be allowed to run its full natural course and that every artificial method of breaking it up was fraught with grave risks, I asked him to desist from doing anything calculated to interrupt it. I

was waiting for Her return to normal consciousness, but noting that even in two or three hours Her condition did not come down to normal and apprehending that it might take an indefinitely long time, I returned home with the intention of coming and seeing Her next day.

It was on the 6th September that I paid my first visit to Mother. I came to learn that She had come a day or two earlier and also that this was the second time She had come to Benares. Her first visit having been in 1927 on Her way to Hardwar on the occasion of the Great Kumbha Fair.

I came back to Mother's place on the 7th as already arranged. In fact I came twice every day during Her short stay at Benares till the 12th September. I remember I did not miss a single day on this occasion. It is difficult to analyse after a lapse of over 17 years my first impressions of Mother and to explain in words what exactly I then felt. I can only say that what I actually saw with my own eyes far exceeded anything of a like nature I had ever seen before — it was a dream, as it were, realised in life. During the few days Mother was at Benares, Kunja Babu's house presented a spectacle of festive jubilation where an unending stream of visitors continued to flow in every day from before sunrise till after midnight. The doors of the house were kept open all the time and everybody was always welcome. High officials, pandits, university students, shopkeepers, sadhus, sannyasis, priests, lay men and men in the street — all flocked in numbers, each in his own convenient hour, to have a glimpse of Her darsana, to pay their respect to Her and if possible, to exchange with Her a few words. People of both sexes, of all ages and of all ranks were to be found in the crowd. Some came to have Her darsana only, a few to have their doubts solved, while others still were there out of mere curiosity. The beauty of it was that all felt a sort of magnetic charm in Mother's personality, so that those who had come once out of curiosity which had been satisfied but owing to some

mysterious attraction. The fact is that all felt that they were like little children in the presence of their own mother. The bleakness of cold formalities was replaced by the warmth of familiarity and intimacy. Mother behaved with them as with Her own children — dear, affectionate and very familiar. There was not the least reserve in Her look nor any note or constraint in Her expression. The whole atmosphere was one of a friendly fathering imbued with vivacity and joyousness.

Every evening a sort of informal meeting would be arranged in the courtyard where the visitors would be seated round Mother and ply Her with questions, She used to reply to each question resolving the doubts of the inquirers with a few short sentences in Her sweet and inimitable manner. As the enquirers hailed from different cultural levels and represented different intellectual and spiritual points of view, it is only natural that the questions should range over many different topics, and be of varying interest and value. It was wonderful how mother tackled all these questions with the same ease and spontaneity and without requiring a moment's reflection to deal with even the most abstruse and knotty problems before Her. Her replies were as a rule very pertinent, going straight to the heart of the questioner, couched in a language remarkable for its terseness and expressiveness. Every word that fell from Her lips carried weight; and humour too was not wanting when occasion demanded it. Mother as a conversationalist was seen at Her best in those days — it was a quality to which everybody who has had the privilege of talking with Her in later years is in a position to testify. It was interesting to observe that She maintained an attitude of strict reticence in regard to questions which were not bonafide in nature but were either academical or intended to elicit opinions likely to hurt the feelings of others.

Different 'Kirtan' parties vied with each other in sing-

ing daily before Her the glories of the Divine and His Name. Individual devotees with a melodious voice considered it a distinct honour (to themselves) to be permitted to regale Her with their songs.

On such occasions generally, when the music flowed spontaneously out of the deeper feelings of the singer's heart, and also on other occasions when in the course of conversations a crucial point was reached it was observed that Mother's appearance became aglow with bhava and the normal gave way to the supernormal. It seemed as if Her usual personality with which Her 'bhaktas' were familiar was replaced for a while by an altogether different one. At such moments various unusual phenomena were observed. 'Stotras' and 'mantras' of an extraordinary kind used to gush out of Her lips with a rapidity which made it practically impossible for any one to record them. The language of these utterances was unique; it was not, strictly speaking, Sanskrit nor even any of its derivative vernaculars, though there were a few Sanskrit words here and there. Several words were unfamiliar and even the so-called Sanskrit words did not perhaps convey their usual sense. Besides, very often monosyllabic 'Bijas', known or unknown, were interspersed. The pronunciation was so perfect that even a conjunct sound, made up of several consonants without any intervocalic linking, was distinctly audible. Sometimes on these occasions Mother melted into tears or ejaculations, or even would become rigid and pass into a trance-like condition.

The trance-like state was also induced in those days when 'bhaktas' offered flowers at Her feet or in other ways tried to propitiate Her. The response was immediate.

There was a difference of opinion at that time concerning the precise status of Mother. Some held that She was a Goddess in human form — Kali according to some, Durga according to others, Sarasvati or Radha according to others still. Some thought that She was a human aspirant, who

had attained perfection in this life, after a series of births during which Her spiritual progress had been continued. Others again entertained the view that she was a Brahmavadini as of yore or perhaps an Incarnation of the Divine come down to earth to relieve its sufferings. She was identified with Sukadeva by some and with Sri Krishna Himself by others. People of worldly nature used to think that some higher spiritual entity, human or celestial, was in possession of Her body and utilised it as an instrument to serve its own ends. A certain gentleman then living in a house adjacent to my own and working in one of the local High schools, went to the length of telling me that Her case was clearly one of obsession, though by a good spirit and that it was desirable to bring back the soul from the control of the spirit. This gentleman, who was old and had the reputation of being a practical Tantrist of long standing, claimed to have the power of restoring Her to Her normal condition, provided that Her husband and father were agreeable. He was under the impression that the appointed course or evolution of Her life was being impeded in this way and that in the interest of Her own spiritual welfare this setback should be removed. It goes without saying that no body cared to attach any importance to these words. One day, the great speaker, the late Swami Dayananda of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, came to see Mother and had a personal talk with Her. Though the interview of Swamiji was intended to be more or less of a private character, it was arranged that the late Sasanka Babu and myself would be allowed to be present on the occasion. Swamiji put several questions to Mother which She readily answered.

Thus :—

Swamiji, — Mother, what are you in fact ? People hold different views regarding you and no agreement seems to exist. What have you to say of yourself ?

Mother, — You want to know what I am. Well, I am



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what you consider me to be — not more nor less.

Swamiji, — What is the nature of your Samadhi? Is it 'Savikalpa' or 'Nirvikalpa'? Does mind then persist?

Mother, — Well, it is for you to decide this question. All that I can say is that in the midst of all apparent changes of state in body and mind, I feel, I am aware, that I am always the same. I feel that in me there is no change of states. Call it by any name you like. Is it Samadhi? Several such questions were put and answered.

These few days of Mother's stay at Benares sufficed to convince me of the greatness of Her personality and the unusual sanctity of Her life. I learnt Her past history from those around Her, including Bholanathji, Sister Gurupriya, Sasanka Babu and others, and I still remember with delight those happy occasions when Mother Herself condescended to narrate the story of Her early life and its development at Bajitpur and Dacca. It was a story of gripping interest to us all.

This story which relates to Her earlier life at Astagram, Bajitpur and Dacca, much of which has since been recorded by Her admirers and devoted followers and the story of Her unique personality.

The greatest things that struck me most in those days in Her was Her personality. Her physical features were magnetic. Her smiling countenance, the sweetness of Her expression, the simplicity of Her life and behaviour, Her unassuming and genial manners, the cordiality and warmth of Her relationship with all, coupled with Her extraordinary holy life and wisdom, made Her an object of universal attraction and adoration.

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# My First Darsana of Anandamayi Ma

Anil Ganguly

It was one of the coldest nights in Northern India — January 31, 1947. The Calcutta-bound Delhi Express was about to leave Delhi Junction Railway Station. I was rushing frantically from one end of the platform to the other in search of accommodation on the train. The porter led me to a vacant compartment and then went away to his other duties. I occupied one of the upper berths — a fact which eventually proved to be of great significance.

Soon after, some important-looking gentlemen claimed that the compartment had been reserved for Anandamayi Ma and I realized that law, equity, convention — everything was against me. I deserved to be turned out of the compartment as a trespasser. However, I was not; on the contrary, I over heard the sweet voice of a Bengali lady — “Leave *Baba* (the poor child) alone; he is so tired!” I could not see the lady, but was agreeably surprised and deeply touched by the sympathetic tone of her voice. The sense of the words uttered by her was comforting, the sound simply captivating. My first impulse was to be chivalrous and to leave the compartment. But expediency prompted me to feign sleep. In fact, I did fall asleep within a few minutes, not caring for my fellow-passengers, nor did they bother themselves about me.

Early the following morning I awoke, refreshed by sound sleep. The glow in the eastern sky indicated that sunrise was near at hand. From my upper berth I could see the lower one on the opposite side occupied by a motherly lady with a radiant face and a pair of sparkling eyes. A cluster of her black silken hair was overflowing her pillow and swinging in rhythm with the movement of the train. Her gracious gaze, focused on me, seemed to penetrate into

every fibre of my being. It was so loving, so soothing! I was told later on that she was Anandamayi Ma and that by such a gaze she often made, as it were, an X-Ray examination of a person's personality. Be that as it may, I seemed to read a mystic message in that gaze — a message of love and peace. My eyes were automatically closed in silent salutation. After some time I recovered from the bewildering effect of the first *darsana* and opened my eyes to find the Mother's face covered. I was disappointed.

As the day dawned, I came down from my upper berth. I wanted a seat on the berth below mine. It was occupied by a lady saint who looked the very picture of peacefulness. Later on, I was told that she was Didima, the mother of Anandamayi Ma. Didima was then immersed in meditation. She did not speak to me but offered me a seat on her berth and then sprinkled holy Ganga water on my head. I appreciated her courtesy, but not the chilling effect of the drops of water that had moistened my forehead that cold winter morning. However, I accepted the kindly gesture without protest and quietly sat down.

Soon I realized, to my dismay, that my fellow-passengers were all ladies and I was the only male in the compartment, I felt extremely embarrassed and out of place. The Mother continued to remain covered up as before and was absolutely motionless. The impression of my first *darsana* kept my mind fully absorbed. Barring the noise of the running train, there was complete silence. Didima suddenly broke it by mildly warning me that I should not touch certain of her belongings. I was not quite familiar with the rules governing the orthodox Hindu way of life; naturally, my uneasiness in the company of my fellow-passengers increased. Concluding that discretion would be the better part of valour, I packed up my bedding and prepared myself for a change of compartment.

Meanwhile, I noticed that the Mother had uncovered her face and was sitting on her berth, tenderly looking at

me. The train stopped at a wayside station and I tried to leave the compartment. However, the Mother would not let me go, Gently she asked me, "Where are you going?" Instead of replying to her question, I simply apologized to her for my trespass into a ladies' compartment. She uttered two words in an East Bengal dialect offering me a seat beside her. I gratefully accepted the kindly gesture and was thrilled with a peculiar sensation of love, peace and joy. The Delhi Express moved on slowly. Sitting so close to the Mother, I had the delightful feeling that I was being caressed by my own mother. It was a unique experience indeed! The Mother's very presence inhibited speech. For some time there was no exchange of words between us until she broke the silence with several questions of a personal nature, and then we talked on various subjects, which did not include religion or spirituality.

Occasionally, our conversation was enlivened by the intermittent intervention of a middle-aged lady with an impressive appearance and an imposing personality. Later on, I came to know that she was Gurupriya Devi (popularly known as Didi, that is to say, elder sister), authoress of *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi*. On recalling the next turn of events I blush at my impertinence and tactlessness. Didi offered me *prasada* (sacramental food offering) at a time when I was hungry. However, there was a snag in her offer. She added that she was waiting for me to change my clothes (in accordance with the convention observed by orthodox Hindus) before I took *prasada*. I told her that I was not in the habit of changing clothes in the morning, adding that I should be much obliged if I got some food from her, otherwise I would have my breakfast elsewhere. My apathy to *prasada* was bad enough and my attitude worse still. Didi looked sullen. The Mother, however, seemed to be indulgent. She observed with a smile that the rules regarding changing of clothes were not for me. This one gesture from her was enough for Didi to be all smiles and she gave

me *prasada*. I appreciated the Mother's liberal outlook and enjoyed the delicacies received from Didi.

Our conversation, temporarily interrupted by the *prasada* episode, was resumed by the Mother. Without any preamble she asked me to sing a song, and I immediately sang a Tagore song which was followed by an unprecedented experience — the Mother seemed to be pleased with my performance and asked me to sing more songs. For a normal listener one musical recital by me would have been more than enough. Incidentally, I told the Mother how several years ago, my prospects of becoming a great musician had been ruined by a well-meaning connoisseur of music who regularly used to listen to my daily voice-training practice. Once he wondered whether I thought that my voice was in tune with the accompanying stringed instrument. Hearing my confident answer in the affirmative, he remarked in despair, "Well, if that be your assessment, I am afraid music is not in your line." Thereupon I bade good-bye to music.

I had previously narrated this sad experience of mine to several persons. Every listener enjoyed the fun, laughed at my cost for a few seconds and there the matter ended. But the Mother's reaction was simply amazing and almost alarming. An insignificant event, or rather an adverse opinion, spoiling the doubtful prospect of my becoming a great musician seemed to prove hilarious enough for the Mother to create quite a scene. She suddenly burst into a loud laughter which continued until she was half exhausted. After a short pause, she started laughing again and would not stop until she was almost out of breath. This fit of convulsive laughter went on relapsing at short intervals. The Mother's face turned red, tears rolled down her cheeks and at times she seemed to be almost reaching to point of suffocation. All this was terrifying beyond measure. Didi sternly stared at me with a look of consternation and I felt I was supposed to be responsible for the

mischievous. I failed to realize how I was at all to blame. I never had the faintest idea that my simple narration could possibly lead to such a serious climax, I had a mixed feeling of embarrassment and apprehension at this unforeseen calamity. I regretted my original decision to continue travelling in the ladies' compartment, and now I learnt, from practical experience, that the Mother was absolutely unpredictable. Didi gently suggested to me that the mischief could be remedied by offering prayer to the Mother. I considered it worthwhile to experiment. With all the sincerity I could command, I prayed to God (and not to the Mother as advised) that nothing untoward might happen to the strange lady. Instantaneously the Mother again became as charming as before — a gently smile replaced her roaring, erratic laughter and the alarming symptoms completely disappeared.

The train stopped at an important station — Fatehpur, if I remember aright. Several devotees forced their way into our compartment and prostrated themselves in salutation to the Mother. I thought it was also my duty to do so. As the train left the station I bowed to the Mother in reverence and was about to touch her feet when Didi admonished me indicating that my conduct had been objectionable. I could not understand why, as it is the time-honoured custom of Hindus to touch the feet of a superior person as a mark of respect for him or her. I did not know if there was any special reason for not touching the Mother's feet. I imploringly looked at the Mother, expecting support from her. Had she not already rescued me from several awkward situations? On this occasion even the Mother did not come to my rescue. In fact, she seemed to approve of Didi's objection. She would not permit me to touch her feet. I felt hurt. Had I not begun inwardly to regard her as my mother? What did she mean by depriving a child of its natural right and privilege to touch its mother's feet? Anyway, I quickly finished a formal saluta-

tion from a distance and immediately thereafter I left the Mother's berth for the one on the opposite side.

Soon after, my heart leapt with joy when suddenly the voice of the Mother reached my ears — "Why not come to this berth?" I looked at her and noticed an apparently mischievous smile on her face. I came back to the Mother and she resumed talking to me, as if nothing had happened. This was enough for me to forget my childish pique. The Mother asked me whether my people would expect me in Calcutta on the morrow. I said, "No Mother". "That's very good!" observed she. I failed to understand the implication of such a remark. Her second question was: "Is anyone coming to meet you at the Railway Station?" I said, "No." The Mother repeated her first remark, "That's very good!" I was unpleasantly surprised, because a repetition of the same remark seemed to confirm her apparently unsympathetic attitude. A mother who alternately attracts and repels seemed an enigma to me. Indeed, her "That's very good!" remained a mystery to me for the time being. Within a few minutes, however, I discovered that it had a deep significance for my future life.

The train stopped at Allahabad, the Mother's destination. I was about to bid her good-bye, when Didi told me that I was to break my journey at Allahabad. Without my knowledge or consent a lower berth from Allahabad to Calcutta had already been reserved for me on the Bombay mail, the next convenient train for Calcutta. I helplessly saw my luggage being carried to the platform by two bright-looking boys who had come from the city of Allahabad to receive the Mother at the Railway Station. I got off the train as instructed. Apparently I had no option in the matter. The Mother asked me to get into her car. I did so and sat by her side. Our destination was the famous Triveni, the confluence of the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati. *Ardha-Kumbha Mela*, a periodical congregation of saints and sages, was taking place there. The "Ma

Anandamayi Camp", consisting of a large number of tents, had been set up especially for the occasion under the supervision of Dr. Pannalal, I.C.S., since deceased.

I stayed at Allahabad as the Mother's guest for about eight hours. She introduced me to Dr. Pannalal, who treated me with paternal care, accommodated me in his own tent and told me in details his rich experience at the feet of the Mother. Then he took me to the dining place for *prasada*. The food served there was more delicious than any I had ever tested. What added to its charm was the fact that the Mother served one of the items and smilingly told me that I should not feel shy nor hesitate to ask for more, if I wished. Her hospitality was unexcelled. It deeply touched my heart.

After *prasada* Dr. Pannalal again took me to his tent. I asked him many questions regarding religion from a scientific point of view. He genuinely tried to be helpful to me. From his experience he warned me against a strictly rationalistic approach and advised me that in the spiritual field there was no alternative to faith. Though not fully convinced by his argument, I was touched by the ring of sincerity in his words which seemed to carry conviction. His views were supported by some elderly devotees, benefited by their long association with the Mother. I was much impressed by the narration of the experience of these venerable persons as recipients of the Mother's grace. It set me thinking from a new point of view. My mind was thus being prepared for the climax yet to come.

The time for my departure was drawing nigh. The sun was sinking down to rest. Its mellowed rays were reflected on the Mother as she was proceeding from her tent to ours. Her face, as seen by me at dawn, was charming; at dusk majestic. The Mother came right up to me and blessed me with her affectionate touch. Then she uttered a few sentences which touch my soul. Her words, too sacred to be repeated and too personal to be disclosed, kindled in me a new type of spiritual aspiration and a new awareness of my duty as a human being. This was the beginning of a new chapter in my life.



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To the enquiry whether diksa (Initiation by Mantra) is necessary, Mataji replied :

When diksa is necessary it comes about at the appointed time. One should try to keep one's mind on the thought of God and have unshakable faith that at the right moment he will give all that is needful.

**Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee**

By singing Rama Nama, one earns million times more 'Punya' (virtue) than one can earn by studying all the vedas and by doing japa of all the mantras. If one even once utters or even remember Rama Nama at the time of death, his spirit pierces through the solar system and reaches the Param Dham.

**Sri Sri Sitaramdas Onkarnath**

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# The Emerging Picture of Priorities in Mataji's Teachings

Bithika Mukherjee

## Shashanka Mohan's Samnyasa

Mataji's wanderings had taken her to a wayside temple in Salogra near Solan in late March 1934. There is a small cave attached to the temple. It is so small that nobody can lie straight or stand upright in it. Mataji accompanied by Bhaiji and Hansa Datt from Dehradun occupied this cave, a few miles beyond Solan and a little way below the main motor-road between Kalka and Simla. Hari Ramji's brother Madan Mohan Joshi was a doctor in Solan. He already knew about Mataji and came to pay his respects to her. He found Mataji sitting in this cave, looking completely at ease and her usual radiant self. Recently there had been a snowfall in the hills and it was bitterly cold in the cave but Mataji did not seem to feel any discomfort. Solan is the capital of Baghat State. H. H. Raja Durga Singh was known to be a Prince of many sterling qualities and also of a religious nature. He was very devoted to a sage called Sogi Baba who was residing in Solan at the time. Although the Raja had heard about Mataji, he, in the beginning was not keen to have *darsana* of 'a woman saint'.

Mataji was invited by Dr. Joshi to come to Solan but after a few days at Salogra Mataji travelled to Hardwar. She sent word to Shashanka Mohan at Dacca to join her in his hill town. She also sent a message to Swami Sankaranandaji, a new devotee in Varanasi, inviting him to come to Hardwar. There was need for Sankaranandaji because Mataji had a sudden *kheyala* that Shashanka Mohan should enter an ascetic order. Sankaranandaji was a *samnyasi* and it could be presumed that he would know about the ceremonial act of renunciation to be undertaken by those who wished to enter an ascetic order.

The organisation into ten ascetic orders of *sannyasa* is traditionally ascribed to Adi Sankaracharya (8th century A.D.). Before the advent of Sankaracharya, the Hindu ascetics were not organised into orders with specific mantras, imparted and received in a ritualistically specified form. The candidate for renunciation has to apply to a guru; if the latter is satisfied then alone he may be initiated and received into the brotherhood of that order. The disciple has first to make up his mind to dissociate himself completely from the world; to relinquish all ties of family relationships, all sense of obligations and duties. In short it is a new life begun in complete freedom in order to make an existential reality of this freedom so that he may attain the Self-fulfilment stated in the *Upanisads*.

Mataji was full of enthusiasm for this project and was very pleased when Shashanka Mohan accompanied by Didi arrived in Hardwar in answer to her letter. She was staying at a *dharmasala* and everyone gathered there in response to her summons. She said to Shashanka Mohan, "Some arrangements had been made at Solan for us, but I had this sudden *kheyala* and so we came away to Hardwar instead. These holy places are conducive to *sadhana* and attract devout and holy men. I have already suggested to Sankarananda that he should look for a suitable Guru for you. *Chaitra Sankranti* the last day of the Bengali year (13th or 14th of April) is an auspicious day. Time is short, so all arrangements must be expedited."

Shashanka Mohan was taken aback at these words. He was not prepared for this radical transformation of his life; moreover it was unthinkable for him to bow his head to some, to him nameless, Guru at this stage in his life. Rather unhappily, he answered, "I cannot think of any other Guru. I do not think I can commit myself to anyone else. I have always believed and hoped that you will guide me. Why do you now ask me to accept another Guru?" Mataji answered gently, "you know that I cannot confer

*samnyasa* on you," to which he unhesitatingly replied, "But I have no need of *anything* that you may not do for me".

Mataji then said quietly, "Well, in that case, there is no necessity for these arrangements. Nothing need be done after all." She became grave and said no more. The cheerful look with which she had opened the conversation vanished completely.

It was evening. Shashanka Mohan withdrew from Mataji's presence and was seen to go out and sit on the bank of the swiftly flowing Ganges for many hours. On the other side of the river wooded hills rise to great heights. What thoughts did he grapple with? He was a proud man, more accustomed to command than to obey. The prospect of giving up every prop and support of a long and familiar way of life and to have to embark on a voyage into the unknown must have shaken him to the core of his being. He was the head of a large family, almost a clan. Perhaps he debated whether it would be right to put himself out of their reach for ever. He would have no duties towards anyone anymore. He must have thought about his daughter also. He could not be a guardian to her and thus she would be alone in the world in the way of life she had chosen for herself. These however are conjectures. He did not share his thoughts with anybody. What happened was that he came to Mataji late at night, touched her feet and said quietly, "I blurted out the thoughts that came unbidden to my mind. I am now ready to carry out your *kheyala* and to do as you say."

Mataji's countenance shone brightly; she was immediately full of plans for the important event. She told him, "you have no reason to think that you will have another Guru. There is but One Reality."

Sri Mangal Giri Maharaj, a *samnyasi* of great eminence in Hardwar, agreed to initiate Shashanka Mohan into the order of the Giris. The disciple is required to perform the last of the ritualistic *yajnas* renouncing con-

nections with the world. In the sacrificial fire is consigned all modes of understanding of oneself as an individual, his society, family and even his own caste and creed. The "I" is sought to be set free from all limitations so that it may seek to identify itself with the One and thus with the whole world. A *sannyasi* belongs to no one and to no place and therefore to everyone and everywhere.

Mataji and a handful of her companions watched this solemn ceremony, the highest pinnacle of achievement for a man born and bred in the Hindu tradition. Shashanka Mohan after leading a full and useful life in the world, was eminently fitted now to renounce it for its greater benefit. In the Indian tradition it is believed that there is a suitable time for different tasks in human life. The role of the ascetic is not less important than that of the teacher or the householder or the student. Mataji, by her *kheyala* for Shashanka Mohan, seemed to have endorsed the ancient tradition. So on Chaitra Sankranti 1934, Shashanka Mohan was initiated into *sannyasa* by Sri Mangal Giriji Maharaj of Kankhal. His new name was Swami Akhandananda Giri. When, dressed in ochre robes, he came to make his obeisance to Mataji after the ceremony, she said to him, "you have so far rendered constant and unremitting (*akhandā*) service to your family and to your profession. From now on devote yourself with the same constancy to Self-realization."

It can be seen easily that Mataji accords the greatest respect to anyone who wants to be an ascetic. However she does not encourage people to give up their duties in the name of religion. In this context an incident may be recorded here which took place in Dehradun some years later : While Mataji was walking down the road from Mussoorie, she saw a man, obviously an ascetic, standing quietly on one side of the gate of the Kishenpur Ashram. She spoke to him in Bengali and when he answered it was realised that he was a Bengali although in appearance he

did not look like one. She invited him in and asked him to have his evening meal in the Ashram. After the meal he came and sat with the handful of other people near Mataji.

Mataji asked him,

“Are you a *samnyasi* ?”

“No.”

“Then why are you dressed like one ?”

“For all practical purposes I am. I have renounced the world.”

“In order to carry on your *sadhana* for Self-realization ?”

“I have not thought about it. For the present I wish to have nothing to do with the world.”

“Does it mean that you have left home for personal reasons and do not wish to go back ?”

“Yes.”

“In that case you are practising a grave deception on the public and doing no good to yourself either.”

“I have nothing to do with anybody; it is nobody’s concern what I do with my life.”

“That is not correct. Your appearance as an ascetic means something to the people. It is our tradition to support a man engaged in intensive *sadhana* because he has no other means of support. He has given up his own will toward self-support, depending solely on the Divine Will. The people choose to support him as they would any other who was selflessly engaged in some activity for the benefit of the entire society. This garb is not to be adopted to solve personal problems or to escape from difficult situations. If you are not engaged in *sadhana* to the exclusion of all other concerns, you have no right to accept food and shelter from the lay public who seeing your robes will give automatically without judging your bonafides.”

The young man, who seemed to belong to middle class society and to be educated, kept quiet. Mataji said to him that he could stay in the Ashram as long as he liked, but

it would be better for him to go home and face whatever situation he had run away from. The next morning the young man was not to be seen, so probably he had chosen to follow Mataji's advice.

On another occasion, a young man belonging to one of the most well-known industrial families of the country, came to ask Mataji about his future way of life. At that time he was the disciple of one of the very respected sadhus of Varanasi, and had lived like an ascetic for many years with his Guru. He had been asked by his Guru to take up the duties of a householder, so he was faced with this problem of giving up his chosen way of life after almost twelve years. He wished to know from Mataji his duty under these peculiar circumstances. Mataji said to him, "I see no problem. At all times you are required to obey your Guru, if you know him as such. If he has asked you to get married and work in the world, that is what you should do. Where is the scope for hesitation?"

After some time the young man went away obviously not quite satisfied by Mataji's words. Mataji in tone of reflection said to the small group of people who had witnessed this scene; "You see, this path of spiritual endeavour is difficult and full of subtle pitfalls. This is the reason why a guide is required at all times. Sometimes, when one is engaged in *sadhana* one begins to enjoy the many benefits which accrue from it; the subtle hankerings after name and fame as a sadhu may also cloud the judgment of a disciple and prevent him from seeing his duty clearly."

Mataji at all times is very discriminating about recommending renunciation to those who seek her advice and permission for it. A few of her answers may be referred to here to understand the place she gives to his highest stage in *sadhana*.

"If you ask me whether you should or not, I shall say that the time has not come for you to do so since the

question arises in your mind whether you should or not.”

“The call of renunciation must be felt as a compulsion. A man who hears this call leaves all behind even as a dry leaf falls from its branch. Renunciation is not for overcoming a sense of duty or for entering a different kind of world. Renunciation must come spontaneously. Does a man debate whether he should escape from a house on fire?”

Thus we see that although Mataji gives the greatest priority to a life of *sadhana* she does not advocate it by extending the possibility of it indiscriminately. When her *kheyala* came that Shashanka Mohan should be initiated into *sannyasa*, a more suitable candidate for this high status could not have been chosen. He had rendered exemplary service as a doctor all his professional life; he had shouldered ably the burden of his family for many years and yet, when he came under the influence of Mataji late in life, he started on a course of *sadhana* which required concentration, fortitude and above all perseverance. His complete reliance on Mataji and his obedience to her *kheyala* belong to a category by itself. He was not a man without a sense of humour. His grave countenance hid a very buoyant spirit. In his last years he saw many changes in Mataji's life and the number of devotees increasing beyond anyone's wildest imagination. He was never out of his depth in the new situations and till the last days of his life stood steadfast in the service of his Guru as he knew her to be.

Perhaps it will not be out of place to record here what he once said to the present author a few years before his death in Varanasi, “Stay with Ma in your thoughts, do not forget her. You are a child and so you may not know and understand what Ma is, but we have had the privilege of seeing her in her divine form, so I tell you that she is the One to be worshipped.” These words spoken lightly enough by the solemn looking old man, who as a rule confined himself to stories for the young who surrounded him, made



an impression which has lasted to this day.

After the *samnyasa* of Shashanka Mohan, Mataji again started on her wanderings in and around Dehradun. She would come and go as freely as a bird; whoever happened to be near her would suffice as an escort. She did not travel alone, more out of consideration for the feelings of her people than for any other reason. If she had walked out alone from a place, they would have been anxious and worried about her well-being and safety and she would have invited undue attention as well. It is never Mataji's way to flout the proprieties obtaining amongst the people who surround her. Within this framework of conventional-ity she follows her own unpredictable *kheyala*. It also must be said that Mataji's behaviour never was such as to be doubtful, displeasing or objectionable in any way; if this is a limitation then so it must be named; the good alone is always exemplified in her were united so closely by accord-ing to Mataji a place in their hearts and by cherishing her undemanding and yet so richly rewarding presence in their midst.

During this time a greater unity was created between the devotees of Bengal and those who had come to know Mataji since her moving to Uttar Pradesh. Very shortly this community would be augmented by people from the Himalayas, Gujarat and South India as well.

### Maroni

Mataji and Bholanath had visited Tarapeeth in the winter of 1935 before coming to Dacca. From Dacca they went to Paruldia, the village home of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh who used to be the Trustee of Shahbagh Gardens in Dacca, where Mataji and Bholanath had lived for four years. A huge crowd of men, women and children went along with Mataji. Like in old times, there was kirtan and much festive activity to welcome the concourse of devotees. From Paruldia Mataji proceeded to Calcutta. The jubilant

mood of the devotees of this town which Mataji was visiting after many years was dimmed by the illness and death of Kshitish Guha. He and his two brothers had been foremost amongst the people attached to Mataji from the earliest times. Their house in Ballygunge had long served as a headquarters for news of Mataji and also as a meeting place for Satsang and Kirtan for the devotees of Calcutta. The depressed atmosphere was dispelled by Mataji's presence yet the sense of loss was keenly felt by everyone.

Mataji returned to Tarapeeth. As mentioned earlier, Tarapeeth is famous for its cremation ground of great sanctity. It is a desolate spot not frequented by ordinary travellers but Mataji was quite well-known in this temple-town. Hindu as well as Muslim villagers crowded round her wherever she happened to be. An old Muslim peasant seemed specially close to her. Whenever she visited his hut he would call his two wives, saying, "Come outside and receive my daughter". They would then with great satisfaction and pleasure make arrangements for Mataji to sit and talk with them.

For some time past Mataji had had the *kheyala* that Maroni and Didi should be invested with the sacred thread. Girls are not initiated like boys in Brahmin families. There was no precedent in this matter. Enquiries about scriptural injunctions regarding this matter had been made in Varanasi; the pandits had said that although no such tradition prevailed, there was no injunction to the contrary either. Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj, when appealed to, declared that Mataji's *kheyala* itself was enough, no further corroboration about its legitimacy was required. Thus, according to Mataji's *kheyala*, the sacred thread ceremony for Maroni and Didi was performed on January 14, 1936 at Tarapeeth. They were initiated into the exclusive *Gayatri mantra* of the brahmins. Maroni's initiation was done by Bholanath, because traditionally the father is the *diksa-guru* for the sacred mantra. Since Didi's father was now a

samnyasi, his privilege was given to Sri Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya a revered old Brahmin, devoted to Mataji.<sup>1</sup>

Mataji also suggested at that time that Maroni's long standing engagement to Chinu should be brought to a conclusion by their marriage. Bholanath had just returned from a pilgrimage to Gangasagar. He was a little saddened at the prospect of the marriage because it meant that Maroni would go away to her husband's place. He was very fond of her and looked upon her as his daughter. He felt a trifle disturbed also, not knowing how all the requirements of a traditional marriage ceremony could be contrived in such a remote region. But he need not have worried because by a concurrence of events the marriage actually came to be performed with every kind of elaborate pomp and ceremony dear to the heart of the womenfolk of Bengal. Some ladies from Calcutta were present who with great enthusiasm undertook the toilet of the bride and the decorating of the place of the *yajna*. Since in the Indian community marriages are by arrangement the ceremonies are more a social festival and religious commitment rather than of a contractual nature. Everybody participates in an Indian marriage in some role or other. The bridegroom is to be received by a group of men and made welcome; much help is needed to make arrangements for the *yajna* which is performed to confirm the marriage vows, and then the newly married couple are to be entertained by members of the family and friends and thus a hilarious and wakeful wedding night is ensured. The tradition of wide participation and extensive celebrations is perhaps necessary to confirm the news of the particular marriage and make it socially acceptable.

Maroni was duly married to Chinu amidst an air of gaity and rejoicing; the mood of aloof asceticism which characterises Tarapeeth was completely submerged under

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<sup>1</sup>In subsequent years several other girls have received this status of the twice-bron. An obsolete tradition was revived by Mataji.

the auspicious sounds of the conch-shell and repeated *uludhvani*.<sup>1</sup>

The inevitable day of parting came. Bholanath gave his blessings to the young couple and sadly bade them farewell. Many of his relations had come to Tarapeeth specially for this occasion. In the perspective of later years, it seems that Mataji by her *kheyala* helped Bholanath in discharging his obligations before resuming again his life of *sadhana* in the northern district of India.<sup>2</sup>

In February 1936, Mataji left Tarapeeth to its silent contemplation of death, and departed with her devotees in a convoy of fifteen to twenty bullock-carts to the nearest Railway Station of Rampurhat. The slow journey through the moonlit night was made memorable by the melodious singing of Bhramara. Mataji herself joined in the kirtana at times. At Rampurhat Mataji and her companions boarded the train for Serampore. From Serampore Mataji travelled in quick succession through Navadweep, Bahrampur and Tatanagar. All these towns saw Mataji after a long time and tumultuous scenes of welcome were repeated everywhere.

On the way to Vindhychal from Tatanagar, Mataji stopped for a few hours only at Howrah Railway Station. Calcutta was already notorious for its unmanageable crowds and now that Mataji was not staying in the city, everyone had come to the station. Only Jatish Guha (the elder brother of Kshitish Guha who had passed away) was conspicuous by his absence although the rest of the family was there. His grief over the untimely death of his brother had alienated him a little from Mataji. Just before the train started he came up to Mataji and after doing *pranama*, moved aside in a very uncharacteristic grave and aloof manner. Mataji looked at him with great understanding

<sup>1</sup>A kind of sound produced by the tongue moved inside the mouth by Bengali women on all auspicious occasions.

<sup>2</sup>Maroni has been widowed recently. She has now chosen to stay with Mataji in the Ashrams.

and said very gently : "Don't forget that Jyotish (Bhaiji) at least is your friend. Continue to write to him and give him news of yourself and your family." Mataji meant that if he could not bear to hold communication with her, he should at least keep in touch with Bhaiji. Jatish Guha could not nurse his hurt after these words and came and wept near Mataji like a child and thus was able to lighten the burden of his grief.

After leaving Calcutta, Mataji spent a couple of days at Bethia, the village home of Dr. Girin Mitra. From there she passed through various towns, stopping for a while in some of them as her *kheyala* arose. She visited Vindhyachal, Allahabad, Chitrakoot, Agra, Mathura, Vrindaban and Delhi before coming back to Dehradun.

In the meantime an Ashram for Mataji was being constructed in Kishenpur, about five miles away from the city, on the road to Mussoorie. Hari Ram Joshi, Hansa Datt Tiwari and other people of the region were keen to have a place for Mataji to stay in. They pressed Bholanath and Mataji to come to the new Ashram where they wished to perform the puja for Mataji's 40th birthday. In the previous year the birthday celebrations had been held on this piece of land by the devotees of Dehradun. This year they had the pleasure of seeing Mataji in an Ashram where she could stay in some comfort for as long as she liked. The inns attached to temples as well as *dharamsalas* expect pilgrims to move on after a few days; they are not used as permanent residences by anyone.

Mataji and Bholanath were welcomed in the new Ashram in May 1936 amidst a festival of great rejoicings. Manmatha Nath Chatterjee, performed *tithi-puja* in Dehradun for the first time. This year the birthday celebrations were observed in Calcutta as well and in Dacca it had already become a tradition. Dehradun also experienced the flocking together of a crowd of men, women and children from remote towns who became one big family.

Bholanath assisted by four others performed a yajna. In Mataji's proximity such religious rites easily came within the reach of the ordinary man. Rites which people had read about in books only or even never had the occasion to think about, now seemed a natural and rewarding activity. Hindu festivals in all their colourful details came to be as much part of Mataji's way of communicating with the people who crowded round her day and night as the philosophical discourses by which she would gently engage the attention of those who had questions in their hearts.

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### **Jagaddhatri Puja at Matri Mandir**

**Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society**

Calcutta Zonal Office, 'Matri-Mandir'

57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta - 700019

Phone - 74-8504

Dear Brother/Sister,

We have great pleasure in informing you that we have organised Jagaddhatri Puja on the auspicious day of 31st October, 1995 Tuesday (Bengali 13th Kartik, 1402) and on the following day i.e on the 1st November 1995, Wednesday (Bengali 14th Kartik, 1402) with Special Pujas of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, Shree Shree Narayanji & Shree Shree Onkarnathji in Matri Mandir. After the Purnahuti the assembled devotees will be entertained with Prasads.

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

Yours

In the Service of Ma

Members (Executive Council)

Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society

Dated : 7th September, 1995

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# Sai Ram Sahay

## Part - II

No humanity without morality  
No morality without humility  
No humility without spirituality  
No spirituality without divinity

*Humanity* : In Uddhav Gita Chap XII V21 Lord Krishna prescribed common duty for all humanity.

21. Non-injuri, truthfulness, freedom from theft, lust, anger and greed, and an effort to do what is agreeable and beneficial to all creatures — this is the common duty of all castes.

In Bhagavatam Narad Muni instructed Vyasdeva to help 8 types of human beings.

tvam apy adabhra-sruta visrutam vibhoh  
samapyate yena vidam bubhutsitam  
prakhyahi dukhair muhur arditatmanam  
sanklesa-nirvanam usanti nanyatha

### Translation

Please, therefore, describe the almighty Lord's activities which you have learned by your vast knowledge of the Vedas, for that will satisfy the hankerings of great learned men and at the same time mitigate the miseries of the masses of common people who are always suffering from material pangs. Indeed, there is no other way to get out of such miseries.

### Purport

Sri Narada Muni from practical experience definitely asserts that the prime solution of all problems of material work is to broadcast very widely the transcendental

glories of the Supreme Lord. There are four classes of good men, and there are four classes of bad men also. The four classes of good men acknowledge the authority of the almighty God, and therefore such good men (1) when they are in difficulty, (2) when they are in need of money, (3) when they are advanced in knowledge and (4) when they are inquisitive to know more and more about God, intuitively take shelter of the Lord. As such, Naradaji advises Vyasadeva to broadcast the transcendental knowledge of God in terms of the vast Vedic knowledge which he had already attained.

As far as the bad men are concerned, they are also four in number: (1) those who are simply addicted to the mode of progressive fruitive work and thus are subjected to the accompanying miseries, (2) those who are simply addicted to vicious work for sense satisfaction and so suffer the consequence, (3) those who are materially very much advanced in knowledge, but who suffer because they do not have the sense to acknowledge the authority of the almighty Lord, and (4) the class of men who are known as atheists and who therefore purposely hate the very name of God, although they are always in difficulty.

Sri Naradaji advised Vyasadeva to describe the glories of the Lord just to do good to all eight classes of men, both good and bad. Srimad-Bhagavatam is therefore not meant for any particular class of men or sect. It is for the sincere soul who actually wants his own welfare and peace of mind.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the First Canto, Fifth Chapter, of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, entitled "Narada's Instructions on Srimad-Bhagavatam for Vyasadeva."

On the basis of the above statements it can be inferred that, those who do not follow morality they can not be called human beings.

Then, what is morality. It is, Dharama which has



been variously translated as religion, law duty religious ordinance or site Code of conduct so on. It is Dharma that upholds the people. In Hinduism four kinds of Purushasthas are (1) Dharma (2) Artha (3) Kama (4) Moksha. Dharma is prime factor. If we have to collect Artha (Wealth) it should be within the limit of Dharma. If we have desire (Kama) it should also follow Dharma. Even achievement of Moksha should be on the basis of Dharma.

Since Vedic period we are following Karma and Dharma theory.

### **Dharma and Karma**

We have thus far discussed only what morality is, not why we should be moral. We now return to the latter question with which began our discussion. Why should we be moral? Two kinds of answers, one pragmatic and the other existential, have been provided by the four major world cultures: the Hellenic, the Hebraic, the Indian and the Chinese.

The pragmatic view is that there is a moral order or law governing the universe and only by living in harmony with it can man attain peace and prosperity; disharmony will lead to suffering. This is the reason why we should be moral.

In India this view has prevailed from prehistoric to present times. The belief during the Vedic period was that there is a single 'cosmo-theanthropic' order which governed both physical events and moral experiences; it was called rta.

How to live in harmony with rta was the chief moral concern of the Vedic man. He found this could be done by converting life into a rhythm of exchange between individual life and universal life. Man must return, through selfless work, all that he receives from the universe. This refunding was called yajna (sacrifice) and was symbolized

by the ritual tending of fire in the altar which everyman maintained. Even the gods had to follow rta which was independent of and superior to everything.

The practice of yajna led to the discovery of the law of Karma, according to which every action produces a cosmic effect (called apurva) which returns in due course to the doers as karmaphala or the fruit of his action; good action brings happiness, bad action brings suffering. This belief converted rta as a flexible harmony and divine-human participation into a rigid draconian law called Dharma which was beyond human control. After the Vedic period the moral life of Indians has been dominated by the fear of Karma and the anxiety to escape from it. It might have been partly caused by the influence of Buddhism and Jainism but one can see it clearly in the Mahabharata. Few people now have the hope that good actions will bring prosperity and happiness (this is partly because of the notion that the purpose of virtuous action is only to purify the mind) but most people have the fear that evil actions will produce evil results. So, to the question why we should be moral, most Indians would answer, 'For fear of Karma'.

The morality is an imperative because you feel compelled to act morally; it is also a law because it is universally found in all human beings. Albert Schweitzer once said that he found no difficulty in preaching his religion in the forests of Africa because he found that even the most primitive tribal had the moral sense.

Why should a man be moral? Because purity is man's true nature which is the Atman. Why should a man do good? Because this Atman is one and indwells all beings.

(Prabuddha Bharata 1983).

Morality has no value if it has not been based on humility.

Humility means being humble in thought and action. Lord Krishna having immense divine power and war

and being almighty he accepted the duty of a chariotier of his friend Arjuna.

The most heroic Arjuna bows down to Lord and says 'I have taken refuge in you please instruct me. He comes down from his height of pride of war and says "I shall do as you bid me".

### **Sai Baba's Humility**

Lord or Bhagwan is said to have six qualities, viz. 1-Frame, 2-wealth, 3-non-attachment, 4-knowledge, 5-grandeur, and 6-generosity. Baba had all these in Him. He incarnated in flesh for the sake of Bhaktas. Wonderful was His grace and kindness! He drew the devotees to Him, or how else one could have known Him! For the sake of His Bhaktas, Baba spoke such words as the Goddess of Speech dare not utter. Here is a specimen. Baba spoke very humbly as follows :— "Slave of slaves. I am your debtor, I am satisfied at your darshan. It is a great favour that I saw your feet. I am an insect in your excreta. I consider myself blessed thereby." What humility is this? If anybody would think that by publishing this, any disrespect is shown to Sai, we beg His pardon and to atone for that we sing and chant Baba's name.

(Sai Sat Charitee)

### **Sadhu Vaswani's humility**

His humility was the humility of one who had reduced himself to naught. The deepest aspiration of his life was to become, in his own words, the "lowest of the low". Destiny dragged him, again and again, out of his solitude to perform "great" things in life: but he always felt happy in doing little things. Great was his joy when he swept a room belonging to an "untouchable", and when he washed a beggar's body clean, clothing it in new garments. His face was lit up with joy as he sat at the grinding-stone making flour for feeding the poor. He felt inexpressibly

happy when, out of his own hands, he fed the little birds that swarmed in hundreds on the roof of his house, at Karachi.

(East and West)

The above men being reknown and having status and positions behaved with almost humility.

The humility without spirituality has no due meaning. It has been already expressed sufficiently regarding the spirituality but now one or two points are noted below.

Sri Ramkrishna expressing his idea regarding Gita says "O, man renounce everything and practise spiritual discipline for the realization of God".

Swami Vivekananda says "Only God to worship is the human soul in the human body, Ofcourse, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that no other temple will be of any advantage".

In the stanza 21 of Bhajagovinda is quoted how a human being understands the futile pleasures of the world and ultimately surrenders to Lord to save him.

Bhaj Govinda or Moha-Mudgara

Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam

Punarapi Jananeejathare Sayanam

Iha Samsaare Bahudustaare

Kripayaa (a) paare Paahi Muraare

(Bhaja Godindam, Bhaja Govindam..) (21)

Again birth, again death, and again lying in mother's womb-this samsaara process is very hard to cross over... Save me, Muraare (O destroyer of Murraa) through Thy Infinite Kindness.

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind...)

The wheel of birth-and-death is never at rest for the jeeva. The individualised ego, prompted by desirs-enter-

tained by his imagination and cultivated by his habits, but not yet completely fulfilled—must seek ever fresh fields of experiences repeatedly. In each lifetime, instead of exhausting the existing desires (vaasanaas), each one gathers to himself a new set of vaasanaas. We come here for a purgation, but due to our ignorance of the way and the goal, the extrovertedness in us compels us to get ourselves attached to the objects, which have a beauty and a charm created by the imaginations of our minds ! Maayaa at work !

We come with our own vaasavaas into 'vaasanaas playing criss-cross', which is the world of objects and beings, the actual field of man's endeavour. To live up to the sahaja vaasanaas and to exhaust them through actions undertaken without ego and egocentric desires (ahammama), so that no new vaasanaas may precipitate in us, is really the 'way'. By all means, act and achieve, but let your actions be in an attitude of dedication (mayi sannyasya), with an idea to serve (loka-samgraha), in a spirit of yagna (yagna-bhaava), says the Geeta.

Thus, when the existing vaasanaas are reduced, the thought-disturbances calm down, and thus, when the subtle-body (mind and intellect) dies a 'mystic death', meaning is transcended, the experience is of the Infinite Spirit.

Thereafter, since there are no vaasanaas in the individual, there are no thoughts in him, and so no subtle-body to claim a new embodiment to function in any fresh environment. The causes for all repeated births thus totally cease.

Birth is painful-death, of course, is excruciatingly so—and again, to come to life in the horried cell of the womb, there to be crushed, twisted, imprisoned, and persecuted by the physical and mental strains and jerks of the mother, is indeed abhorrent, terrible, cruel. And yet, as we are today, we are seemingly helpless.

The momentum gathered by this great fall from perfection is too powerful to be halted all by ourselves. The ego, born out of me, has now become a mighty power ruling over me relentlessly, and in front of this usurper of my bosom I am but a slave. To free myself from this great inner tyrant I need now a mighty friend, a powerful and sympathetic friend. And who can It be ?

'O Destroyer of Mura, Lord Krishna, saved me...help me, please,' is the ardent prayer into Him, and seeking His Feet of Love is the only way out.

'And even here, what right have I, the slave of my own passions, the non-believer all these years, to seek His help now ?'

'True, I have no faith to meet Thee, O Lord. I have nothing to offer Thee, except my own tears. I have nothing to claim for myself except the fatigue of my indulgence, the stink of my selfish acts, the sweat of my passions, the chords of my attachments. In fact, I don't deserve to be saved. Yet, Lord, I am tired-beaten out completely, exhausted thoroughly-repentant fully-helpless wholly.'

'I surrender myself to Thee and Thy grace. I claim a hearing and expect help from Thee. Are not Thou the Ocean of Kripaa-of grace, of kindness, and of love ? Are Thou not the Destroyer of demon Mura ? Won't Thou, in Thy kindness, take pity on me and once more destroy the old enemy, Mura, in my bosom-the bundle of my own wretched vaasanaas ?'

Thus, to surrender unto Him and to sincerely invoke His grace is to create in us divine and godly vaasanaas, which are the only antidote to the ego and the egocentric vassanaas, that constantly clamour in our bosom for gratification. Once these are hushed, the Song of the Flute-bearer shall be heard; the blue light of His aura can be seen; the Fragrance of His garland of wild flowers can be smelt; the Butter in His hand can be tasted; the

Embrace of the Infinite can be experienced !

(Commentary by Swami Chinmayananda)

Spirituality is the only way for peace of mind.

Spirituality is not fruitful if it does not possess divinity. Lord Krishna describes to Arjuna the divine qualities in Chap. XIII V 7 to 11.

7. Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forbearance, uprightness, service to the teacher, purity, steadiness, self-control;

8. The renunciation of sense-objects, and also absence of egoism; reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness, and pain;

9. Non-attachment, non-identification of self with son, wife, home, and the rest, and constant even-mindedness in the occurrence of the desirable and the undesirable;

10. Unswerving devotion to Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to sequestered places, distaste for the society of men;

11. Constant application to spiritual knowledge, understanding of the end of true knowledge: this is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.

But Lord Krishna not being satisfied regarding divine qualities explained he again elaborates the same in Chap. XVI V 1 to 5.

### Uprightness:

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Fearlessness, purity of heart, stead-fastness in knowledge and Yoga; almsgiving, control of the senses, Yajna, reading of the Sastras, austerity, uprightness;

2. Non-injury, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquillity, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness;

3. Boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride; these belong to one born for a

divine state, O descendent of Bharata.

4. Ostentation, arrogance, and self-conceit, anger as also harshness and ignorance, belong to one who is born, O Partha, for an Asurika State.

Asurika: Demoniac.

5. The divine state is deemed to make for liberation, the Asurika for bondage; grieve not O Pandava, thou art born for a divine state.

Sai Baba had all these divine qualities which he got from his Guru Gopal Rao.

Not only Sai Baba was a philosopher and spiritualist but generally all saints possess these qualities.

Swami Ramadas of Anandashram South India says "Saints achieve reputation and fame due to their inherent greatness." "They do not depend upon any individual for anything. Their lives flow absolutely freely and blissfully without caring for praise and blame of the world".

**World is God  
By Swami Ramdas  
Switzerland (Contd.)**

Q : As you say, when the whole world is the Lila of God, should we ignore the Lila, or should we take part in it? Should we resist and try to abstain, or should we be tools of that Lila?

Ramdas: We have to play, each one, a part allotted to us by Him who is the Master of the play. He is within us and He is responsible for this Lila. If we are aware of Him, within us, we play our part well. If we forget Him, we play our part ill. While in the former case we reap happiness, in the latter, we reap misery or unhappiness.

(Vision)

**Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram**

**Pujya Mataji Krishnabai**

Mataji, after realising the Eternal, had lived and



suffered only for the others. After spending a glorious life in the highest realisation of Truth and wearing herself out in selfless service, she has gone back to her Eternal Abode. But she lives in the hearts of thousands of devotees the world over. May Beloved Papa and Mataji who are really forms of the one supreme Spirit continue to guide us all from moment to moment and take us to the supreme goal!

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti!

— Swami Satchidananda  
(Vision)

Shivanandaji Maharaj Says:

### **What is true religion**

Not by mere argument or discussion can religion be taught. Not by precepts or moral cannons alone can you convert a person to become religious. Not by pointing to your loads of sacred literature or the miracles of your chief can an aspirant be won over. Practise religion and live upto its teachings if you want to evolve and attain the goal of life. Whatever be your religion, whatsoever be your prophet, whichever be your language and country, whatever be your age or sex you can easily grow if you know the way to crush the ego, to destroy the lower nature of the mind and to have mastery over your body, senses and mind. This is what I have found out to be the way for real peace and bliss eternal. Therefore, I do not try to convince people by heated debates and arguments.

Real religion is the religion of the heart. The heart must be purified first. Truth, love and purity form the basis of religion. Conquest of the lower nature of man, control of the mind, cultivation of virtues, service of humanity, goodwill, fellowship and mutual amity constitute the fundamentals of true religion. These ideals are included in the mottos of the Divine Life Society, and I am very particular in propagating them widely.

I do not waste time in finding out suitable authoritative statements from scriptures to satisfy the curiosity of aspirants. I lead a practical life and try to be an example to the students for moulding their lives. Know that true religion begins when you rise above body-consciousness. The essence of the teachings of all sages and saints, the fundamentals of all religions and cults are the same. People needlessly fight over non-essentials and miss the goal.

### **“Role of Divine Life branches and spiritual aspirants”**

“Swamiji’s message to individual spiritual aspirants and to the branches of the Divine Life Society is as follows:

“You have come to this earth to attain spiritual perfection. You have come here to attain supreme and unalloyed bliss. The purpose of this human birth is the achievement of Divine Consciousness. The goal of life is Self-realization.”

(Anand Varta)

### **Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma’s Teaching**

We have the picture of an extraordinary being, a true renunciant who embodied the ancient Truth of philosophical Hinduism that one is truly not this body. Rather, one is the atman, the changeless soul that is the only One. This is Anandamayi Ma’s central teaching: “The One who is the Eternal, the True Self, He is the traveler on the path of Immortality. He alone is.” God alone exists, disguised as the universe, the world of form, and the individual human being. The aim of religion is to penetrate the illusion of duality to uncover this underlying Oneness. Ultimately, one is destined to merge with the Absolute.

Anandamayi Ma’s diagnosis of the human condition is

that human being are suffering from the delusion that they are separate from each other and from God. One's essential nature is spirit, and spirit cannot be satisfied with material food. Happiness cannot come from material accumulation and worldly attainment, but only from understanding one's true nature as divine. Her diagnosis certainly brings nothing new to Hinduism. What is unique about Ma is her prescription and the effect that the medicine she dispensed had on those who sought her help.

Ma's prescription for the disease of worldness was not, as one might expect, renunciation of the world. Although she herself was a supreme renunciant, Ma asked her devotees not to renounce the world, but to renounce their misconceptions. She asked people only to remember who they really are. She said, "God is not outside the world and the world is not outside God. You don't have to go anywhere. God is where you are". Her prescription, then, called for spiritualizing the very lives that people were already living.

No matter who came to Ma for spiritual advice, she tailored this prescription to the situation. One day a young married woman came to Ma complaining that no one in her family approved of her spiritual practice. Rather than encouraging her to renounce family life, Ma replied:—

Will you try to take up the following practice, Mother? One day a month from morning until night, regard everyone as a manifestation of God. Your husband, your father-in-law, your brother-in-law — consider them to be God in different guises. That day look upon your children as child Krishna and Kumari Devi. If, on that day, you are visited by any sorrow or trouble, welcome them as messengers of the Lord ... First of all do this once a month, then once a week, and you will observe that the happiness you feel on the day will influence all the rest of the week.

Thus Ma maintained that life and religion are one.

“All that you do to maintain your life, your everyday work and play, all your attempts to make a living, should be done with sincerity, love and devotion, and with a firm conviction that true living means virtually perfecting one’s spiritual existence (to be) in tune with the universe.” She maintained if one could do one’s worldly duties always bearing in mind that the worker, the work, and the recipient of the work are One, one’s life would be transformed.

About spirituality, Ma was practical. She would ask people to begin incorporating God into their lives by devoting ten minutes a day to God and then building the practice from there. To the devotee with an inclination towards solitary contemplation, she prescribed ten minutes of meditation. To one comfortable with devotion, she would suggest ten minutes of singing the divine name. And to the devotee inclined towards physical work, she would suggest ten minutes of work envisioning God as the sower and the reaper.

(Ananda Varta Vol. XXXV)

Let us pray God to give us mind and strength to tread the Path of God Realization.

*Om Shanthi Om Shanthi Om Shanthi*

# The Universal Mother

Anil Chandra Ganguly

Ma, an Ideal *Guru*: *Samyama-Vrata* (Vow of Discipline)

“There are”, Ma has observed, “various kinds of initiation — by *mantra*, by touch, by a look, by instruction... *Guru* is he who can reveal the hidden truth out of deep darkness... *Guru* is not an ordinary preceptor... *Guru* is he who has the capacity to deliver man from *bhava sagara*. He is the pilot who helps his disciple cross the storm-tossed sea of life.”

Two words used by Ma in the above-quoted passage call for an explanatory note—*mantra* and *bhava-sagara*. *Mantra* means a series of sounds of great potency. A *mantra* is a word of power—divine power transmitted through a word. In the present context, it is the sound-symbol of *Ishta* (literally ‘beloved’) — the chosen deity one worships, the Object of one’s supreme wish.

Secondly, *bhava-sagara* (literally meaning ‘ocean of becoming’), denotes being born in the world of changes. The world is always in a state of flux and knows no rest. The true aim of human life is said to be the transcendence of this state—end to rebirth and realization of peace.

Reminiscences of devotees that have been recorded and published reveal that many have received from Ma initiation in some form or other, not infrequently in dreams confirmed by subsequent facts. A *guru* gives guidance and enlightenment. So does Ma. Moreover, she inspires a feeling in many that she is not only one’s *guru* but also the *Ishta* and, first and foremost, one’s mother—indeed an unfailing refuge and solace. One who dedicates oneself to Ma can feel the influence of the indulgent mother, as also of the hardtask-mistress in Ma — the *Guru* with watchful eyes.

Her role as Ma and *guru* both combined is marvellously revealed in the annual *samyama-vrata* (vow of discipline).

This unprecedented innovation in the line of *sadhana* claims a note about its genesis, objects and functions, with special reference to Ma.

Ma was often approached by many who protested that they could not spare the time and lacked the opportunity to think of God, far less to meditate on Him, because their struggle for existence demanded their whole time and energy. Overpowered by their cares, desires and incurable habits, they felt helpless and sought Ma's advice. It is quite clear from her teachings and dialogues that, barring a few exceptions, Ma does not ask anybody to renounce the world or to neglect one's worldly duties; she takes a practical view and often says : "All right, if your time is taken up by your everyday occupations and mundane thoughts, you can at least set apart certain days and dedicate these entirely to the Supreme Quest. If possible, let the members of the family co-operate and devise together the programme for those special days, which may be observed once or twice a year, once or twice a month — or better still — once or twice a week. Decide that at least on those days you will speak the truth, avoid all gossip and unnecessary talk, observe *brahmacharya* (abstinence), forgo your favourite food and drinks and live on simple, moderate diet. Let the thought of God be with you all the time, read the *Gita* or some other sacred text, seek the company of saints and sages, execute your work as service to God, be in harmony with all, do not quarrel with anyone. If on such a day you experience even a slight touch of Him who is your Self, you will begin to hanker after His constant presence, the thought of God will be with you more and more along with your outer activities and gradually your life will be changed.\*

Ma's precepts, briefly sketched above, encouraged Yogibhai (Raja Saheb of Solan) to make an experiment. He proposed to Ma, then at Varanasi, that as many as

\**Ananda Varta*, 1/2/50.

were willing should together observe a week of *samyama* (spiritual discipline) at certain intervals. It was to be a week set apart for intense spiritual aspiration and a rigorous vow of discipline voluntarily accepted. The objects of the *vrata* are "to find out the way to one's home, to ascertain who one is, wherefrom one has come, what is one's Self and what is Reality". Having these objects in view, the *vratis* (participants) are required to develop spiritual life by observance of *satya* (truth), *brahmacharya* (abstinence), *ahimsa* (non-violence) etc., and go through a discipline of austerity in their diet and conduct which would make their body and mind fit for spiritual pursuits. The *vrata* provides them with an opportunity for congregational silence in Ma's presence and in an atmosphere conducive to concentration and self-purification. The whole week is spent in individual *sadhana* (preparation for self-realization), *satsanga* (religious congregation) and collective meditation. The crowded programme leaves the *vratis* no time to spare nor does it permit any inclination for worldly thoughts or idle talks. They experience an inward exhilaration from the reverberating sound of Vedic hymns, devotional songs and talks by *mahatmas* (literally meaning high-souled persons and signifying wise and holy leaders). Some of the *vratis* feel in their innermost beings the soul-enkindling touch of the love and light radiating from Ma, the *guru* of *gurus*.

In the context of *samyama-vrata*, the word 'samyama' is not confined to discipline or restraint in the sense of merely controlling one's unruly lower self—it is regarded as a step towards Self-realization. Ma equates *samyama* with *sadhana*. To start with, *samyama* has to be practised with conscious effort, so that real *samyama* may come about spontaneously. The idea is this : Sustained effort to attain a particular state ends in an effortless existence in that state. In other words, the state that has been attained by constant practice is finally transcended

and it becomes attainable easily without much effort. Once Ma made certain observations on *samyama-vrata* somewhat to the following effect :

“*Samyama* does not actually bring about Self-realization. For the sake of purification of body and mind, *satsanga* and the activities practised during *samyama-vrata* are imperative. All these combine to harmonize a human being so as to attune him to the Divine. The restricted diet and sleep, the life that you lead during these gatherings are aids to meditation and self-discovery.”\*

Its comprehensive programme makes the *samyama-vrata* admirably suitable both for men in meditation and action. This is why it appeals to saints who have renounced the world as well as to house-holders attached to worldly things. Initiated by a small group of determined devotees of Ma at Varanasi three decades ago, the *vrata* has since been earnestly taken up by a large number of spiritual aspirants hailing from different corners of this sub-continent and also by some foreigners. So bold and ambitious a spiritual adventure on all all-India basis, inspired by such a great source of *sakti* (spiritual energy or force) and so meticulously maintained by such a band of zealous idealists is unprecedented.

The first session of the *vrata* was held at Varanasi and the second at Vindhyachal—both ancient sacred places with spiritual tradition. Each has an Anandamayi Ashram facing the Ganga and providing unique facilities for *sadhana* in quietude in the hallowed company of a galaxy of *mahatmas*. Naturally, the experiment of *samyama* was a grand success in both the places.

Next came the turn of Calcutta, in 1953, as prompted by Ma's *kheyal*. We, the devotees residing in this giant modern city of commerce, congestion and confusion, received the news of the impending event with a mixed

\**Ananda Varta*, V/4/298.



feeling of joy and diffidence. We had unnumerable problems, some of which had then seemed insoluble — unfavourable surroundings, unfriendly neighbours and non-availability of a suitable place. Circumstances, however, mysteriously made our task easy beyond expectation. But notwithstanding our best efforts we failed to arrange religious discourses by *mahatmas*, so essential to the success of the *samyama-vrata*.

The most acute problem was the dearth of the right type of *vratis*. The President of the Local Committee of the Sangha, a leading member of the Calcutta Bar, expressly said that he could not rely on the intending *vratis* of Calcutta, mostly used to a life of ease and luxury and victims of certain Western habits, not calculated to qualify one for sustained spiritual pursuits. In despair I went to Ma, then in Vindhyachal, and placed our difficulties before her. I also told her about the hostile attitude of a band of local youths, claiming to be anti-God and anti-religion by conviction and determined to sabotage the proposed *samyama-vrata*. I added that there were grounds for apprehending that the misguided miscreants, in their fanatic frenzy, might set fire to our pandal. After giving me a patient hearing, Ma smilingly made a brief comment. : "If you do your best, gaps left by you will be filled up by God." Ma's message, communicated through me, instilled into our *vratis* and volunteers hope and self-confidence and a will to succeed. Subsequent events proved how Ma's *kheyal* could work wonders even out of most unpromising material

Ma arrived in Calcutta on the eve of the week-long *vrata* scheduled to commence from November 14, 1953. Her *kheyal* started with a pleasant surprise for us. She brought with her a team of saints and savants, including Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj and Krishnananda Avadhuta, for religious discourses. Unparalleled was their contribution to the success of the *vrata*

which Calcutta was fortunate enough to witness. Thus, Ma filled up the big gap left by us through our failure to enlist the co-operation of any local *mahatma* of the statues of the Mahamahopadhyaya or the Avadhuta.

The austerity to be observed by the *vratis* included abstention from smoking, from taking tea and coffee and from chewing betel. They had to live on simple vegetarian food for lunch and a cup of milk for dinner, some kept fast on Ganga water on the first day and the last. The *vrata* required restraint of speech and thought throughout the week and congregational silence during stated periods four times a day. Once a questioner asked Ma : "What is the 'fruit' of remaining silent?" Ma's reply was : "It controls speech and preserves your energy. If the mind also becomes silent at that time, Truth shines forth."\*

Strangely enough, most of us did not feel much difficulty in observing the austerities. In fact, through will force, mysteriously infused by Ma, we felt fitter and stronger than usual and received the inner strength not experienced before. Our power of concentration remarkably improved, and our enthusiasm for work and efficiency in the service of Ma gathered momentum day by day.

The common experience of almost all the participants was that in course of this week of discipline they had gained something memorable, a new enthusiasm in their spiritual pursuit, a greater certainty of purpose and a stronger will to succeed. In the words of Ganga Charan Dasgupta, a veteran educationist and author : "We had to slam the door on our daily routine of soulless drudgery and direct our attention to a course of self-discipline with Ma as the central symbol, moulding our aspirations for a higher life. We had a unique opportunity to turn our eyes inwards and to find out that there were many dusty comers in the chamber of our soul which required vigor-

\*Ananda Varta, VIII/3/154.

ous cleaning. We felt the great need of a constant repair-job to be done in the daily scheme of our lives.”\*

We appreciated, from experience, the force of the saying of Sri Krishnananda Avadhuta : “Whilst it is difficult for the *sadhaka* to live up to his resolve when left to himself, literally nothing is impossible in the presence of Mother. Have firm faith in Mother’s Grace.”

Under Ma’s influence there was complete transformation of outlook in many individuals. Our President who had sounded a pessimistic note of warning against undertaking a venture beyond our capacity, observed later on: “*Samyama vrata* in Calcutta was, to my mind, to say the least, a wonder ... Undoubtedly this was something unique in the history of Calcutta.”\*\*

Incidentally, a reference may be made to an interesting episode connected with the *samyama-vrata* in Calcutta. As already stated, I had communicated to Ma at Vindhyachal my apprehension about the possibility of arson by a group of misguided youngmen. The sequence to this apprehended mischief was a very gratifying fulfillment of Ma’s remark to me at that time. During the *vrata* those youngmen sought Ma’s *darsana* and were blessed with a conversation full of loving concern. Ma spoke to them without the least sense of embarrassment and in a homely atmosphere of friendship. Subsequently, they presented Ma with a poem in her adoration composed by one of them. Thus those who had come to destroy, stayed to pray.

For since 1952 sessions of *samyama-vrata* have been annually held at some place or other, subject to Ma’s approval. The occasion is invariably graced by Ma’s hallowed presence, which invariably has an elevating influence on the minds of the participants. Universally revered mahatmas from all parts of India take a lively

\**Ananda Varta*, II/1/85.

\*\**Ananda Varta*, I/5/307.

interest in the *samyama-urata* and add to its spiritual value by their presence and discourses.

Let me communicate to the reader a glimpse of the presiding spirit caught by me in the 24th session of *samyama-urata* at Vrindavan in 1973. On the last day of the *urata*, we had the rare fortune of a special *darsana* of Ma who then seemed to be 'God-in-man one with man-in-God'. The interplay between her 'outer manifestation' and 'inner being' seemed to have reached the acme of perfect synthesis. The 'outer manifestation' was in the role of both a loving friend full of concern for the well-being of the *vratis* and an ideal guide or *guru* to help them attain their cherished goal. The 'inner being', ever in unison with the One, was apparently oblivious of our separate existence. But the *lila* of her 'outer manifestation' was in the best form. The spiritual guide in Ma declared that she was a 'beggar woman' and asked the *vratis* for alms: "Fix a definite time everyday for praying to God and let that period be dedicated to Him for the rest of your life." This saying combined in itself the humility of a 'beggar', the assertiveness of a *guru* and the affection of a mother. And what was the prayer to God to be like? Ma set a model for our benefit: "Lord, I am Thine. Thou art my refuge. Have mercy upon me and show me the path to Thee." This is the English translation (as far as a translation of Ma's saying is practicable) of the text of the wonderful prayer we heard from Ma Anandamayi — a prayer from Ma to Ma. There was a deep meaning underlying it. And the sound emanating from Ma had a message deeper than the sense conveyed by the three sentences uttered by her. It travelled beyond the bounds of words — its appeal was not to the brain but to the core of one's being. Ma, as revealed that night in the background of the *samyama-urata*, was wonderful — her face aglow, her eyes half-closed, her body still as a statue, her hands folded. Ma seemed to be completely merged in herself, taking no notice of the presence on anyone of us and yet residing in all. Each of us felt her presence within ourselves according to our own lights.

# Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

Professor B. Ganguli  
(Translated by Atmananda)

Ranchi Ashram,  
24-5-1958

*Question* : What can the Great Mother give to the individual ?

*Mataji* : The spirit of motherhood : the Mother gives Herself. She loves, protects — does everything. What is there that She cannot give ?

*Question* : Can She bestow on the same person liberation as well as worldly supremacy ?

*Mataji* : Yes, She can.

*Question* : Is there such a thing as rebirth ? Does God really exist ?

*Mataji* : Can a mtriculate have the knowledge of an M.A. ? Father, go on studying and you will know.

*Question* : Since the world can be explained by environment, heredity, in other words by science, what need is there to believe in God ?

*Mataji* : All those explanations are but relative not complete or exhaustive.

*Question* : In the atomic age the world with all its creatures will be destroyed by war. Is it possible to save it by spiritual means ?

*Mataji* : Whatever is to happen will happen. Why worry about it ? He who does everything will do the needful. You are also one of His manifestations, and are able to concern yourself with this kind of thing. But how much can you effect by your concern ?

*Question* : Will there be war again ? Atomic war ?

*Mataji* : To try and get information about the future

from this body is futile. God does not allow the ordinary person to know all about the future, because it would harm him. He gives knowledge and understanding according to His own measure. Thus you will get to know exactly as much as is necessary for you.

*Question* : Why was Arjuna frightened when he had a vision of the Lord's Universal Form ?

*Mataji* : The Lord Himself granted Arjuna divine sight to make the vision possible for him. He gave him the power to see as much as was necessary for Arjuna. But Arjuna did not have the vision of the Self (*Atma darsana*) and therefore he was afraid. God is of infinite forms and there are infinite visions of Him.

*Question* : If God is the fountain of goodness, why should there be so much fighting, cruelty and sin ?

*Mataji* : He is goodness as well as evil. He is everything. He Himself stages a play with Himself. Whatever is necessary in order that His Play may be accomplished to the full, that He does.

*Question* : Is it possible for a man engaged in *sadhana* to see God by direct perception ?

*Mataji* : While advancing towards Calcutta, it cannot be seen. At the end of your journey they will be Calcutta. Similarly God will be found at the end of *sadhana*.

*Question* : Can He be realised through *sadhana*.

*Mataji* : He cannot be.

*Question* : Is it possible to perceive God right here, as one sees a human being ?

*Mataji* : Yes, really and truly. He can be seen.

*Question* : What is your experience in this field?

*Mataji* : Really and truly, I have said it. He is ever Self-revealed. By *sadhana* one can only remove the veil of ignorance.

*Question* : Again, please say, have you really seen Him?

*Mataji* : It has already been said : He who is within

you, who is manifested in your shape, truly I see Him. "Wherever a man is, there is *Siva*, and wherever a woman there is *Gauri*." He and He alone is. Nevertheless, you may express it in any way you please.

*Question* : Which is the easiest way to the realization of God—*Kirtana*, *mantras*, *yoga* or the repetition of a Name ?

*Mataji* : The way which the Guru points out for anyone is the easiest way for that particular person.

*Question* : Is it possible to practise *sadhana* without having recourse to a Guru ?

*Mataji* : Your question and the reply give show that you are a seeker resorting to a Guru.

*Question* : In the *Bhagavad Gita* Sri Krishna says : "Whenever there is decay of righteousness. O Bharata, and there is the exaltation of unrighteousness then I Myself come forth" Why then — although in our age there is decay of righteousness — should there be no Advent of the Lord ?

*Mataji* : God spoke the truth. He has certainly come. Those who can see are seeing.

*Question* : Why is there so much violence in Pakistan?

*Mataji* : All happens according to His will. He is violent with Himself. There is no doubt some beneficent purpose behind it.

*Question* : When the deity is in one's own home, why should one have to go to a place of pilgrimage for His *darsana* ? Does it really help ?

*Mataji* : One goes because one does not feel satisfied at home. Besides, it occurs at times that some-one derives distinct benefit from visiting places of pilgrimage.

*Question* : Where exactly is the mind ?

*Mataji* : "Roots above, branches below." Its root lies in the brain, yet it also permeates the whole body. In deep sleep one communes with one's own Self. After sound sleep, body and mind experience a sense of well-being,

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although on waking one cannot tell where one has been while asleep. Only when the veil has been lifted and one's vision is therefore unobstructed, then one knows where one had gone : for a short span one had reposed within one's Self during sleep. The centre of the mind lies in the brain, although it is scattered everywhere in the body.

Man alone has the possibility to become fully conscious. The animal has merely the capacity to enjoy and suffer, while man can do this as well as practise *sadhana*. The purpose of *sadhana* is liberation. Man has the opportunity for both, worldly experience and liberation. In order that man may awaken to full consciousness he has from his childhood on infinite possibilities for inquiry, for the acceptance of countless preceptors. Yet the Guru may also be revealed within. If there are querries, the necessity for an outer Guru arises. It is man's nature to ask questions and to feel happy when they have been replied to. What can be grasped by the intelligence, is all within the realm of the mind. The mind is indeed scattered all over. It has to be collected and placed into the head. Therefore one has to concentrate and sit in meditation.

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# Mother and Her Ways

Swami Paramananda

There are some remarkable features and aspects of Mother's personality. What strikes us most in the first place is the complete absence in Her of the various passions and qualities natural to all living creatures (Jiva) such as anger, greed, envy, hatred, desire, aversion, hypocrisy, falsehood etc. These have never been observed in Her either by ourselves or by those who have been in Her company for a long time. Even under the gravest provocation She is always the same, serene, unperturbed, firmly poised like the Himalayas. Mother's patience, endurance, simplicity, Her benign appearance, and her care-free, cheerful face lit up with charming smile and Her nature ever free from dualities such as happiness and misery, likes and dislikes, are indeed unique. When we see Her we feel that She does not belong to this body nor does She live in this world of ours.

Equally remarkable and worthy of note is, in our opinion, Her universal toleration and love. Mother keeps Her door wide open for all, be they mad, stupid, absolutely unprincipled or worthless, — persons whom everybody avoids. Knowing very well their real character, for nothing is hidden from Her, She welcomes them all with the same smile and pours Her healing compassion and grace upon them all. If we object to Her giving shelter to such people, She says, "Where will they go? This body does not call anybody deliberately. When they come, serve them as much as you can. Every one is His form or image. Knowing them so, try to serve them. He reveals Himself in diverse forms." Such an all-embracing love and mercy as mother's, which denies itself to none, is indeed rarely to be found. Almost everybody offers shelter and protection after first considering a person's worth or fitness. But Mother extends Her protection and mercy to all who seek

them, regardless of all considerations of fitness and qualities. Mother is above all sectarianism and tolerates every shade of opinion, variety of religious doctrine or creed. She had no Guru of Her own and had no disciple except Bholanath and makes none now. When requested to initiate somebody She says, "Nothing deliberate or intentional can be done by this body. In the case of Bholanath, "*Kheyal*", (an urge) came spontaneously. Even now if there arises a *Kheyal* it may happen again. No such vow has been taken by this body that it will or will not initiate anybody. Whatever comes off, comes of its own accord." Having no Guru of Her own, mother belongs to no particular sect (*Sampradaya*). When asked about it, She says, "Leave aside the question of this body. It is but a little child of yours. This body is what each of you thinks it to be. Further, there is but one sect in reality. Everyone is seeking Him. And this body says whatever has been said or is being said about Him is right. For He is infinite; He is one. So whatever anybody says is correct, no matter what sect that person belongs to. What matters is that he should think of Him. All thoughts, except those about Him, are fruitless and painful." Again She says — "It is He alone who exists in all forms and He also resides in the formless. So what is needed is that you should think of Him in any way you choose, whether as one with a form or without it. For He is indeed everything; therefore all who think of Him or seek Him belong to the same sect. Everyone should reason thus that since there is no end or limit to Him, so in whatever manner or with whatever notion, people seek Him, they all belong to the same sect; for after all they are all seeking Him alone."

Mother says further, — "Some teaching or doctrine is inferior and some superior, or some path is more true and some less; this body has nothing to do with such controversies and conflicts. Whatever anybody says is right from his standpoint. Each person realises in his own way

the Infinite and the Supreme Reality. So it is but natural, that there must be diversity or variety in men's attempts to express or reveal Him. In that Infinite Reality is to be found the unity and harmony that subsists even in the midst of conflicting and divergent doctrines and opinions. Nothing is outside the Infinite Totality or the Whole, not even the "non-existent."

As all sects and doctrines are equal to Mother, followers and aspirants of every sect come to Her and obtain peace and joy from Her.

Whatever be the path one follows, whatever be one's *Bhava*' (attitude or sentiment), everyone feels blessed by receiving favour and grace from Mother, each according to his *Sanskaras* (tendencies and dispositions). We have heard from many people belonging to the different *Asramas* and orders of Hindu life such as *Brahmacharies*, *Grihasthas*, *Sannyasis* that the recollection or contemplation of the 'Ista' (the chosen deity) of each is stimulated or is induced in them when they sit near Mother. Mother too, says that whatever the *Guru* has instructed is right. His instructions should be followed. One can find peace only by doing so. For this reason people of every sect and order of life find peace when they come to Her. Almost everybody feels that Mother loves him the most and so is extremely kind to him and favours him and holds the same doctrine as his.

Let us now say some thing about the word '*Kheyal*' which mother frequently uses. If anyone wants to know something from Mother or requests Her to do something saying, "Mother, you know everything and can do everything", She never says, "I cannot do it, or I do not know it or I have no power to do it." Such expressions as "I do not know or cannot do, have never been heard from Mother. Her usual reply in such cases is, "There is no *Kheyal* now; if circumstances allow, ask again." As far as we have understood, Mother has none of these, — mind,

intellect, egoism, found in us nor the three states, waking, dreaming, or sleep. In Mother there is only this state of one-ness with the Infinite or She is Infinity itself. So in Her there is none of the conflict between desire and aversion, mind and intellect etc., yet in a sense everything is there. Mother says, "Here (inside Her) it is all swept and rubbed clean; there is no thought of any kind. As you will play on it so you will hear." Mother's movements arise directly from the Ultimate Reality or the Supreme Will according to our *Sanskaras*. When our desires correspond to the Supreme Will, then they are fulfilled. That Supreme Will manifesting itself to us according to our *Sanskaras* is probably the "*Kheyal*" of Mother.

As Mother is absolutely devoid of the gross, narrow 'ego', so the expressions of this ego, as "I shall or I know, I can, I do etc." and their negatives are never heard from Her. Generally Her remarks are liberally sprinkled with a few "ifs" or qualifying expressions such as "if circumstances are favourable," "if there is no obstacle," "one cannot be certain of a single breath," "let whatever happens happen." Not that She deliberately avoids one kind of language or uses the other, but such words come spontaneously from Her.

There is no end to the extraordinary aspects of Mother's personality. In fact everything about Her viz. Her laughter, weeping, singing are all supernatural and extraordinary, as those who have had the good fortune to witness and hear them, will testify.

It is almost impossible to convey their special quality through words only. A few more interesting details may be added. Mother sees disembodied souls of saints, *sadhus* etc. She says, "they are sitting here round about this body just as you are. Only you cannot see them." Once She said, — "There are so many of those saints and others

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## Celebration of Guru Purnima at Matri - Mandir

Like yester-year this too Guru Purnima was celebrated here at Matri-Mandir on Wednesday — the 12th July, 1995. On this occasion a large number of devotees gathered at Matri-Mandir. From the very dawn Nam-kirtan was started and all those assembled took part in it. All the portraits of Shree Shree MA, Shree Shree Didima, Shree Shree Baba Bholanath, Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath Thakur and others were beautifully decorated by flower garlands. Special Pujas including Kumari Puja were performed. Bhajans, kirtans and other devotional songs from Sri Satyeshwar Mukhopadhyaya Sri Krishna Gopal Ghosh, Smt. Krishna Majumdar, Smt. Archana Ghosh, Smt. Jayashree Basu Majumdar and Tulsidi was the added attractions of this year which spell-bound all. After puja, prasad was distributed among all the devotees who assembled at Matri-Mandir.

On this day, as per scheduled programmes of the Birth Centenary Celebration of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee, a special honour was presented on behalf of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee Abirbhab Satabarsa Utsav Committee to Shri Phani Bhusan Chakraborty (Jatu Bhai) — the oldest, nonogenarian devotee of MA.

Special honour was also given to Prof. Gopal Mitra and Shri Amal Roy for their splendid activities to make the inaugural functions of the Birth Centenary of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee — a success.

In the afternoon the video cassette on the inaugural functions of the Birth Centenary Celebration was shown to the devotees present. After all these a Satsanga was organized where some senior devotees disclosed their realizations about MA and Her Teachings.

## Obituary

One of the most favourite sons of Shree Shree MA and our beloved Bhaia, B. K. Shah passed away on 4th September, 1995 at his own residence in Bombay.

Bhaiaji was the lifelong President of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. Though he died at a very matured age yet his sincerity and intelligence will be felt by all for a long time.

Bhaiaji met MA first in the year 1954 when MA was in Bombay to attend the Sanjam Saptaha. At that time Gurupriya Didi was bedridden due to serious illness. Then this unknown new entrant Bhaia B. K. Shah spontaneously took the responsibility to look after Didi and to arrange her medical treatment. That time, seeing his brotherly approach Shree Shree MA called him 'Bhaia' and since then he was known as Bhaia to all. It was not only Didi, in fact, several devotees and saints of our Ashrams get touch of his brotherly hand. In several occasions Shree Shree MA with Her devotees stayed at his residence in Bombay where a separate beautiful cottage was built for Shree Shree MA.

May his soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of MA and may MA grant strength and peace to the members of his family to enable them to stand the loss.

Udasji — A sincere saint who was attending MA at her closing years passed away on Wednesday — the 6th September, 1995 at Kankhal

At the very young age she was attracted by Shree Shree MA and She leaving her home, took the shelter of MA. She was born in a Kashmiri Brahmin family and Her original name was Bilasi. By the grace of MA She was turned into Udasji. She was that saint who for the sole cause of the healthy existence of the person of Shree Shree MA performed 108 crore japa in Benaras Ashram. She was that saint who had offered all her ornaments and other belongings which were stored by Her father for Her

marriage at the Feet of Shree Shree MA. For a long time She followed MA like a shadow and served HER with all her heart.

May Her sincere devotion ultimates unite Her with Her idol — Shree Shree MA Anandamayee.

Sri Dhirendra Nath Sengupta, an ardent devotee of Shree Shree MA Anandamayee breathed his last on Monday — the 5th June, 1995. We convey our deep condolences to his relatives and hope that the departed soul may rest in peace in his heavenly abode.

Late Smt. Puspa Renu Bandopadhyaya — one of the ardent old devotees of Mother passed away on 3rd April, 1995 to take eternal rest in the lap of our divine Mother Shree Shree MA Anandamayee. May MA grant peace to the members' of her family.

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sitting inside the room that there is hardly any space available." She sees also the forms of diseases and often describes them. She says, — "Every disease has its own peculiar form, when such forms come before this body they are not forbidden or opposed, just as you are not prevented from coming. Occasionally however, they may be opposed or have their destination changed, — suppose, for example, they might be coming in this direction but they are deflected in a different way.

It is impossible to understand the strange, extraordinary personality of Mother unless She of Her own accord reveals Herself to us. Mother's teachings are universal, simple and touching to the heart. She never preaches or gives instruction with any definite purpose. She also says, "One gets as much as one is destined to get from this body in the light of his *Bhava*."