

# Ananda

Newsletter of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

Issue No 12 – March 2020

Contents – First part of January 2019 Amrita Varta



Video file:

[Swami Padmanabhananda of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh talks at the samyam saptah in November 2019.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9SSmbhZ_9s) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9SSmbhZ\\_9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9SSmbhZ_9s)

Text file:

<http://www.anandamayi.org/new/GovindaNsouvfinal.pdf> (souvenir at the time of inauguration of Sri Ma's samadhi temple in 1987.) Article about Ma by Govinda Narain.

Sound file:

[Sri Ma Anandamayi.](#)

[Sri Ma sings Gopal Govinda, date and location unknown.](#)

Source of sound recording: Anandamayi Ma, Recordings, DIV\_bMS00556\_AU\_131\_B; Das Gupta,s5 (T2) [Track 2/2 - Repository: Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University. Digitized content accessed via <https://sds.lib.harvard.edu/sds/audio/430602193>

# MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly  
with the divine life and sayings of  
Shree Anandamayee Ma

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### NOTICE

In order to ensure receipt of Amrit Varta, it was decided in the Governing Body meeting that the annual subscription of the journal be enhanced from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 300/- w.c.f. January, 2019 Your cooperatoin is earnestly solicited.

**COVER PAGE : Matri Mandir, Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun**

### REQUEST

Efforts are being made to make the journal more attractive and interesting to preach the sayings, biography etc. of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee widely. All are requested to send their suggestion that may be compiled, if considered worthy, so that we can make it more lucid and appealing for the readers belonging to every age group of modern time.

Thanking you and Jai Ma.

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## Matri Vani

This world is created by God. *Jiva* means *jagat* and *jagat* means bondage. Best is the human life. God is omnipresent. *Jiva-jagat-vandhan* (bondage) are the manifestation of God, He has created all these with His imagination. Virtues and vices, light and darkness, *jiva* and world, all are the parts of the universe and human birth is regarded as the best because only human being enjoys the right to liberate.



Sense and consciousness are the main features that separate human being from other creatures. Joy and sorrow are the parts of the physical body, hence human being suffers. *Ajnyna* (अज्ञान - ignorance) is a veil that covers the human being. At the same time ignorance shows the door after uncovering the Truth. Pleasure and pain are subject to coming and going. One must go beyond virtues and vices to know the Truth which can be experienced only in human life.



One who is fallen by curse, is liberated from it also. All the creatures and objects - animal, bird, tree, human being can be liberated in the same body. This is the only Truth. Human life is regarded as best because it is changeable.



One who is ever liberated living entity and one who is fallen under ignorance. There is a veil needs to be uncovered. All are the instruments in my hands. World is created as imagination. I am omnipresent everywhere in different forms of manifestation.



Lord, let me know who am I? Let me realise myself. Let me liberate myself from death.



What is the physical body - animal, birds, trees, branches etc. All are both *rupa* and *arupa* (*rupa* means external appearance, not just physical existence of an object, but also its tangible nature. *Arupa*, on the other hand, means formless referring to non-material subjects or objects). There are innumerable paths through which the knowledge and ignorance are revealed. Children of the sages. *Mantras* are illuminated and so are the *bhava* and *abhava*. No question of death of the children of sages (the major manifestation is in the spiritual world. So they do not die).



God has made different *rupas* means external appearances. He is both *khanda* - खण्ड (pieces, divisible) and *akhanda* - अखण्ड (indivisible) He Himself is the *rupa* and at the sametime he has created the *rupa*. This way the play is going on and the God is the player. He is playing with Himself. He is manifested and not manifested at the same time. There are wrathful persons, there are greedy persons, there are persons full with infatuation. This infatuation can also be discarded. No question of external and internal because He exists everywhere. He is the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is the only ONE



The play in the physical world of action is different from that of the psychic world. The world of action is busy with new creations, while in the subtle world of emotions, every thing happens in silence and in a hidden manner. If it were otherwise, feelings and thoughts (*bhāva*) could not grow strong; it is this inner force which keeps the world of action going. The source of the Ganges lies in the depths of inaccessible jungles, hidden away from the eyes of men; yet its life-giving waters irrigate fields and pastures and bring prosperity to the smiling country-side along its bank. It is *bhāva* which is at the root of Creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. Nevertheless so long as man's bondage of karma has not fallen away of itself and he therefore depends on work, it is needed to recognize the supremacy of action. One who feels the desire to be active cannot attain to the highest Good without engaging in karma.

**Shree Shree Ma**

## Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Prasanga

--Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Swami Shankarananda then began with how Sri Sri Ma used to utter *Pranava mantra* (प्रणव मन्त्र व ओम—*Aum* is a sacred sound and a spiritual symbol in Hinduism, that signifies the essence of the ultimate reality, consciousness or *Atman*). He said, "*Shastra* prohibits women to utter *Pranava mantra*. Mother, therefore, uttered this mantra after chanting "*Haribol*". At this, mother said, "The word '*bol*' became *aum* or *omkara*. It's not right that I intentionally uttered in this way. Physical body transforms itself with the right utterance of *Pranava* and my body too transformed the same way. It's just like a machine doing its work. I perceived the process like a witness. *Pranava* is known by different names i.e. *shabda-brahma* (transcendental sound) or *varnamala* and all are true and are perceived at different stages. All have their respective existence and it should not be allowed to discard anything. All appear true in situation wise and are manifested once a person reaches that stage or realises that truth. There are different ways of manifestation too and every stage seems to be extreme truth. Also, there is a stage when everything appears truth and nothing else.

Myself: Mother, does this manifestation that you have mentioned appear as same in imagination and in reality? We generally think manifestation resembles the truth.

Mother: Yes. Truth alone is manifested. However, imagination can also be manifested if it becomes the only goal. Truth becomes manifested in all stages when the aim or goal is concentrated. It reveals that existence of truth is everywhere. Truth is manifested even if there is conflict between truth and scepticism because truth pervades sceptic mind but same is not found in the case of imagination. Imagination alongwith sceptive mind never reveals the truth which overcomes scepticism, but imagination doesn't have that power. Have you got the point - difference between the truth and imagination?

Khukunididi came and took the Mother for her dinner. Discussion was suspended and we returned after offering our pronam to the Mother.

**8 Paush, Thursday (23/12/1948)**

Gopibaba had his lunch in the ashram this noon along with his family but there was no discussion with him today on any issue. Gopaldada delivered lecture on *Gurutattva* in the afternoon. Discussion started after the *kirtan* in the night.



Swami Shankarananda recalled his first meeting with the Mother. He said, "Gopibaba and I decided to meet Anandamayee when we came to know that she was staying in Kashi. We found her in *samadhi* (it is a state of meditative absorption) stage that continued for three days. Baba Bholanath tried to bring her back into conscious level on last day". At this point, Mother smiled and said, "They all were tried their best to break my *samadhi*. They created loud noise and the sound of this scream was so loud that it could have made me deaf. They all decided to apply that very process to break my *samadhi* because they knew only that method. However, strangely, that process failed to make me deaf".

Gopaldada: We are fortunate. We do not have the replies to our questions very often and the situation would be different had you been deaf!

Mother: They would also do another thing to break my *samadhi* stage. They would massage my backbone so severely that it became swollen and the process was too painful even for me. They thought this process could break the *samadhi* but it was broken at its own time.

Swami Shankarananda: Mother retained bit consciousness following Baba Bholanath's efforts. He asked us to raise our questions and I requested Gopibaba to do the same. But he insisted me and I asked Mother her views about me. She was unable to talk properly at that time. But she replied, "You and I are same". That made me surprised and I realised her the '*murtiman shruti*' that means she resembles Veda or she herself is the Veda."

#### **Time of the *sadhan* and monotony in *sadhana***

Topics on proper or suitable timing of meditation and *naam* were raised and Mother said, "Dawn and *sandhi-kaal* are generally said to be the perfect time for meditation and *sandhya* (*sandhya* is a type of daily ritual in the evening) because it is considered as the perfect timing traditionally been interpreted either as the transition moments of the day, namely the two twilights dawn and dusk. You can judge this issue from another angle. Every time is best for meditation, *naam* and *sandhya* because time zone is different in whole of the world and thus, every time is suitable to meditation, *naam* and *sandhya* in this context. However, it is found that certain persons go deep into meditation and *naam* in specific time like morning or midnight. It is, therefore, found that timing differs from person to person. Every time is suitable to know and realise the god depending upon the depth of eagerness. In this stage, person is able to know the perfect timing for him and his daily chore gradually become supportive to his *sadhana*. Actually, strong impulse is necessary to know the god. Some people become frustrated sometime for not-getting desirous result of their *japa* (*japa* is an ancient practice in which a *mantra* or the name of a deity is recited either silently or aloud. The Sanskrit word is derived from the root, *japa*, meaning "to repeat quietly and internally). It's not actually the frustration, instead, it reflects

that they are inching towards their goal. More monotonous is the process more progress is noticed in the path of *sadhana*. *Sadhak* is confined to a place if he enjoys his *sadhana* so early and so easily. His efforts are obstructed at this stage as he loses his impulse to move forward. Intense longing is the secret of success in spiritual life. Attachment means the feeling towards god. It's a good symptom".

It was nine o'clock in the night and Mother stood up for the dinner of Gopaldada. We too left the ashram after offering our *pranam* to her.

### 9 Paush, Friday (24/12/1948)

I reached Ashram at 11 in the morning when recitation of the Gita was going on. Attended the recitation for half-an-hour. Gopaldada decorated Mother with flowers and garlands covered her all over her neck and hands. It was a majestic like look. Gopaldada started dancing to the tune of the *kirtan*. Entire hall was full with religious fervour and this *bhava* touched all of us present there. Mother asked Bhupen to take away the garlands from her and offer to the devotees.

### Evidence of omnipresence of the *Brahma*

*Kirtan* was over in the night and daily discussion started. Sri Debshankar Mitra told mother that he wanted to have the topic clear that had been incomplete the other day. He wanted to know the evidence of the omnipresence of the *Brahma*.

Mother: Is there anything without *Brahma*?

Devshankar Babu: You are telling the stage of experience but I want to know how it would be proved through logic?

Mother: My child, what will you say? Are you denying the omnipresence of the *Brahma*?

Devshankar Babu: *Brahma* is full with *chaitanya* (consciousness). Therefore, it exists wherever conscious creatures exist. But, this world also carries inanimate objects and hence how it is proved that the *Brahma* is omnipresent in this context?

Mother: Who will prove it?

Devshankar Babu: Those who are scholars will decide over it with proof. Also, *sadhaks* can prove it through their meditation and realisation.

Mother: *Brahma* cannot be realised through mere meditation. He does not know or realise anything even though he claims to have realised it (*Brahma*). A void exists at this point. There is another stage when meditation occurs spontaneously without any efforts and *sadhaks* hardly come out of it. You too have experienced this type of meditation. These *sadhaks* can only realise the omnipresence of the god to some extent. The void you referred to start filling up. And there exists the last stage where *Brahma* manifests itself as a light. This stage does not require any meditation and the void too does not exist in the presence of the *Brahma*.

Devshankar Babu: Mother, you have just referred to the third and last stage.....

Mother: I have not talked of any stage but I referred to different conditions. This physical body does not say anything about the status of people's or *sadhaks'* different stages of *sadhana*. There exists a stage when *sadhaks* know the first and last stage. It's like the stairs when people feel the ascending and descending position. Same way *sadhaks* know the progress step by step in the ladder. He ascends the stair or ladder cautiously with full attention to avoid falling down. Each step in the ladder provides *sadhaks* specific knowledge and they feel it as the truth in totality. However, this feeling is changed soon when *sadhaks* get more knowledge in next steps and *sadhaks* feel the truth better. Ascending and descending are the major factors in this stage. In another stage, only infinite exists and it becomes the only object. In other word, it is the Absolute. I have expressed it in word or language but it is beyond any language or word. Absolute or *Brahma* cannot be described in any language because it is Self Manifestation or Self Illumination. Here is an example- light is lit inside a pot and light comes out after the pot is broken. What you will say about the illumination? Light is already there inside the pot and it was not seen till the pot is not broken. Same way, *Brahma* always exists and is not seen because It is covered under a veil (*maya*). It is illuminated once the cover is removed. Here is another example - all the ornaments are made of gold and are known by different names. There is the oneness because of the gold. Similarly, *naam* and *roopa* are the segments and a segment creates the void. Absolute exists when *naam* and *roopa* are removed.

Devshankar Babu: Mother, I talked the other day that Paramhansadev used to say 'I want to drink water' before his *samadhi*. By saying it, he left an aphorism of descending from the *samadhi*.

Mother: I have already told that this body never talks about other persons. This body can answer to any question if not referred to any particular person.

Devshankar Babu: Yes, your are right. It is not proper to hold discussion on particular individual.

Many present in the hall became frustrated following the suspension of the discussion for the cause of meditation. At this, Mother said, "We have been going to bed after two in the night for past two days and it will happen tonight also. You can continue and the discussion may be longer tonight. It does not matter if personal chores like dinner, sleep etc. miss the time during the Gita jayanti."

Everyone was satisfied with these words of the Mother. Swami Shankarananda told Gopalada, "We got the timing till 2 o'clock in the night. But you may request the Mother to leave earlier for her bed."

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Padapeetham Smarami

Dehradun Ashram

## **Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Ashram**

Br. Geeta

Dehradun, nestling in the foot of the Himalaya, is better known as Doon valley among the tourists. According to the Purana, this place was the *tapobhumi* of Dronacharya and the name of Doon or Dehradun has been derived from him. Sri Sri Ma described this place as the seat of '*tapasya*' (it means "generation of heat and energy." It is a practical spiritual discipline that involves deep meditation, austerity/moderation, self-discipline, and efforts to reach Self-realization. of the saints and mahatmas). This place becomes more holy and pious to the devotees of Sri Sri Ma because she stepped in here first in whole of Uttarakhand.

It is in this place where women of aristocratic families took refuge at the feet of the Mother after realising her Motherhood and they wholeheartedly surrendered to her for ever. It is here in this place where politicians started coming to the Mother.

Mother first arrived in Dehradun in May 1929 following the request of Mahamahopadhaya Gopinath Kaviraj. She came here from Haridwar along with her father, Sri Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya. She stayed here for some time and visited Sahasradhara before returning back to Haridwar. Mother's second visit was held in 1932 when she arrived on June 7 from Dhaka but she went straight to Raipur and stayed there in a dharmashala. She was accompanied by Baba Bholanath and Bhaiji at that time.

She spent about seven months in Raipur. Sri Hariram Joshi who was the inspector of Dehradun Cooperative Society had her darshan in March 1933.

### **Mother at Manohar temple in Anandachowk**

Mother again visited Dehradun in the month of July 1933 with Bhaiji. She spent one day near Tapkeshwar cave. Sri Hansdutt Tiwari, a friend of Sri Hariram Joshi, had the darshan of the Mother here. Sri Joshi took Mother and Bhaiji the next day to Manohar temple in Anandachowk. There are two temples here belonging one to Shiva and another to Radhakrishna. Both the temples belonged to Bhargava family of Saharanpur and Sri Kashinarain Tankha looked after the both. On the request of Joshiji he arranged one room for the Mother

Many Kashmiri families came to contact with the Mother here. These families became so closed to the Mother that she used different names for the members—she used to call the wife of Sri Kashinaraian as Mahalakshmi and affectionately called Sri Dwarkanath Raina as Gopal. Jawaharlal Nehru's mother and wife too met the Mother for the first time here and Indira was also with them. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya met the Mother here.

### **Mother Memorial temple in Anandachowk**

Gayetri yajna organised in Manohar temple in Anandachowk in August 1933 and the bhasma of this yajna (मंत्र) was kept inside the earth near this temple. Mother memorial temple was built at this point in 1934. A yajna *kund* too was built here. The temple was commemorated to the holy visit of the Mother. Baba Bholanath performed a yajna in 1935 and the devotees for the first time had their darshan of him here.

### **Beginning of the construction work of Dehradun Ashram**

Sri Hariram Joshi first requested the Mother for a ashram in Dehradun. He came to Anandachowk to have darshan of the Mother in March 1935 and Bhaiji asked him to launch his efforts for the ashram. It was a joint effort of Sri Joshi and Sri Hansdutt Tiwari that the land was purchased in at Rajpur Road in Kishenpur. Birth anniversary of the Mother was celebrated in this new premises in 1935.

Construction of Kishenpur ashram was completed and birth anniversary of the Mother was observed on May 2, 1936 amidst hundreds of the Mother's devotees. In her reminiscences, Gurupriyadidi wrote, "Inauguration ceremony of this ashram was held during the birth anniversary function of the Mother. Baba Bholanath conducted a big yajna in the ashram to mark the occasion and one lakh *ahuti* (offering oblations) were offered. The ashram was decorated by the devotees beautifully with a big photograph of the Mother placed in the hall. Mother accompanied by Baba Bholanath and devotees entered the new ashram in the mid night of May 2, 1936 amidst kirtan and sound of conch Shell. Devotees welcomed Mother with camphor. Yajna was completed the next day.

### **Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Vishwa Mandir**

Bhaiji once told Sri Hariram Joshi about the spontaneous spiritual activities of Mother. "Her lila (effortless or playful relation between the Absolute and the contingent world) and activities are solely for the world brotherhood, peace and love and I realised it through my *anudhyana* and thinking", Bhaiji said. Bhaiji already had deep realisation and foresight that Mother would be regarded in future as '*Vishwa-janani*' by whole of the world and would be worshipped.



Shiv Mandir, Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun

Accordingly, 'Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Vishwa Mandir' was inscripted on the main entrance of Dehradun ashram.

There are two big photographs of the Mother placed in two sides of the big hall of the ashram besides other small photographs. 'Be quiescent in body, speech and mind and know that, 'Thou are that'. These words are found written in the hall. Also written in Bengali, "Friends, keep always remember the holy feet, do the *japa* and meditation. Your tongue always utter His/Her name and words". In other words, it means this ashram is the place only for the *Bhagavata katha* or the remembrance of the God.

Numerous spiritual activities were organised in this hall. The hall is surrounded by verandah in four corners with four rooms in each corner. Besides, there is car parking space. Rooms of the Mother and her mother are on the upper floor where also exist Shakti Peeth and two other rooms along with verandah.

(continued)

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## List of Festivals

1.	Sri Sri Saraswatipuja	February10, 2019
2.	Maghi Purnima	February 19, 2019
3.	Mahashivaratri	March 8, 2019
4.	Holika Dahan	March 20, 2019
5.	Holi Mahotsav	March 21, 2019
6.	Sri Sri Basanti Puja	April 11-14, 2019
7.	Sri Sri Annapurna Puja	April 13, 2019
8.	Ramnavami	April 14, 2019
9.	Sri 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji's Sanyas Utsav	April 14, 2019

## Children Page

### Flower, Frog, Fish and Bee

A big lotus bloomed in a pond. Pathway falls by the side of the pond. A passer-by happened to see the flower while passing through this pathway. The flower was so beautiful that he could not distract his eyes. He could not remember to have seen such a beautiful flower. He was thinking of the name of the flower but found nobody to answer to him.

He happened to see one frog and one fish swimming in the water and asked the frog, "Friend, can you tell me the name of the flower around of which you are swimming"? The frog looked at him and said, " Why are you so curious? It's just a flower. Have you not seen any flower before?" Frog then became busy in searching insects.

The man became frustrated and thought the frog itself did not know the name of the flower. He then asked the fish the same question and received the same reply from the fish like that of the frog. The fish started searching its food. This made the man more disappointed.

He then came across a bee which all of a sudden appeared there and sat on the flower. The man became hopeful and requested the bee to listen to him. The bee was busy in collecting honey from the flower and said, "I'm busy right now and will talk to you later." The man was curious to know what the bee was doing by sitting on the flower and he was repeatedly asking the bee the same question. However, the bee was busy in eating the honey. After half-an-hour bee flew to the man and wanted to know what his question was. He asked, " What is the name of the flower?" Bee smiled and said it was the lotus full with honey and she was eating its honey.

Narrating the story Mother asked, " Have you got the point?" She then explained, " Mere accompanying the *sadhu-mahatmas* bears no fruit unless one realises their merits or virtues. Right persons can only realise the *sadhu-mahatmas* and is benefitted by them and their merits no matter they spend very little time with them.

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# Existence of Human Being before Birth and after Death Character Story of Birth and Death

Swami Vedananda

(Continued)

Three Movements await after death of the human being.

Every human being passes through three movements after death- *Devyan Marg*, *Pitriyan Marg* and *Brahmaloka Marg*. Marg means path. Souls are bound to the cycle of births and deaths mainly because of desires and desire-ridden actions and *jiva* passes through any of these three movements according to his or her desires and actions.

*Devyan Marg*: *Jiva*, the *sthul* or *gross body* of living being consists of five gross elements known as *Panch-bhutas*. These are: *Prithvi, Jal, Agni, Vayu and Akash*. Human being lives upon this earth as per his or her destined age and passes away. Once the soul leaves the body, the person becomes lifeless. The body is then cremated and its elements are returned to the elements from where it originally had come. Death touches and destroys everything in the object world when its time comes. However, it cannot touch the individual Self which is immortal and indestructible. Death is for the physical body. Soul remains intact and escapes from the body to take birth again. The body returns from the *sthul* world to *sukshma* and exists in an astral form. However, the *mana-deha* that is covered under the previous imprints still exists in moving form.

Those people, who acquired self purification through their good acts in this earth, take shelter in the divine light immediately after their death. In other words, *jiva* mingles into the flames of the fire after death and passes to the ray of light from where it goes to the day. It is a chain of journey that *jiva* passes one after another – from day to *shukla paksha* (fortnight period from new moon to full moon) and from *shukla paksha* to *uttarayana* (*uttarayana* is basically the period when the sun travels from Capricorn to Cancer, i.e. from south to north). Here, *jiva* stays for six months

and its next journey point is the year from where it reaches *aditya* means the sun and then passes to *Chandra* means the moon and from here it goes to the celestial sphere where one celestial body receives *jiva* and takes it to the *brahmadham*, the highest heaven. This celestial body gets the mind of *jiva* free from the previous imprints through its good actions as a result, *jiva* does not return to this earth again. *Jiva* moves towards *devayan marg* which is in the form of *nivritti*, means directed inward, often with a focus on acceptance and finding connection with god or the divine. And finally, *jiva* is liberated in due course through self-realisation.

***Pitriyan Marg:*** *Jiva* that dies with his or her desires unfulfilled, goes to *pitriyan marg* after death. *Jiva* enters into smoke, from smoke to night, from night to the *Krishna-paksha*, the dark fortnight, from the dark fortnight to those six months in which the sun moves southwards. The path through which *jiva* travels is known as the path of the ancestors (*pitrayana*) or the southern path (*dakshinayana*). Further journey covers from *pitriyana* to *akash* and from *akash* to *chandraloka*. This *chandraloka* is different from that of the moon on the sky. This *chandraloka* is a soft layer exists by the side of the sun and regarded as a pleasant place in the heaven. Gods like the presence of *jiva* at this point. *Jiva* that becomes the object of displeasure of the gods, go to the hell. Pure souls are loved by god while the impure souls are punished.

Nevertheless, staying in the heaven for several years *jiva* is not liberated and it comes down to this earth in the form of a body. When a soul assumes a human body, it takes up the thread of spiritual evolution of its previous human birth and continues to evolve toward Self-knowledge. *Jiva* enters into the *chandraloka* unconsciously after completion of its virtuous deeds and then moves to the *pitriloka* (region or heaven - according to some, the orbit of the moon- inhabited by the manes or deified progenitors of mankind) which is a place of desires and attachments. *Pitriloka* is the aerial form of the desires and attachments covered in the mind of the human father of *jiva*. There upon, exhausting the wealth of the *karmas* of the soul, it returns again, by the same path by which it comes through, to space, and from space to air. Having become air, it becomes smoke; and having become smoke, it becomes mist. Having become mist, it becomes clouds, having become clouds, it becomes rains. Those whose conduct was pure or good will attain pleasant wombs, and those whose behaviour was evil, will attain the wombs of the evil and the impure ones.

When the soul falls down upon earth, it enters the plants through water. Some of the plants are consumed by both man and animal. When both the plants and animals

are consumed by men, they become part of their semen and it is first step of human birth.

Next question is whether the *chandraloka* or *shukla-paksha* (waxing of the moon) and *krishna-paksha* (waning of the moon) or *dakshinayan* (southern world) are the heaven and hell? The answer is in affirmative. Virtuous deeds of *jivatma* on the earth take him to the heaven after death and the individual soul reaches heaven through *shukla-paksha* or the waxing of the moon. Contrary to it vicious or sinful deeds committed by *jivatma* on this earth take him to the hell which represents darkness and sadness.

Here rises another question- human beings, animals, birds and other creatures die every minute. Do all these creatures take birth in the earth through rain and grains? This earth which depends upon the sun is the *karma-bhoomi* (land of action or earthly plane) of *jivatma*. *Jivatma's* true shelter lies in the manifestation of the *vishwa-manas* (cosmic mind). *Sukshma* or subtle mind that exists behind the physical universe is the place of manifestation. This manifested region is known as *maya-prakriti* (*maya* is fundamentally inscrutable and *prakriti* is the set of eternal indestructible) belonging to *mahamaya*- *mahamaya* is devoid of delusion that pertains to material objects). It is under the influence of the *mahamaya* or the pure consciousness that *jivas* come down to the earth in numerous small conscious forms. Once *jivatmas* acquire physical bodies, they are known as men and women and their conscious mind is always indulged in the worldly objects as a result, they are unable to know their original home.

Illuminated zone is the original home of *jivatma* where there exists neither birth nor death, neither sorrow, nor grief. *Jivatma* attains the extreme state of mind of purification and becomes identical with the eternal core. This is the path of the *brahmaloka*.

**Brahmaloka Marg:** *Jivatmas* of the individuals who leave the earth after gaining self knowledge climb upwards through the *sushumna* meaning "very gracious" or "kind" and is also the name for the central *nadi* (channel or stream) in the body. Anatomically, the *sushumna* runs down the central axis of the body, through the spinal cord. The *sushumna nadi* is the most important *nadi* of the astral (emotional) body. *Jivatma* cross the *brahma-randhra* (evolving centre of the brain) and float towards *devaloka*. They first reach *adityaloka* through crossing *agniloka*, and *vayuloka* and other different *lokas* (*indra*, *varuna* and *prajapatiloka*) and at last reach *brahmaloka*

and reside there in the presence of the Absolute. *Maha, Jana, Tapa* and *Satyaloka* are described as Aditya, Varuna, Indra and Prajapati respectively.

### **Do the transmigrated souls take births as animals and birds?**

Yes. All the creatures taking births in this earth rotate here. Influence of the earth's gravity exists in the latent imprints of the subtle bodies. It is said that individual souls pass through many cycles of births and deaths, and live upon earth as humans, animals and other living beings until they are liberated from the bonds of Nature. Rebirth facilitates the gradual progression of souls from ignorance to knowledge, untruth to truth, darkness to light, and death to immortality. Though body and mind are different of these creatures yet they are the same in the form of *atma* (soul) and there exists a conjunction between all the mind and the *vishwa-manasa*.

Every individual is compelled to be engaged in some activity or the other, which includes voluntary and involuntary acts. Acts are inseparably attached to effects, both good and bad, and these are governed by motives prompting these acts. This is the law of karma and the basis of every individual's existence through the cycle of birth. It is eternal law not framed by any human being. This is also called *ritam* (ऋतम्) is eternal order and is an ethical principle linked with the notion of cosmic retribution through which expansion or development of universal system of creation continues since time immemorial.

Subtle bodies acquire invisible aerial forms after death with all their good and bad imprints and they get their new nature or condition as per their *karma*. Then, they proceed to the *devyan* or *pitriyan* path. Gravity of the earth draws them towards this earth and these *jivatmas* take up new physical bodies and start a new life. *Jivatmas* always depend upon the *karma*. *Karma-deha* is also known as subtle body and the mind of this subtle body is known as transmigrated soul. Every soul is a circle. The circumference of this circle is nowhere but its centre is in the body. Soul is bound to the cycle of births and deaths mainly because of desires and desire-ridden actions. At this stage, soul carries with it a small residue of the mind consisting of dominant desires and tendencies as latent impressions (*samskaras*). They become the blueprint for the soul's next birth. The *karma* decides where *jivas* will go and how long they will stay in the earth.

Supreme Soul or Paramatma is death-less, decay-less, timeless, cause-less and space-less. It is birth-less, constant eternal and ancient. It is not slain when the

body is slain. It is *sat-chit-ananda*. Human being can have the realization of this eternal Self. For that, one has to practice renunciation, cultivate virtues, perform obligatory duties selflessly, surrender to god and lead exemplary lives pursuing the highest knowledge, fixing their minds completely upon the Self or the Supreme Self. At this stage, human being can have the *darshan* of the *paramatma* through pure intellect.

### Is the Death Chasing the Creatures?

Death is inevitable in the life of all creatures. Death is the last scene in the drama of the life all creatures. It is chasing all of us since our birth but we just ignore it for many reasons and deeds which make us always busy in our prime time. Sound of its footsteps starts ringing in our ears once we advance towards ageing because we by that time are suppressed with sorrows, failures, ailments etc. Death cannot be avoided and should be welcomed. It is not our enemy; instead it is the other side of the coin. Death is not the end of life. Life is one continuous never-ending process. Death is only a passing and necessary phenomenon, which every soul has to pass in order to gain experience for its further evolution.

However, god does not let the people know in advance the details of rebirth. There might have been no discipline in the human mind and human society had god allowed the people to know about the rebirth in advance. Also, people might not have the urge to know the existence of the god had they knew it in advance. It is, therefore, the Creator of this universe does not disclose what happens before birth and after death.

Why will the human being accept the words of the god? It is the nature of the human being to search or find out everything. The mind is gifted to the human being by the god and this mind remains always hungry to collect knowledge. This mind also enquires itself about the existence of the being- where I were before birth and where I will go after death; will I continue to live after death? The problem of life beyond death has ever been a most fascinating one from time immemorial. Man has always been intrigued by the question, 'What becomes of the soul after death?'

One devotee requested me to write a book on what happens after death. The book, he says, will deal with the common curiosities of the people – why the obsequial rites (*shraddha* ceremony) and *pinda-daan* (*pinda daan* is a mandatory ritual which is to be performed post death. *Pinda Daan* gives an ultimate relief to the departed

soul and paves way into the world of peace) are performed? Do these processes help *jivatma* to take rebirth soon? How long it takes for rebirth in case of accidental deaths? Human being understands the state of liberation and is inspired to get it if he knows the mystery of birth and death.

### **What actually happens before and after death?**

Question of rebirth, or life after death, has remained an enigma through the ages. We all are moving towards death immediately after birth. There exists no life without death. Life and death are two sides of same coin and it's a natural process, can never be changed. Sorrow follows the happiness, loss follows the gains and darkness follows the light. In the same way, death follows the birth and life and death are certain for both the theists and atheists. People confront death at any time. It is like the warrant that chasing all the creatures in this earth. Death which is also known as *Yama* (God of death) is scared by all-even the lower creatures too have fear of death.

Usually, it is seen that the terror of death haunts the people with the advancement of their age. At this point, question arises why are we not ready to accept the death? We may not want to get our existence perished. We want to be eternal. Our pure mind cherishes the dream of becoming eternity and this conception becomes stronger with the search of the god. People realize the knowledge of truth that death is not real when their conception of the Absolute becomes clearer. They come to know that gross body (*sthul deha*) dies and the self is not bound by birth and death; it is *nitya shuddha Buddha mukta anandamaya atma* (Eternal, Always Pure, Always Enlightened, Always Free and Bliss) and is thus eternal and timeless. In other words, death is a subject which is of the deepest interest to everyone. One day or other all must die. The terror of death overshadows the lives of all human beings. It brings considerably unnecessary sorrow, suffering and anxiety to the survivors who are anxious to know about the fate of the departed souls.

In whole of the world, death is glorified alone in India. What is the nature of this life without death? Death is separation of the soul from the physical body. Death becomes the starting point of a new and better life. Death does not end the personality and self-consciousness. It merely opens the door to a higher form of life. Death is only the gateway to a fuller life. Birth and death are jugglery of *Maya*. He who is born begins to die. He who dies begins to live. Life is death and death is life. It is, thus, establishes the concept of immortality of the soul.

It is the soul that enlivens moves and directs the body, mind and the senses. The Supreme Soul is self-consciousness, self-awareness, self-delight, self-knowledge and self-existence. It knows itself and knows others. Everybody feels 'I exist', 'I am, Aham Asmi'. No one can say 'I do not exist'. This itself proves the existence of an Immortal Soul or the Supreme Self. This was realised by the Indian sages long long ago through meditation and Bhagavat Gita envisages this very concept. Hinduism signifies the concepts of eternity and rebirth. Second chapter of Bhagavat Gita explains this concept- just as a person gives up worn out clothes and puts on other new ones, even so does the embodied self give up decrepit bodies and enters other new ones. The soul accompanied by the vital air (*mukhya prana*), the sense-organs and the mind and taking with itself *Avidya* (*avidya* is similar to the concept of *maya*, the difference being that *maya* is universal illusion, while *avidya* is individual ignorance or delusion), good and evil actions and the impressions left by his previous existence, leaves its former body and obtains a new body. When the soul passes from one body to another it is enveloped by the subtle parts of the elements which are the seeds of the new body. This process of migration from one body to another is known as death which is known as transmigration of soul in philosophy.

Hence death seems to be a changeable condition. Common people in the materialistic world think in a different way though they are already aware of the concept of the journey of the soul. Their love and affection to their near and dear ones are so deep that they are not able to accept death of these dear and near people and they continuously cry and mourn the death. It reflects the *avidya* (erroneous apprehension through the illusiveness of the material world; admission of these unrealities as real) of the common people who totally forget their real nature in the midst of this material world. They build up a world of their own and apply all material feelings and attachments to this world. At last, they confront the death and their *sthul deha* (gross body) perishes.

Countless birth and death take place in this universe every second. It's just like an endless procession. Death is inevitable irrespective of rich and poor, caste and creed- everyone inches towards death. It does not mean that end comes with the death. Indian scriptures signify the concept of heaven and hell. Theory or the concept of *paraloka* (the other world) is not only complex but mysterious too because common people seldom know the developments occurring after death though details are available in the Indian context. It is said that once the soul leaves the body, the person becomes lifeless. The body is then cremated and its five elements move around the gross body. Common people cannot see it but the yogis observe it.

Shashibhushan Mukhopadhyaya in his book, Paraloka and Pret-tattva, narrates an incident that happened in America in November 1899. An American doctor hailing from Kansas City State wrote his experience in a journal. He became unconscious following typhoid. His pulse was lost for about four hours and the doctors declared him dead. He, however, felt that his gross body ascending towards his head. More interestingly, he experienced that *jivatma* (soul) came out of his body started moving around his head and it transformed into an invisible subtle body same as human body. This soul of the subtle body then started floating on the air in faraway places. The subtle body earlier tried to convince the people around it before it left the body but they did not hear it. This subtle body returned after four hours and entered into the gross body of the doctor after gathering lots of experiences. And, the doctor became conscious and recognised his family members and relatives.

Our scriptures say that the body the *jivatma* holds immediately after the death of the individual is not seen. It is the astral body consisting of energy, sky and air. This body does not fulfill the hunger and thirst of the subtle body as a result it suffers a lot. This aerial body face the heaven and hell as per its deeds in this world. Rituals of *shraddha*, (obsequial rites) and *pinda daan*, (a mandatory post death ritual) give an ultimate relief to the departed soul and paves the way into the world of peace. We will discuss it later in detail but we will now know the changes taking place in the body after death. It is already said that gross body (*sthal deha*) meets the death while the subtle body (*sukshma deha*) still exists. Gross body is cremated while the invisible *karmic* actions and thoughts of the subtle body float on the sky.

According to Upanishads, when a person is about to die, his senses are withdrawn into the mind, and the mind into the breath. He is unable to speak and his memory fails and intelligence stops to work. He is unable to hear and cannot smell. Infact, all the sense organs collect their sensory powers into *mana*. In other words, sense organs merge into *mana* (मन) which also stops to think over at this juncture. *Mana* takes shelter into *prana* (प्राण) which its turn takes shelter into the energy of the body. This energy or *teja* (तेज) submerges into the Supreme. In this way, gross body and its sense organs become senseless and the person dies.

### Is death a painful process?

No. It's like dropping of the dry leaves of a tree. Gross body becomes infirm owing to ageing, decrepitude and ailments. The casual body or *karana deha* (कारण शरीर) inverts from the gross body along with *jivatma*, the individual, and floats on the



air as subtle body. It is not true that death is a painful process. Those who derive the sinful deeds by their past *samaskars* (संस्कार), face the sufferings at the time of death. It reflects in the faces of these persons when they die- their faces become pale. On the other hand, faces of the pure persons (पुण्यात्मा) remain as bright as ever even at the time of death; it seems they are all smiling.

Literally, terror of death is not real because gross body adopts another *deha* after death. However, process of absorbing another *deha* becomes delayed in case of sinful deeds of the persons. People are generally under fear of death with the advancement of age in the absence of good deeds and religious life. They are scared of the arrival of the death. But death is not painful; it is just like a natural process - it is not painful when we cut our hair or nail, though both are the parts of our body. Hair and nail consist of the materials of the sky as thus we do not feel pain. Human body loses its vitality in the old age because of infirmity and ailments and thus the sense organs become powerless and intellect, memory and decision making capacity lose their power. In other word, human being loses all his worldly consciousness.

The *vishwa-manas* (विश्वमानस) makes *jeeva* unconsciousness for some time and brings out the subtle body through death. It is often seen that the dying persons feel relieved before the last breath- it is like brighten the flame before it ends up. *Jiva* becomes conscious with the touch of the *paramatma* and the ailing body gets a relief. It seems that the condition of the person may improve but it does not happen because life meets its end. At this stage, *jiva* carries with him a small residue of the mind consisting of dominant desires and tendencies as latent impressions (संस्कार). He regrets at his latent impressions that carry mostly sinful deeds. He laments at his failure on not spending quality time in remembering god instead in of doing unfair deeds. He looks much worried about his condition after death. He thinks to have strong desire of doing good in life and this concept must dominate the mind in the last moment before the last breath. This very feeling will enable the body to invert from the subtle body towards heaven.

### **Where does *jivatma* go immediately after death?**

It is said that subtle body or *sukhma sharir* still exists and *jivatma* leaves the body after a specific period. The life or vital force (*prana*) of the body enters into a particular *nadis* (नाड़ी) are the flowing currents of energy in the body) when *jivatma* comes out of the body. Then the *prana*, in the form of *jivatma* comes out through one of the organs depending upon the latent impressions of the human being. It means

*jivatma* can come out of mouth, eye, ear etc. Spirit leaves the body through a tiny hole (ब्रह्मरन्ध्र) at the crown of the head of the monotheists only.

According to many Indian sages, *jivatma* cannot leave the place after death following its attachment to the body and moves around the body in subtle form depending upon the individual attachment of individual *jivatma*. It loses this attachment once the body is cremated and it takes shelter in air and sky living in invisible form. *Jivatma* proceeds towards heaven if it possess virtuous deeds while it has to wait for rebirth in the form of *pret-deha* (spirit body) if it has committed sinful acts. *Brahmagya* (ब्रह्मज्ञ) person, on the other hand, does not wait for the rebirth.

Duration of the stay of *jivatma* in heaven and *prêt-loka* (world of evil spirit) depends upon its latent imprints (संस्कार)- means its good and bad actions. *Jivatma* returns to earth for rebirth once its virtuous deedset exhausted in the heaven. Similarly, *jivatma* staying in the *pret-loka* too returns to the earth after completing the period of suffering and miseries. This period of suffering varies in case of all *jivatmas* in *pret-loka*. These *jivatmas* can move in invisible form anywhere. Sweet fragrance covers the ambience in the presence of *jivatma* carrying virtuous deeds. On the contrary, foul smell covers the atmosphere in the presence of *jivatma* having bad deeds. Absorbing the *pret-deha* is known as *narak-bhog* (suffering in the hell). However, *jivatma* faces both happiness and sorrow in the *para-loka* (the other world) similar to that of this material world.

### How does *jiva* enjoy and suffer heaven and hell respectively?

We already know that *jivatma* adopts subtle body after death. Subtle body (सूक्ष्म शरीर) means the combination of subtle materials of five elements. The earth element (स्थिति व पृथ्वी तत्त्व) dominates the gross body or *sthoor sharir* while air element (वायु तत्त्व) dominates the *sukshma sharir* and it is for this reason that subtle body or *jivatma* adopts the aerial (वायवीय) form. *Jivatma* cannot form gross body unless it goes through the paths depending upon its *karmas* Acts are inseparably attached to effects, both good and bad, and these are governed by the motives prompting these acts. This is the law of karma and the basis of every individual's existence through the cycle of birth.

Heaven and hell are those places where *jivatma* goes to enjoy or suffer for its karma. *Sukshma sharir jivatma* leaves the gross body and exists as emotional imprints. Earth is the central point through which people move around and perform

their all activities. In similar way, ether and air are the driven forces of *sukshma dehi jivatma*. It is unsteady because it is the form of the nature hence it follows the law of the nature. But where does it go? It goes to heaven or hell depending upon its past deeds and latent imprints - good deeds take it to heaven while the bad deeds take it to hell.

It is already explained that the human beings mostly involved in vices such as lust, egotism, violence, anger, infatuation, jealousy, crave, terror, exploitation and such other negative activities become *pretatma* in subtle form and go to hell. All these activities are dominated by the earth material and thus *pretatma* takes shelter in earthly objects like, trees, dilapidated buildings and temples etc. after death. It has to pass through tremendous torments at this stage and it is also called as '*narak bhog*'. *Karma* is the only process that takes *jivatma* as well as *pretatma* to their destination - heaven for virtuous *karma* and hell for vicious *karma*. *Karma* leaves an imprint on our *mana* and it is called *samaskara* or latent imprint. This imprint goes down in case of unfulfilled attachments (वासना). Attachments are the bonds we form with the objects and people in the world. They hold us down and prevent us from achieving complete freedom from the hold of nature and *jivatma* adopts the form of *pretatma* after death following its bad *samskaras*. Those who practice renunciation, cultivate virtues, perform obligatory duties selflessly, and surrender to god and lead exemplary lives pursuing the highest knowledge, fixing their minds completely upon the Self or the Supreme Self qualify to achieve heaven. They again return to earth taking birth in a virtuous family. One should not lament at his past deeds instead try to adopt the good path that helps him to acquire positive *samskaras*. Recitation of Bhagavat Gita and Chandi will help people towards right direction.

It is already explained how the subtle body passes through different stages of *pitriyan*. Now question is which materials dominate the *pitriyan* path? It is the aerial material that dominates this path along with energy and earth. Attraction of the subtle body depends upon the materials that form this body. The subtle body takes shelter into sky and eats air once its mundane body perishes and suffers for its *karma*. However, rituals of *shraddha*, (the obsequial rites) and *pinda daan* can minimise the suffering of the subtle body. *Jivatma* then comes down to earth through its power of gravity and takes new birth and the cycle of birth-death-rebirth continues.

Men and women who acquire *punya* through virtuous actions proceed to *devyan* path after death. They are the illuminated existent of their subtle bodies. Since these men and women have increased divinity in themselves by doing good

actions, they are attracted by the gods and spontaneously proceed to the *devloka*. Subtle body takes shelter into the rays of fire and advances through *archi marg* (rays of light. This ray does not produce heat instead it is the form of illumination. If the person is gentle and pious soul, his subtle body ascends through sun rays. Other name of this sun rays is *archi* (अर्ची) or day (दिवस). Subtle body moves towards *devyan marg* in *shukla-paksha* and from there it again moves towards *Sambatsara* which is bright but soothing ray. It then goes to *adityaloka* and moves towards *swargaloka* or heaven where virtuous souls reside before reincarnation. As time goes by in the *swargaloka*, souls lose their subtle bodies and come down to earth.

However, a few pious souls feel the attraction of *brahmaloka* (it is the highest heavenly realm where the gods or celestial spirits live) in their mind and heart and become successful to enter into that *loka* through the help of *brahmagya* (ब्रह्मज्ञ) person. Region of *brahmaloka* is full with radiant. Inner *samskaras* of subtle body are converted into the form of *sat-chit-ananda* under the influence of this divine light. It waits in this stage till the end of *kalpa* ( a *kalpa* is the period of time between the creation and recreation of a world or universe. The process of dissolution and destruction of the universe that takes place at the end of each age or *kalpa* and precedes a new creation) and it merges with the Absolute during *pralaya-kala* ( प्रलय काल, time of destruction of the universe). Those who realise the *paramatma* deeply in their life span reach *brahmaloka* through *devyan marg*.

There are certain creatures like, animals, birds, insects, fish etc. that cannot move towards *devyan marg* and *pitriyan marg*. These creatures take birth, survive for sometime and perish. Individual souls pass through many cycles of births and deaths, and live upon this earth as humans, animals and other living beings until they are liberated from the bonds of Nature. There are total 84 lakh *yonis* (योनी means 'a place of origin' in general) through which human beings pass before take birth in human form and go to heaven and hell depending upon their *karma*. Rebirths facilitate the gradual progression of souls from ignorance to knowledge, untruth to truth, darkness to light, and death to immortality. In this way human beings enjoy the bliss while staying in the *brahmaloka*.

### **Gross body perishes but why does the subtle body alive?**

Souls are bound to the cycle of births and deaths mainly because of desires and desire-ridden actions. This cycle of happiness and sorrow continues until the souls become pure. It can be explained in detail through three *sharir* or bodies:

***Sthul sharir:*** It is a gross physical body of *jiva*. Sthul body is made of different parts and organ systems called "*Anga*" and "*Upānga*" in Sanskrit. For the lower animals and microbes, their gross body is microscopic and they have tiny *angas* and *upangas*. Out of 24 elements, the sthul body of living being consists of five gross elements known as *Pancha bhutas*. They are: *Prithvi, Jal, Tej, Vayu, and Akash*. Desires, *vasana* (*vasana* is a behavioural tendency or *karmic* imprint which influences the present behaviour of a person), attachment, egotism, *maya* (the power by which the universe becomes manifest; the illusion or appearance of the phenomenal world), *mamata* (it signifies the maternal affection of a mother towards her children, *Mamata* is a feeling which is universal in all kind of life forms) and many other such things that influence *jiva* in the course of its *karma* in this world and these factors are responsible for the creation of *samaskaras*. Good and bad *samaskaras* or imprints convert *jiva* to *jivatma*. *Jiva* becomes *paramatma* when it crosses all these *samaskaras*; means when it liberates itself from all bondages and *samaskaras*.

All *jivas* get the gross bodies from their parents and as already described that *sthul sharir* or gross body is made of five gross elements. Periosteum (अस्थि) of the gross body comes from earth and visual power and body temperature come from energy. Breathing is the act of air while blood, *pitta* (पित्त), *rasa* (रस) and *kapha* (कफ) derive from the source of water and sky element is the source of the formation of nail and hair. Rest of the body elements too derive from different gross elements. There are different types of gross body consisting of city of nine gates (नवद्वार or the material body). The embodied soul lives in the city of nine gates. There are nine gates in the body: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the genitals and the anus. There are numerous ways and forms through which this gross body is known. Besides, the gross body is divided into two main categories- male and female. Further, every individual gross body of male and female is introduced in this earth under numerous names, caste, *gotra* (clan), *sheel* (the quality of being modest) and lineage. Thus, this gross body or *sthul sharir* is better known as "I" that symbolises *ahamkara* or ego. Why does human being prefer to call himself as "I"? Reason behind it that *sukhma sharir* exists inside the *sthul sharir*. Now, let me explain what *sukhma sharir* is.

***Sukshma sharir:*** It is subtle, psychological or functional body. For higher animals it is psyche or mental body for the soul. It is not perceptible by our senses or sensory organs but its existence can be inferred and experienced in our day to day life. It is not visible but can be felt in conscious. There are as many as nineteen parts in the *sukshma sharir*. For example, five sense organs of the gross body have their