

Ananda

Newsletter of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

Issue No 6 – March 2019

Contents – First part of January 2018 Amrit Varta



Sound file:

Sri Ma Anandamayi.

<http://www.anandamayi.org/mmedia/mp3/Names.mp3> Sri Ma sings many names of God

Source of sound recording: Anandamayi Ma. Recordings. DIV_bMS00556_AU_011_A_Deliverable_Side_1. Performed by Anandamayi, 1896-1982. Suktal, India, Kirtan to many forms, November 1961-Repository: Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University. Digitized content accessed via <https://sds.lib.harvard.edu/sds/audio/430373459>

Videofile:

Sri Ma Anandamayi.

<https://youtu.be/pZU0-wA70Go> - Sri Ma at a private meeting in 1981.

Talk in Hindi with English subtitles:

Sri Ma Anandamayi

https://youtu.be/rq_oJegRQiI - Sri Ma answers questions at the sanyam saptah at Ram Tirtha Mission in November 1974 - particularly on Advaita.

Sangha website <http://www.shreeshreeanandamayeesangha.org>

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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No. 1

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শ্রীশ্রীমা

MATRI VANI

Everything belongs to the Creator of the world; where this truth is revealed, sorrow cannot exist. Where there is *Kartritva* (the egotistic feeling that one is to the doer) only their happiness and sorrow exist. Hence one should try to know the creator. Where there are birth and death, it is natural that there should be reavement. Where there is the contact with the Creator, there is hope (of liberation). But if one is covered by worldly desires and hankerings, his habitation becomes longer and his hope of salvation becomes smaller.

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Happiness and sorrow exists in the world while one is ignorant about the creator, that is to say, while he is ignorant about oneself. Hence only try, try and try again to know Him. Be in the Creator's presence (through meditation) all the time and the reason why one is unable to continue being in dhyanayoga (practise meditation) is the cover of desire for worldly objects.

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"Why am I unable to take this name?" If even a little bit of this feeling of remorse awakens in a person, that too should you know as due to His grace. For the sake of full awakening one should always try to give time to satsang, discourse on Him, japa, meditation etc. One has got to oneself engaged for twenty four hours – there must not be any break, because the aim is to realize manifestation of the Infinite Self, whose continuity is without break. Verily, it is the true identity of one's own Self. Pitaji, who is whose son? Who is whose daughter? Where is birth? Where is death?

x

x

x

To be liberated from work for selfish purposes – that signifies coming to know oneself, whether as *prabu-dâsa* (the Lord and His servant) or as *purna aham* (the

self as the plenum) or as the all-inclusive soul. Yes, one must attain to *chetanā* (spiritual consciousness), that is, one must make effort for the manifestation of the *chetanā* which is hidden in oneself. Satchidānanda Svarūpa – the self as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss; He is the source of Light; the Source of Bhakti (devotion) and Shraddhā.

X

X

X

What is liberation? The manifestation of the true identity of the Self, attainment of one's self; to be completed and perfected in all dimensions. *Manushya*, man, is man *kā hosh*, the mind's attainment of consciousness. If you talk of the manifestation of that great Divine Consciousness, you cannot ask if a human being is capable of achieving it – that question does not arise. Where there is *Shivalinga* and the *Shaligram*, where is the stone? He Himself manifests in the form of *bhakti* and also in the form of *prema*. Each individual must strive to realize that supreme *bhakti* and *prema*.

X

X

X

Coming (to this world) and going (from that world) are both subject to *karma*. That is why it was said (at a previous *satsang*) that you should perform actions accordingly so that you set freedom from coming and going. Although everything is happening according to His wish, yet there is no awareness of that (in you). For that awareness to be awakened, apply all your force that it at your disposal (to *sādhana*). The end of coming and going takes place with the realization of God that is, the realization of the self. Everything belongs to Him indeed; He himself is there on one's or on wish, the wish of others, lack of wish and so on – also He is there in the wish for that (striving for God-realization).

X

X

X

Whatever boon you may receive from Him, you approach Him for that. Hence if you go to Him with your prayer for release from bondage, that too is very good.

X

X

X



In 1935 the idol of Shri Shri Kali was established by
Baba Bholanath in presence of Maa.



Famous temple of Sankatmochan Mandir of Kashi.

SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE

(Vol. VIII)

Baba Bholanath's *Salil Samadhi*

(9 May – 26 July)

- Gurupriya Devi

9 May 1938 Monday

Today we received a reply telegram saying that Ma is keeping well, but there is no change in Her *bhava*. She wants us to work the way She has told us. Just today we started out for Calcutta by train at 6 p.m.

10 May 1938 Tuesday

We arrived in Calcutta at 8 a.m. After dropping Mejdi¹ en route we went to Shachidada's place and talked about Ma and Bholanath until quite late. Then we accompanied Didima to her place. Today is Ekadashi². We had breakfast at Didima's, then visited a few people on the way at doorsteps of their homes, getting to Birla's Shive Temple around 1 p.m. At dusk Ramtaranbabu, Gopinathbabu, Shachibabu and Yatishbabu visited us along with their families; our conversation lasted until 11 p.m.

Everything seems to be in flux and our concerns dominated all conversations. Shachidada informed us that a letter came from Nareshbabu from Dehradun. In it he mentioned that Bholanath's body had been taken to Haridwar and given *Salil Samadhi*³ and that there remains no change in Ma's *bhava*. There is no other news.

We heard from Yatishdada's mother that a few days back her younger daughter Butu dreamt she had gone to a Kali temple. In the temple she saw that Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee was sitting with Her legs folded in Vajrasana next to the idol of Kali. The priest gave flowers to Butu for the puja, and when Butu uttered the mantras and offered the flowers at the feet of Ma Kali, she saw all the flowers falling at the feet of Ma Anandamayee. Butu was bewildered and thought, "How is it that I am offering flowers at the feet of Kali and at the same time they are falling at the feet of Ma Anandamayee?" Again she said the mantras mentally concentrating hard and

offered the flowers at the feet of Kali thinking this time Kali Ma would accept her offerings, but then again she saw her offerings falling at the feet of Ma Anandamayee. In this way, her doubt was cleared and on seeing this she woke up from her dream.

At night Shachidada came. He said, "From a letter sent by Naresh from Dehradun to his brother Bhupesh we learned that they took Bholanath's body at 2 a.m. from there and set out on their journey. Then on reaching Haridwar, they accorded it a *Salil Samadhi*. There is no change in Ma's *bhava*. No other news is there."

I remembered that during the Haridwar Kumbh, one day at around midnight, when everyone else was sleeping, I was with Ma. Suddenly Ma told me, "Go, call Bholanath." I did so and brought him to Ma. I was standing outside and could not hear what She told Bholanath. But from the next day on Bholanath was telling everyone, "You all will not have me for long. See what I do this *Sankranti*." My guess was that Ma must have told him something along these lines. Shankarananda Swami told Ma, "Babaji is talking like this." Ma said, "Is he saying this on his own? Is he not saying the obvious? Last night he was told so much."

Whatever Bholanath might say he really could not accomplish much. Once in Dehradun when Bholanath was not well, Ma was sitting in Her room with Phanibabu, Bhupatidada and many of us, when the topic about Bholanath came up. Ma said, "When one is told to do something and one promises to do so, if one does not act accordingly there will inevitably be suffering from your point of view⁵. At times he does not listen, preferring to have his own way. See, while at the Haridwar Kumbh, at midnight he was called and was told certain things, he replied, "Let me see." But actually he did not do anything. When talking to him I gathered that he would not keep his word, in spite of what he was told. I can see that even if one does not keep one's word, there is always some effect left on one's mind and body⁶. It is like leaving an impression. And again, do you know how it is? If there is a *Kheyal* for something, it must be said. It is like when you have saliva in your mouth you have to spit it out — just like that, what else to say? Results are bound to occur."

It seems that Bholanath at some point realized this. I saw one night when he was writhing in pain and suffering extremely from his illness, he called for Ma. As Ma entered his room he said, "Forgive me." Another day Ma called me aside and said, "Can you see? Bholanath does not have the sacred thread around his neck⁷."

Some time after, I remembered Ma narrating the following story (about Kailas) to me: "For a while Parvati had wanted to get *diksha* (initiation) from Bholanath. Standing at Lake Mansarovar, Bholanath was giving a mantra to Parvati; this body was also there for some time. Then from the lips of this body mantras started emanating and as a *Kheyal* arose, I told Bholanath, "See, Vedic mantras are emanating from my lips, will you listen to them? You are already wearing ochre clothes." Then Bholanath said, "When I was in Uttar Kashi, I learned the mantras of *sannyasa* and many more." Hearing that, this body kept quiet. Then when this body began to walk and the mantras were flowing forth, immediately Bholanath said, "Oh! Oh! this is a *sannyasa* mantra!" and with great joy and concentration he listened to the mantra carefully. Because this happened in this way and at that place, Bholanath had given himself a name pertaining to the *bhava* of '*Eko Brahma dvitiryo nati*' (Brahma is one and there is no second); Bholanath now has that *sannyasa* name.⁸ Later on during the Haridwar Kumbh when, at midnight what had happened at Manasarovar was discussed, he was asked to perform the rituals of *sannyasa*. So he went by himself and performed the rituals and returned saying, "I have completed the kriyas of *sannyasa*." He was then told, "If you can try to live in the ways of a wandering sadhu, it would be beneficial." That he could not do." Recollecting this much, I understood that this was the reason for his *Salil Samadhi*⁹. Ma went on to say that Bholanath had expressed a desire to be initiated into *sannyasa* by the Tirtha Sampradaya (one of the ten orders of *sannyasa*). Later on when in Dehradun he was sent to get initiation from the Tirtha Sampradaya, but he was not successful.

11 May, 1938, Wednesday

We received two detailed letters from Bhupatidada. He wrote one letter to Shachidada and another to me. He wrote to me, "Whatever had to happen has happened, what will happen in the future we cannot say now. I do not know if you have any idea of this, but from five days prior to Pitaji's demise, Ma started visiting his room every hour and nursed him. (For two-three days we ourselves were witness to this). At the time of his death Ma was again at his bedside sitting near his head and doing some kriyas by passing Her hand from his *brahmatalu*¹⁰ down to his forehead back and forth repeatedly until he breathed his last. There was absolutely no change in Ma's expression nor did She look perturbed. After Bholanath's demise, Ma told us the story about his *sannyasa diksha* on the way to Kailas and revealed his *sannyasa* name. Ma said that She had already told you this once before."

In his letter to Shachidada, Bhupatidada wrote, "Bholanath received *sannyasa* mantra from Ma at Manasarovar. The name Ma gave to him was *Tibbatananda Tirtha*. On 6 May, 1938 at 9:15 p.m. Baba's soul left his body. He was around 56 or 57 years old. The same night Hariram, Yogeshdada, Sadananda, Shanti and I took his body to Haridwar and gave him *Jal Samadhi*¹¹ and then returned to Dehradun. There is no change in Ma's *bhava*: the vermilion on the head, the white conch bangles — nothing has changed.¹² Just as before, She still has a smiling face, the same way of talking, eating and so forth. There is absolutely no change. She is imperturbable as ever. Ma says, "When was I ever a wife, in the real sense, that I can now be widowed? But, I am ready to adjust to the way you all want me to. Know that I am always the same." So, do not be worried about Ma. In keeping with the traditional rituals for *sannyasis*, on the 16th day following Bholanathji's passing (21 May), we will have a *bhandara* here and at Haridwar." Many more details followed.

At night, Shachidada brought a card written by Yogeshdada to Keshtobabu. On it he had written, "Early in the morning on the day of his death, Baba expressed his wish to eat rice and Ma Herself supervised the preparation of mashed cooked rice, mixed with lentil soup and had it sent to Baba. He asked, "Has Ma eaten?" We said, 'No.' He then said, "First you feed Ma." Ma went to the room and said, "All right, give me a little." She took a tiny morsel and then Baba said, "Ma! feed me a little now." Ma complied and his face brightened up and in that moment it seemed he would get better. Baba is now addressing Ma as Ma and She responds, "Yes, Ma is here, why?" and goes closer to him." On the day of Baba's death Ma was sitting at Baba's bedside near his head from sunset on. At 9 p.m. She asked us to start singing Kirtan. We did so and it was after this that Baba left his body. We took his body to Haridwar in a bus and immersed it in the Neeldhara stream of the Ganga at 3 a.m. and then returned to Dehradun.

(to be continued)

1. The second elder sister among three or more.

2. The eleventh phase of the moon, considered auspicious for rituals like fasting etc.

* Brahmacharis, widows and persons observing spiritual discipline take simple, *sattvik* food on Ekadashi. Didi and others breakfasted at Didima's because they were not to take other kinds of food at other places.

3. Internment in water.
4. Transit of the sun from one zodiacal sign to the next.
5. From Ma's point of view there was neither enjoyment nor suffering.
6. Some positive effect of the very thought of doing something good, though the act does not happen to take place.
7. During the ritual of *sannyasa diksha*, a person gives up all possessions and symbols of caste, creed etc., including the sacred thread.
8. Bhôlanathji's *sannyasa* name: Tibbatananda Tirtha.
9. *Salil Samadhi* or *Jal Samadhi*: the words *Salil* and *Jal* are used interchangeably, meaning 'water'. This ritual is the immersion of the deceased *sannyasi's* body in the holy waters of the Ganges or one of the other sacred rivers in India; it is a special ritual meant only for *sannyasis*.
10. The top of the head, the seat of the highest *Chakra*, *Sahasrara*.
11. See footnote 9.
12. The reference is to the tradition in Bengal for widowed women who remove their bangles and cease marking the parting in their hair with red vermilion. According to the orthodox tradition, Bengali Hindu women begin wearing conch shell bangles and the use of vermilion from the day of their wedding and give up the same when widowed.

* * *

YA DEVI SARVABHUTESU

MA IN COMPANY OF GREAT SPIRITUAL LEADERS

- Dr. Premalata Srivastava

(continued)

Swami Krishnananda Avadhootji

Swami Krishnananda Avadhootji was a Vedantist, who met Ma for the first time in the 1940s. Very much impressed by Her darshan, Avadhootji remained in Ma's company until his death at Ma's Vrindavan Ashram, where he stayed for a long time.

Avadhootji graced almost all the celebrations at Ma's Ashram. His contribution towards the consecration of Vrindavan temple and installation of the images is immeasurable.

Hari Baba

He was born in a respected highly educated Sikh family of Gandhabal village (District Hoshiarpur, Punjab) on the day before Holi Purnima in 1885. His passion from his childhood was meditation. He was studying in the Punjab Medical College when his family insisted that he get married. He straightaway came to Hoshiarpur and devoted his life and time in the service of his Guru- Swami Sachchidanandaji. He stood for hours, fanning his Guru. His devotion to his Guru was praiseworthy. That quality was in evidence much later when he stood for hours during the Rasleelas and other leelas to fan the various idols. He never used to sit during these occasions. He said he saw neither Ram nor Krishna during the fanning, he saw only his Guru instead.

Due to his stoicism, he wanted to take '*Vidwat sannyasa*'. He meditated hard for six years at Prayag before going to the Punjab frontier for Sadhana and Bhajan. After taking *sannyasa*, he studied the Vedas and related scriptures in depth.

Hari Baba never wasted a moment in his life. He woke up at 2-3 o'clock, much before dawn. When he went for his morning walk, people used to set their watches. He had a good sense of humor. Once Baba was going somewhere across the river. He was accompanied by some 20 people. When he boarded a boat, the boatman

said, he would not take any fare from him and his company. He only asked Baba to point out those who were going along with him.

Baba replied, "My dear, I am alone. There is nobody with me."

Hari Baba travelled a lot and met new people and Mahatmas. In 1915 when he was roaming as an ascetic through Anup Nagar, Hari Baba met Oriya Baba. The meeting gradually turned into a great relationship. Similarly in 1922, the traveler Baba reached Ganwa village on the banks of Ganges in Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh. Making this a centre, he spread Harinam in the surrounding areas.

These area were low-lying, and therefore prone to flooding every year. He was deeply moved by the plight of the villagers due to the losses caused by the floods. The 'Karmayogi' then decided to construct a dam there. It was a herculean task. Repeating Harinam all the time Hari Baba himself together with villagers took up the challenge. They piled up maunds of earth to construct a 24 mile long dam across the Ganga without any Government assistance and in just six months. By doing so, he saved the lands of hundreds of families.

Hari Baba's Ashram is located on this dam which has been the venue for several celebrations. For thousands of people of 'Bandh Dham', it is Hari Baba personified.

Attending the Maharashtrian Sankirtan Mandal's function at Wardha Hanuman Garhi was a turning point in Hari Baba's life. It was at this function that he manifested eight pure moods of Bhaktiras. From this moment, Hari Baba remained intoxicated with Bhaktiras and began his quest for this. He read the literature of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and visited the sites of his *leelas*. Chaitanya became God for Hari Baba, who preached His name throughout the rest of his life. At the time he was taken for granted as the foremost representative of Chaitanya Dev in spreading God's name.

Once Hari Baba recounted his experience, "I was a confirmed Vedantist earlier. I always preached and studied Vedanta. Once I went to Wardha where I attended a wonderful Kirtan recital at a Maharashtrian Mahatmas's Ashram. When I was listening to this Kirtan, a unique 'Bhagavat Prem' came to me from within. And that was the end of my knowledge of Vedanta."

Hari Baba was a rare soul whose pure and ideal character was difficult to emulate. He was regarded as an Avatar of Ragbunathji, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Mahabir and some even regarded him as a Siddha Yogi.

After meeting Sri Ma in 1944 at Dehradun, they gradually came closer. On Baba's request the Holi festival became Hari Baba's festival. Ma's functions were now better organized.

One day Hari Baba was coming to Ma's Ashram at Dehradun. On Ma's direction, Vibhuda and others stood at the Ashram gate with musical instruments. The moment Baba arrived, they began chanting Kirtan. Baba reached Ma and prostrated. Ma too did the same. It was a rare treat to watch these meetings of great personalities.

Hari Baba and Avadhootji accompanied Ma to several places on North and South Indian tours. Wherever he stayed, he continued with his satsang as usual. He used to do Kirtan with a big gong in his hand, all the time on the move. After becoming ill, he was compelled to do Kirtan in a sitting posture.

Ma has said many times, "Compared to what Hari Baba has done for this body, little has been done by this Ashram for him. You cannot imagine the variety of the ways he will welcome this body, make arrangements for this body to sit in a car, or on elephant back; he will walk on foot with a Kirtan party facing this body. He used to invite this body for a month-long program of Kirtan, Satsang, Rasleela etc. at Bandh Ashram during Holi festival together with other saints and seers. Prabhudattji's happiness knew no bounds. All these Babas took this body to Mahatmas, saints and Pandits, otherwise this body was staying in one place."

When Hari Baba read the scriptures, particularly at the time of reading 'Matridarshan' or Didi's book, he would ask questions to Ma. She would reply recounting very old incidents. These Satsangs were unique. Ma said, "You will hear the way you beat the drum." Baba was a perfect drummer. When in Dehradun Baba stayed at Kalyanvan, he called it 'Vaikunth', the abode of God. At nightfall, he and his disciples read the Hanuman Chalisa (Prayer) loudly while dancing to the rhythm of the reading. Hari Baba's fair complexion, grey hair and the yellow band on his forehead heightened the charm of his personality as well as the environment.

At Vrindavan, during Jhulan Purnima at his Ashram, Hari Baba himself seated this daughter on the swing. Nobody can believe that someone else can sit on the swing at Vrindavan Dham that was meant for the deity. But Baba would not bother about this, he would accomplish what he decided to do.

That is why this body says, "It is Pitaji who brought this body into the society of saints. He took this body to several Vaishnav centres and introduced it to the

Mahatmas. Though the initial response to this female body was guarded. Later all Mahants and Ashram heads gladly invited this body to their temples and Ashrams."

In the summer of 1947, Ma was in Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun. Hari Baba too was there in Kalyanvan with his followers. One young couple came to Ma with their 4 years old child Ramlal, who was then seriously affected by typhoid and pneumonia. One day during Satsang, the child's mother came rushing to Ma's feet and cried aloud, "Ma! you must save this child. You will have to, Ma."

Ma looked at Hari Baba who instantly arranged for Kirtan, Japa and Durgapath etc. Hari Baba himself did Durgapath. The Kirtan Mandali made frequent rounds of the place where the child lay. When Baba was doing so much Ma was bound to have Her Kheyal. She arranged for regular, uninterrupted Japa and on the 14th day between 1.45 a.m. and 2.15 a.m. asked Didi to touch the body of this patient and do Japa. Ma had visualized something during this time. By Baba's effort and Ma's Kheyal, the child left the Ashram after he had recovered. Now he is an Engineer working in California.

On March 22, 1948, festivities were going on Hari Baba's Ashram on the dam. Returning from Hari Baba's Satsang, Ma called three Brahmacharis privately and asked them to stage a Leela before Hari Baba and Oriya Baba.

"Two of you dress as pilgrims visiting Kedar-Badri. As if going to Kedarnath, reach Oriya Baba and worship him as Kedarnath. Tell the audience he is really Shiva and then pointing to the ladies and call them Mother Bhagavati. Similarly, as if going to Badrinath, go to Hari Baba and worship him as Badrivishal. This is how the Leela on Ma's direction was played out before them. Once Baba was in Dehradun, several devotees of him had come there from the dam-Ashram. The following day was Guru Purnima. Hari Baba after consulting Ma said, "To plant the panchavati in Her new Ashram the place needs to be cleaned. My people know the job well. We will therefore start the work after the morning Kirtan." Baba asked Didi to arrange for tools etc.

Next morning, Baba started as planned and told his disciples, "It is Guru Purnima today, even if you lose your life in serving Ma, do not stop the work."

Amidst heavy rains, they worked up to 12 noon when Baba asked them to do Kirtan and celebrate Guru Purnima. With Baba's direction the disciples were ready

for Kirtan, which went on without break for two hours. The downpour reduced and the disciples saw Ma and Her followers at a distance, smiling at them.

One day, Hari Baba read the 'Chaitanya Charitramrita'. He was translating instantly from the original Bengali publication. He said the stage of a Bhakta is much higher than the stage of union. Mahaprabhu's Leela was over 48 years out of which he spent 24 years in that rare special mood (Prem Bhava). In the last 12 years, he was in 'Madhurya Ras' (pleasant mood). Only the lovers, the Gopis have accessed to Bhagvan's Prem Bhava. Not even Brahma, Vishnu and Kailashpati can reach there.

Hari Baba used to enjoy Mahaprabhu Leela and Ras Leela. Swami Purushottamanandji had written a book 'Swapna Vilas' on Mahaprabhu's Leela. On 5 October 1967, he presented the scripts to Ma and Hari Baba. Similarly Swami Premananda wrote the Gouranga Leela in 14 years and showed it to Baba and Ma. This Leela was played so well that various onlookers including saints and seers could not stop their tears.

Once Hari Baba was in the Jhusi Ashram of Prabhudattji. Prabhudattji wrote to Didi that Hari Baba was himself supervising the cleaning work before Ma's arrival. In fact, he was asking the disciples why they were working so indifferently and why they did not show respect and faith since Ma was coming.

Brahmachariji has written, "Faith and respect are not commodities. When Ma is asked to give, She laughs at this demand saying, I am your little daughter."

During Satsang discussions on religions topics were held. Once Baba told of an incident. There was a thief who had a change of heart after meeting a Mahatma. The Mahatma initiated him, telling him that he had a new life from that moment onward. He should not continue that profession. Sometime later, the thief was taken to the king who asked him whether he had stolen some things. The thief who had now turned over a new life said, "No sir, not in this life." In those days, hot iron balls were placed on the palm of such suspects. If they were found to be cold after that, the person was thought to be innocent. The same was done with this man too. What faith he had in his Guru's words - the ball cooled down and so he was found not guilty.

Hari Baba said, "Ma does not belong to creation, She belongs to the Creator. She had no previous birth nor would She be born again."

Hari Baba was asked why She had taken a body.

Hari Baba replied that She took that form for the welfare of humanity. She lived with Her husband as his daughter. She was self-initiated. All the Sadhana exercises (Kriyas) took place automatically in Her body. She is the personification of Divine grace.

The last 25 years Hari Baba spent mainly in Vrindavan or Kalyanvan, Dehradun - mostly in touch with Ma. He left his mortal coil in the presence of Ma at Kashi Ashram on 3 January 1970.

Swami Akhandananda Saraswati

Swamiji, the renowned scholar of the Srimad Bhagavat, too came in touch with Ma around the time that Hari Baba knew Her. He met Ma at Hari Baba's Bandh-Ashram festival.

Swamiji inspired by Oriya Baba took initiation from Shankaracharya Sri 1008 Brahmananand Saraswati. He was an excellent speaker on Srimad Bhagavat Krishna Leelas and Braj Leela flowed from his mouth in his own lucid style. When he was just 10 years old, he took the seat of an Acharya and first explained the Srimad Bhagavat. The function was organized by his grandfather who formally seated him to speak.

Sri Ma organized the Bhagavat Saptah and 'Pakshik Bhagavat' (fifteen days) on several occasions. In 1950 during the Purnahuti of the Savitri Mahayajna at Kashi Ashram, Swamiji graced the occasion and spoke on Srimad Bhagavat. Those days the crowd swelled so much that no space was left on the bank and the eager listeners would anchor their boats nearby and listen with rapt attention from the boat.

Once such a large Srimad Bhagavat function was organized at Kashi Ashram from 21 January to 6 February 1970. A huge pandal was erected in the compound of Sri Ma's hospital. Thousands of people attended Baba's discourses. At other times also whenever Baba visited Ma, he was requested to speak.

In one of his lectures, Swamiji said, "One must work with total involvement and full devotion." He gave an example.

Among the Sikh Gurus, one had a son and a disciple. The Guru asked both of them to construct two separate platforms. When they did so, the Guru asked them to destroy and rebuild them as they were not up to his expectations.

The same exercise continued for days as after the platforms were built, the Guru asked them to rebuild it again as it was not up to the mark. Then the son lost his patience and told the Guru, "I cannot make a better platform, please ask me to do some other work." The disciple however continued to build and rebuild according to the Guru's directions.

One day his Guru asked him, "What is the matter? All you are doing is making a platform." The disciple said, "I derive pleasure by following your orders. Building and destroying is my job, giving orders is yours." Guru was delighted to hear this. After his death, his disciple and not the son took his place.

Swamiji said, "One must get pleasure from doing his duty whether he is a Sadhak, a learned man or a family man; everyone must do his work."

Ma said about Swamiji, "Swamiji is illuminated by the power of knowledge from within. The significance of his life was authentic knowledge and absolute faith in God, belief in the Vedas and sacrifice for others."

In 1968, during a Srimad Bhagavat Parayan at Naimisharanya, Swamiji said to Ma, "This Puran temple is ready. We must install the image of Puranapurush here." Ma instantly agreed to this proposal.

The image of Puranapurush was sculpted with the picture from Rajrajeshwar Shastri, who obtained this from his father, who used to worship it daily. Swamiji saw this picture and later published it in his magazine 'Chintamani'. The idol of 'Puran Purush' installed at Naimisharanya Ashram is based on this very picture. The image was consecrated in the presence of Sri Ma and other Mahatmas.

Swami Akhandanandaji, credited with writing many acclaimed publications, lived in Vrindavan during the latter part of his life. He visited Kankhal Ashram during the Atirudra Mahayajna in May 1981. On 19 November 1987, he left his mortal coil.

(to be continued)

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MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA DR. GOPINATH KAVIRAJ HIS ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY

- Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyaya

Philosophy is a pursuit of truth. The truth is veiled to the common eye and one has to pierce through the veil to see the face of truth. To connote this 'seeing' the Indian term for philosophy has been '*darśana*'. The savant whose life and philosophy this seminar has been privileged to discuss was a life-long seeker after truth and as such was a philosopher *par excellence* as well as a *darśanika* in the true sense of the term as he had seen that Truth face to face. In this lies the uniqueness of Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. Gopināth Kavirāj that he was at once a *śrotriya*, well-versed in all the *śāstras*, as well as a *brahmanistha*, firmly established in the supreme consciousness. He was a *Risi*, a seer who had seen truth in all its facets (*risir darśanāt*) as well as a *Kavi* who could communicate through faultless charming expression his realization of the Infinite. Those who were privileged to sit at his feet and had the good fortune of being bathed in the perennial stream of illuminating, vibrant words that flowed from his lips, alone can testify to the truth of the above statement.

To many Gopinathji was a mystic and not a philosopher in the true sense of the term. If a realised soul is termed a mystic, he was certainly one in every sense of the term. But there was nothing vague or mystifying in his expositions of truth. On the contrary, his reasoning was so lucid and faultless as well as logical that even a sceptic had to own the truth of his statements. So he was also an ideal philosopher. But did he contribute anything original in the field of philosophy?

To my mind his first and foremost contribution in the field of philosophy has been to set forth anew the true aim of all Indian philosophies. In fact he is the only Indian philosopher who has put us over again on the right track of philosophical pursuit. This may appear as a tall claim but to make the point clear let me quote his own words, where he beautifully expresses his own idea about the aim or goal of Indian philosophy:

“In India, philosophy especially in its earlier and truer form was intended to serve a practical purpose. Bare speculation is invariably condemned as waste of energy, in as much as it leads nowhere; speculation is deemed blind without the guiding light which revelation or higher perception alone can furnish. Thus the premises from which reason has to draw its inferences are naturally beyond its own reach and stand outside of itself.”

Gopinathji therefore clearly puts forth the role of reason in the search for truth by pointing out its limitations.

To quote again:

“Reason is, by nature, impotent and cannot in anywise overstep its data. It is not creative nor intuitive; its function is interpretation of facts. Its ultimate resort is therefore nothing short of direct experience.”

But if direct experience is to be adhered to, should we then base our reasoning only on the sense-data, which are limited, distorted and often wrong and confused? To this he replies:

“But as human experience is limited in its scope and is liable to error, the experience on which our reasoning is based must be conceived as infinite and free from all the defects incidental to erring humanity. This infinite experience is embodied in the revealed scriptures.” To those who want to discard revelation as mere nonsense or mental fancy, Gopinathji sounds a note of warning: “Reason, unaided by the light of this revelation would be a groping in the dark and would never be able to discover the truth which is incapable of analysis and synthesis.” Precisely for this reason, he points out, “to the general Indian philosopher, therefore, seeking to build up his individual system of thought of the bed-rock of supra-rational illumination contained in the Vedas or Agamas much in the same fashion as to the schoolmen of medieval Europe, reason is subservient to faith. ‘Believe and then know’, - *Sraddhâvân labhate jñānam* - this seems to be the motto of Indian philosophy.”

In assigning the right role to philosophy, Gopinathji states clearly thus: “Philosophy if rightly understood, is then only a step in cultivation of man’s life. To be at all fruitful it must work in subordination the data supplied by Revelation. Else it is apt to run astray.”

One may object that this subordination of reason to revelation is practically an abandonment of philosophy but Gopinathji strongly affirms that it is not so but on

the contrary only assigns its rightful place. He points out that 'in the general scheme of a man's inner culture the study of philosophy is given a secondary, though necessary, place:

âtma vâre dractavyah-srotavyo mantavyo nididhyâsitavyah? arutivâkyebhyo mantavyaceco'papattibhih? matvâ ca satatam dhyeya ete daroanahetavah.

This implies that the ultimate source of true knowledge is Revelation, but as the facts of revelation cannot be accepted without any questioning in the present state of our life, we have to study them with the help of our reason. As soon as it is brought home to us that these facts are quite possible and not irrational, the function of reason as a factor of our culture is fulfilled.

What then is the function? Gopinathji sets it forth very clearly thus: 'For this function is simply to beget a notion of possibility (*sambhâvanâbuddhi*) in regard to a certain proposition and not of its certainty. Certitude can never be reached by the intellectual faculties (*cf. tarkâpratisthânât*). It has therefore a limited role viz. removing "the disturbing factors of doubt (*asambhâvanâ*) and perversion (*viparitabhâvanâ*) in order to make the mind fit to 'receive the truth.'"

He therefore concludes that "the process of rational demonstration (*manana*), which is implied in all philosophy, aims at removing this element of doubt and producing a belief that the proposition as laid down in the scriptures is likely enough." He also reminds us that "the word for philosophy in India variously appears as *nyâya*, *ânviksiki* etc, and the *Nyâyavartikâ*'s statement viz. *Samsayâdi bhedânauvidhâyini anviksiki* implies that philosophy is meant for dispelling doubts on the principle that *nânupalabdhe na nirnite nyâyah pravartate*. A categorical enunciation of the truth is not its province - it deals with reasons of things."

Having properly assigned the place of philosophy and also having indicated its important and indispensable role in the human pursuit for Truth, Gopinathji makes another significant contribution in the field of philosophy, which follows from the first viz. Truth, which is the single goal of all philosophies, is one and indivisible. He had such an all-embracing view that he never looked down upon any system of philosophy nor did he ever think of discarding any as useless. To him all the view points were real and true according to the respective realms from which they originated. To speak again in his own words: "It is easy to understand how different systems of philosophy, apparently conflicting with or subversive of one another,

originate. The highest truth, which lends itself to the light of supra-mental Intuition is indeed one and indivisible but it appears in diverse forms when looked at from diverse points of view corresponding to the capacities and tastes of the individual *sādhakas*. The difference in the formulation of the same single truth are unavoidable because he points out unerringly once again, "So long as the individualized consciousness asserts itself - so long as we are unable to dispense with 'mind' as an organ of knowledge - it is vain to hope for the attainment of *Absolute Truth*. Relative or partial truth is all that can be reached by human reason. And these relative or fragmentary truths or aspects of the Absolute Truth are held to be the immediate ends of the different systems of philosophy."

Does human reason then stand self-condemned by its own intrinsic nature and is there no hope for it to rise above the fragmentary or relative? Gopinathji here presents his all-comprehensive outlook wherein alone lies a great hope for all of us who are bogged in our narrow viewpoints, imprisoned in our hard shell of dogmas, creeds and systems of thought, when he reminds us that they (i.e. the different systems of philosophy) represent varying stages in the ascending order of the *sādhaka's* journey in quest of self-realisation. When pieced together and studied in the light of the resultant whole, they will present a sublime picture of synthesis, fraught with deep significance and interest to humanity. An indirect and veiled picture is this; but is the grandest within the reach of our mind. In this "piecing together and presenting a sublime picture of synthesis" lies the most significant contribution of M.M. Kaviraj and he was unparalleled in this field.

From the foregoing account one should not be misled to think that Gopinathji was an advocate of eclecticism. His piecing together was not based on the principle of getting the best out of everything but on the bedrock of a fundamental unity whose golden thread runs through all. He himself propounds the logic behind this synthesis thus: "One thing remains to be noted. The piecing together or co-ordination of the systems is possible, simply because there is at bottom a real unity. For all the systems pledge unconditional allegiance to revelation. It is in their mode of interpreting the scriptures, determined by capacities of the people for whom they are meant, that the systems vary. Even the Buddhist and Jaina philosophies accept in their own ways the necessity of this." In his unique manner of synthesizing the different systems of philosophy, Gopinathji used to invariably point out that the highest truth had been communicated through each of them though sometimes in a

concealed or a veiled manner and he, who has the eye to discern, will immediately discover the supreme reality through any one of them. For instance, we are generally of a confirmed opinion that the Samkhya-Yoga system of thought advocates a sundering of matter and spirit in order to attain *Kaivalya* or liberation. But it was only Gopinathji's discerning eye which could point out that even a definition of *Prakriti* or matter through an absolute purification and thereby bringing it on a par with the self or *Purusa* was advocated for the real *Kaivalya* in a sutra of Patanjali: '*Sattvapurusayoh œddhisamyē Kaivalyam.*' In this way, whichever system he taught or explained, orthodox or heterodox, contained flashes of that highest illumination and so he never despised or undermined any system.

This rare phenomenon became possible in him because of his wonderful clarity of intellect, which seized directly the unity behind all the diversities of doctrines or systems. In explaining the unity and the way to attain it, he affirms: "The unity of which Revelation is an expression, is transcendental. The *Risis* - the Sages and the *Illuminattii* - split up, by an apparent process of self-division, this unity into concepts of symbolical knowledge, arranged them in a certain grade of increasing purity and laid them before the intellectual faculties to play with. If rightly pursued, these will result in a wonderful clarification of the intellect, when the 'mind' will cease to work and vanish. On the bare soul, Truth will then dawn as a flash of lightning, dispelling all doubts and uncertainties."

Philosophies differ because our intellectual faculties differ, because our patterns of mind differ. We would not have mutually broken our heads if we had that integral vision which looks upon the different formulations of the one supreme truth as expressions through a certain grade of increasing purity. In this connection, Gopinathji reveals the secret of *adhikārabheda*, which is a fundamental thing in Indian philosophy. He points out that "this is the secret of what is technically called *adhikārabheda*, which means that not every man is capable of receiving every form of truth. The faculty of understanding develops gradually and in the course of this development, truths which once seemed unintelligible and vague begin to assume a depth of meaning and are accepted." He makes a prophetic statement when he says that "it is thus that the folly of one age is turned into wisdom in another. So with countries and individuals." Thus the *adhikāra* changes or shifts not only from individual to individual but even in a single individual according to his progress in *sādhana*. The term *sādhana* may be taken as a taboo in philosophy and we may be

accused of treading here on the grounds of mysticism. But Gopinathji understood by it the highest intellectual discipline, which is termed as *sat-tarka* in our ancient scriptures. Through it “the impediments that stand in the way of a man’s knowledge of reality” are removed and “the obscure truths are at once illuminated.” This is, however, gradually accomplished as a general rule and that is why “there are degrees in the receptivity of the mind.” He alone is an ideal teacher who instructs according to the receptivity of each of his students. Gopinathji supports his contention by quoting from two absolutely opposite schools of thought, one heterodox and the other orthodox, to show that this *adhikārabheda* was equally recognized by all and this *bheda* was only on the surface of the level of the mind underlying which was the *abheda*, in the realm of the spirit. He says: “This idea finds excellent expression in the following statement of the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*:

*Desanā lokanāthānām sattvāsayaśānugāhī
Bhidyante bahudhā loka upāyair bahubhiḥ punaḥ ||
Gambhīrōttānābhedenā kvacī co’bhāyalaksavāḥ
Bhinnā’ pi desanā’ bhinnā sunyatādvayalaksanāḥ |*

He continues: “This is from a work on Mahyānic philosophy. The same appears also in an even more precise form, in the words of Madhusudana Sarasvati, who is rightly reckoned as one of the greatest philosophers of India in the last millennium. Referring to the apparently conflicting views of the different Acharyas, he observes:

Nahi te munayo bhrāntāḥ sarvajñatvāt tesām.

*Kintu bahirvisayapravānānām āpātataḥ paramapurusaḥ the praveśo na bhavatīti
nastikyanivāraṇāya tathā prakāraṇābhedaḥ pradarśitāḥ*

Thus Gopinathji’s discerning eye discovered “that there is a real order in the system of Indian philosophy.” He proves convincingly that “the synthetic consciousness to which such an order reveals itself has ever been recognized in India.” He refers to the *Samksepasāriraka*, *Ātmātattvaviveka*, *Prasthānabheda*, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* and such other ancient texts of philosophy to support his contention and concludes that “this is merely to point out that there is a real spirit of unity, of aim as much as of methods, among the diversities of thought and activity according to Indian philosophers.”

We have gone at length to show how Gopinathji realised and demonstrated the fundamental unity behind all Indian philosophies. His own original philosophy was,

therefore, *Pūrṇa Advayavāda*, if it can be so termed and the means to realize it be called *Akhanda Mahāyoga*. Reality was to him one and indivisible. There was no dichotomy of spirit and matter. Matter is nothing but congealed or concealed spirit. There is no doubt, an element of *māyā*, which conceals or veils spirit but it is self-imposed and can therefore be removed at will. This *māyā* is deliberately or willfully imposed to make *līlā* possible and the world is therefore, not an illusion or hallucination, nor of the same stuff that dreams are made of. The relative world is the play-ground of the Absolute. We suffer because we are being crushed under the wheels of Time. Time must have a stop and the Eternal be manifested here and now. He was as much a realist as an idealist. He never dismissed the reality of the material world but he dedicated himself in discovering the supreme science, which he called *Sūryavijnāna*, which would reveal in its entirety the different steps through which spirit becomes matter, the ideal becomes actual. He was therefore deeply interested in the process of creation which revealed to him how spirit was immanent in matter. Beyond lies the transcendent form, which also attracted him but he was not attached to either of them. To him Reality was at once immanent and transcendent as well as beyond both. This he cryptically used to call '*svayam*', that is, beyond all formulations. He also felt that without the realization of Reality *as it is in itself* the redemption of the world will ever remain a far-off dream. There may be individual salvations here and there but to make all free was his sole and single dream. In the fulfillment of that dream lies the consummation of his philosophy. Let us dedicate ourselves to that ideal and by this alone can we truly offer our homage to this unique thinker and philosopher.¹

1. This Seminar paper was presented at the seminar on the Life and Philosophy of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, held from 23rd to 25th November, 1978 at the University of Calcutta.