

Ananda

Newsletter of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

Issue No 8 – July 2019

Contents – First part of April 2018 Amrita Varta



Sound file:

Sri Ma Anandamayi.

<http://www.anandamayi.org/mmedia/mp3/Premamayisita1.mp3> Sri Ma sings Premamayi Ma

Source of sound recording: Anandamayi Ma. Recordings. DIV_bMS00556_AU_008_A_Deliverable_Side_1. Performed by Anandamayi,1896-1982. _Premamayi Ma Sita Ram, Varanasi, India -Repository: Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University. Digitized content accessed via <https://sds.lib.harvard.edu/sds/audio/430372779>

Text file:

Commentary by Sw Kedarnath.

www.anandamayi.org/new/Ramtirthavid.pdf - on Sri Ma's answering questions at the samyam saptah at Rama Tirtha Mission 1974.

Talk in Hindi with English subtitles:

Sri Ma Anandamayi.

<https://youtu.be/vkAJXhi37Sw> Questions and Answers, date and location unknown.

Anandamayi Ma. Recordings. DIV_bMS00556_AU_128_Deliverable_Side_2. Performed by Anandamayi,1896-1982. _B. Das Gupta. tape 10(B)Repository: Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University. Digitized content accessed via <https://sds.lib.harvard.edu/sds/audio/430602098>

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

VOL.-22

APRIL 2018

No. 2

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MATRIVANI

“Do you know what this body says?- It does not go to anyone’s house, it does not eat anyone’s food, it does not talk with anyone, it does not look anywhere, Of whom and who? no such questions arise. Do you know what it means? It (this body) is always with its father, mother and friends. It is free; it neither comes nor goes. Do you understand?”

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“Hundreds of *Karmas* stored in life after life remain unknown, beyond the reach of one’s comprehension. If one is born in a human body, it is a matter of his good fortune if his human birth is successful (if he is able to avail the opportunity of performing good deeds and avoiding evil deeds). The human birth is the result of his *Kripa*; it is the fruit of past good deeds. Since the birth in a human body is rare, therefore a human being should adopt the path of the manifestation of humanity. ”

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“It is futile to hope for peace in *samsara* (worldly life). Try to stay with Him alone. Render service (to the people of the world, to family members, etc.), in the spirit of duty. Verily, *samsara* is not a place for happiness. If you hope for peace, take refuge in God alone.”

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“Love for God is the only desirable thing. He from whom you are born is your mother, father, friend, companion, Lord—everything. The Supreme Mother who has manifested you through her and has nourished you with the nectar of Her breast, the word by which you call this Being (namely, ‘Ma’), keep that word, each and every moment, attached to your mind and heart.”



ভাবাবস্থায় শ্রীশ্রীমা

* * *

“Take refuge in the being who is free from all fears; the entire world is full of fears. If you live surrounded by fears, won't you be fear-stricken? Here it is useless to hope for being rid of fears. It is one's duty to try to take refuge in God alone in order to be rid of all fears.”

* * *

“The act of tying a knot and the act of untying a knot-you may concentrate your mind in both. By contemplating the objects of worldly enjoyment, the mind forms only new knots. By concentrating itself on the contemplation of God, it tries to untie the knots.

* * *

“Do not consider calamity as calamity. It is a sin to think of calamity. What calamity? Whatever he does is for one's good. Under no circumstances should a person break down. Do remember at all moment – Gurudeva, you are doing only whatever is good for one; verily, all this keeps taking place in this world.”

* * *

“Who is a friend? One who turns a person's mind towards God. He is truly a great friend. One who diverts the mind from the Ishta and directs it towards death is a foe, not a friend; one who does not try to reform oneself is an *atmaghati* (Killer of oneself, one who commits suicide).”

* * *

“Pray at an appointed moment (chosen for praying each and everyday)—O God, manifest yourself in me. Make me your own. Show me the path.”

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SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG

Vol V

- Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

2nd Paush, Friday (17/12/1918)

Today it is scheduled to vacate the residence of Ramapura and move to the residence of Shivalay. The whole day was spent in the activities of shifting. After dusk, I went to the Ashram taking all my family members with me. Shree Shree Ma enquired about the conveniences and inconveniences at our new residence.

Swami Shankarananda was sitting near Ma. During conversation on various topics, he said, "Last night I could not sleep at all. Once it would so happen that as soon as I lay on bed, I was fast asleep."

Ma- "Was it only sleeping in bed? Was it not sleeping while sitting? Do you remember what happened in Vrindavan? (laughter among the listeners).

A Sadhu - "What happened in Vrindavan, Ma?"

Ma- "Once in Vrindavan we were sitting together and talking. During our conversation, I suddenly noticed that Baba (Swami Shankarananda) was fast asleep with his mouth open though he was sitting. And what a sleep! There was no response to calls. *Rasgullas* were kept near. I asked a person to put a *rasgulla* into Baba's open mouth. It was done. Even then Baba was not roused. When the syrup of that *rasgulla* trickled down his throat, only then he woke up!" (everyone laughs).

Ma- "In fact, before *rasa* (the nectar of God's love, divine bliss) gets inside a person, there is no awakening (to spiritual life) for him. Whether you call it sleep or *tamoguna* (darkness of ignorance, inertia), until its *moha* (attraction of worldly enjoyment) is removed, the taste of that *rasa* is not felt. Verily, He is *rasa-svarupa* (*rasa* itself) - call it *rasa*, *ananda* or *jyoti* (Divine Essenu, Bliss or Divine Effulgence) - that is his *svarupa* (true identity). Viewed from the worldly perspective, where there is *ananda* (joy), there is also *nirananda* (sorrow). Just as without the concept

of darkness, the concept of light is not grasped, without the concept of unhappiness, happiness cannot be understood, in the same way, if you talk of *ananda* The trace of *nirananda* remains in your mind; but when He is called *anandasvarupa* or *sukha svarupa* in the *adhyatmika bhava* (in the spiritual context), there is no trace of *nirananda* or *duhkha*; there it is only *ananda* and *ananda* alone, or it is not possible to say what it is – *ananda* or *nirananda*.”

Ma talked in this manner for some time and then all sat there in silence.

Ma said, “It is better to chant God’s name rather than sit with a vacant mind in this way. A vacant mind here does not mean a mind emptied of all thoughts. A vacant mind means a mind full of useless thoughts. Instead of filling the mind with useless thoughts it is better to engage it in the chanting of (God’s) name. For the mind refuses to remain vacant. Like a child, the mind wants to stay in the lap of one thing or another in a state of unrest. If you want to pacify it, give it good food. Kirtan, japa etc. are varieties of good food; the mind will stay quiet if you give them to it. The quietness of the mind means getting it immersed and lost.”

Saying these words Ma began to laugh. When no one came forward to discuss any topic with Ma, Kirtan was started. After listening to the Kirtan for some time we did pranam to Ma and left.

(to be continued)

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The search after truth is the one thing by which the shape of human life should be determined. Genuine desire itself opens the road to fulfilment.

Matri Vani (Volume II)

SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE

- Gurupriya Devi

Vol VII

Baba Bholanath's Salil Samadhi

(continued)

12 May 1938 Thursday

Nothing particularly noteworthy today.

13 May 1938 Friday

A letter from Yogeshdada arrived and in it he wrote, "Two to three hours before Bholanath's death Ma asked him, 'Do you remember the *sannyasa mantra*?' Baba replied, 'Yes'." Yogeshdada further wrote that Ma said Bholanath's passing should not cause anyone to waiver from their particular tasks and that all should carry on with determination the repetition of "*Nama*", performance of *Yajna* and other such related activities concerning *sadhana*." Ma's instructions are as irrevocable as God's - I keep noticing this all the time and it is gaining momentum day by day. She says, "Get on with whatever you have to do and do not get distracted." This is why She has sent Her orders to us today itself. Birth and death are the same for Her; so for Her no scheduled work should be hampered by these. Death is a daily event in the world. I am in awe of Her: She is more fierce than thunder and at the same time softer than a flower. Also, without this softness She would be incomplete.¹³ Moreover, how could we survive otherwise? Repeatedly She says, "All that is happening through this body is for you all, otherwise there is no reason for it to be here." The truth of these sweet words of Hers brings everyone to Her Lotus Feet.

14 May 1938 Saturday

Today we set out for Dhaka. Ma says we must get to Dhaka while the celebrations¹⁴ are going on. On the night of third *Jyeshtha*¹⁵ the *Tithi Puja* will be performed.

15 May 1938 Sunday

We arrived in Dhaka today. Jatu and Kanu met us at the station. Since they are not able to be in the company of Ma very often, they compensate for it and feel



Shri Gouri-Kedareshwar



Shri Shava-Shiva Kali Mandir



Idol of Shri Shava-Shiva Kali



Adhibas of Shri Narayan on the eve of Holi.

happy by having us around them. In this happiness, their respect and love for Ma is expressed.

They were very sad over Bholanath's demise and kept reminiscing and repeating stories about his last visit when he shared so much happiness with all here. The celebrations are being carried out as per orthodox rules and according to schedule. The ladies gather in the afternoon and sing *kirtan* for a long time. Continuous repetition of the "Name" is in progress and at least one person must keep it going so there is never a pause. The ladies sing *kirtan* very well until after dusk. The *kirtan* room gets filled with people. The ladies look beautiful as they move around in a circle in the evening clapping and playing the cymbals in accompaniment to the *kirtan*. Some of them sit in the centre of the circle and keep repeating the "Name". Sandal paste *tika* is on their foreheads. The gentlemen are outside during this period while the ladies carry on with their *kirtan*, chanting the "Name" in absolute abandon and gaiety. The sound of the sweet female voices singing the name of "Ma" brings delight to the heart; such nice and regular *kirtan* done by the ladies of Dhaka cannot be witnessed elsewhere. This is a matter of pride for the ladies of this place. Twice a week (Sundays and Thursdays) they surmount all kinds of obstacles of family life and come to join the *kirtan*. During this time an *asan* (seat) is also prepared for Ma in the *Nama Ghar*. A nice and pure feeling prevails. For these two days there is no worldly gossip amongst them and everyone comes with the sole aim of singing *kirtan*. Women of all ages, old, young and little girls, join in singing *kirtan* together. Today as I watched the ladies I was quite moved and so I have written about it. At 11 p.m. the gents and ladies gradually retired to their home. The Ashram has made arrangements for repetition of the "Name" by at least one person so "*Nama kirtan*" continues without interruption. I remained sitting on the verandah of the temple for a long time.

16 May 1938 Monday

In keeping with the traditional ways of worship, *Yajna* and *kirtan* amongst other activities were carried out. There is nothing important worth mentioning. Today also the ladies did *kirtan* for 2 to 3 hours. Then there was *arati* and later Kanu chanted "*Nama kirtan*" with everyone and did it very well. I liked it very much. Around 11 p.m. everyone gradually returned to their homes.

17 May 1938 Tuesday

Today is Ma's *Tithi Puja*¹⁶. It will be performed late in the night during the lunar date of *Krishna Chaturthi*. After the regular worship the door to the cave (underground

chamber) of the Kali Mata Shrine was opened. As per Ma's, order, Shree Yogesh Chandra Bandyopadhyay came and opened the door. We were not at the temple then.¹⁷ After opening the door he sent for us. When we got to the temple Kuladadada said, "Terrible news! Look at Mother Kali!" Right then and there with the help of a light, I saw the *murti* (statue/idol) of Kali. Her lower left hand had completely fallen off. "What is to be done now?" was the thought in everyone's mind. We decided that a telegram should be sent to Ma and in the meantime we would call someone to get the hand repaired. Once the hand of Ma Kali was repaired the door could be opened to the public. Ma had once said that in case some appendages or parts of the statue get disfigured then it should be repaired (like once before when thieves had broken one of the hands and it was then repaired). But in the case of a vital part, such as a human organ upon whose loss a human being would not survive, being disfigured or destroyed, then immediately the door to the cave should be permanently closed with a brick wall.

There was a lot of discussion on what should be done in the light of the circumstances. Finally it was decided to get the repair done as had been the case before. It was not certain exactly when the hand had fallen off. The hand could not be fixed in its original shape as it had fallen off from the shoulder joint so there was some question about it being repaired at all. All the same at midday, one Acharya was called and the hand was repaired and fixed. I heard from some devotees that once before when the wrist of the hand was fixed something special had happened with respect to the repair. After that Bholanath did the worship himself. That is why even after the hand was repaired, Kuladadada did not dare to do the worship. He decided to worship the *yantra*¹⁸ instead. Ma had been informed by telegram about all this. At 5 p.m. in the evening the door was opened to the public.

By sunset the public was stopped from entering the cave. Mother Kali's *puja* was done to the *yantra*. Many stayed in the Ashram to see the worship. People have a chance to see Mother Kali after a year and so they kept waiting. At 3:30 a.m., the moment of Ma's advent, the worship of Mother Kali began. The gents began singing *Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai*, after *arati* was performed. While sitting on the verandah many ladies viewed the worship of Mother Kali. It has been one year since the door was opened allowing everyone to see the Mother's idol to his or her heart's content. At dawn the worship and *arati* were finished.

18 May 1938 Wednesday

It is now the sixteenth day of continuous singing of the "Name" and it is supposed to end today. All arrived to join in the ritual and began singing away moving in a circle. They circumambulated the temple and Ma's hut while singing the "Name". Then incense was lit and they did the ritual of *loot*¹⁹. So many days of singing the "Name" had brought about a passion in the devotees' hearts. Gradually everyone left after having *Prasad*.

Until today everyone had a routine: they would come to the Ashram, and upon arriving they would be adorned with garlands and sandal paste. The seat for *Nama Kirtan* was prepared in Ma's hut and one by one they would occupy the seat and sing the Name "Ma, Ma." This used to be a day and night ritual. Sometimes some devotees would come and sing the *Padavalis*²⁰ in the room. The ladies come every day in the evening and sing kirtan. Hirandidi and her daughter Belun, and many others sing very nicely and most of the ladies have learned to play the small and large cymbals. Maroni, the daughters of Kuladadada and Amulyadada, Mukta and many others play the cymbals quite nicely. The ladies garland themselves and apply sandal paste and sing the *Nama*. The ladies meet at the ashram on Sundays for *kirtan*. The last time I was here I told them that Shree Shree Ma was born on a Thursday and if they could get together on Thursdays as well and sing *kirtan*, it would be nice. The enjoyment of *kirtan* is so great that the very mention of this idea was readily agreed upon by all. This has prompted them to meet on Thursdays specifically for this purpose. Coming twice a week for *kirtan* was creating some discord in the families for many ladies, but they could not be bothered. They tolerated the taunts and ridicule of people and simply would not stop coming. Day by day more and more came. Ma had said that if one does *kirtan* moving round and clapping in absolute abandon, the *granthis*²¹ get dissolved and the mind opens up new vistas; this is being realized by most of them day by day. Some get so immersed and enjoy it in such gay abandon that the bliss radiating from their being is clearly perceptible. Many a time I stand aside and feel enthralled by the sight of them. Seeing the effects of Ma's Grace, a thrill-like current runs through my whole body. Bhudevbabu (lawyer) says quite often, "That ladies can get together and sing *kirtan* with such passion was beyond my imagination; it is possible only due to Ma's wish." I hear many sisters saying that even in the midst of all the work and family responsibilities they feel an intense yearning for coming to the Ashram. No obstacles are great enough to stop them

from coming. They also say that if their husband or children fall sick, the first thing that comes to their mind is that it will stop them from going to the Ashram. Yesterday Bhudevbabu's wife was saying, "From early morning on we are eager to be finished with family duties and come to the Ashram on time, otherwise the mind gets very agitated." Actually I keep noticing that in scorching sun or continuous rain, these people come here every day to see us. It is needless to say not because of us, but because of their great respect and love for Ma that they come running with such earnestness.

Shree Barada Charan Sen's wife is quite elderly and cannot see properly but she comes daily to the Ashram to sing. Seeing this great yearning in everyone I am reminded of Shree Krishna and the Gopis. Some of the ladies have mentioned that their in-laws are afraid of seeing any other lady entering their house because they fear that the lady would take their daughter-in-law to the Ashram. In actuality, however, the ladies do not go to another's house for worldly gossip, they go to bring the other lady to the Ashram. Even when at the Ashram they do not indulge in gossip or useless conversation as is sometimes prevalent among women. They decorate Ma's photograph beautifully and get together for *kirtan*. Today I am overwhelmed with joy and so have written this about the ladies of Dhaka. I firmly believe that all this is happening due to the special blessings of Ma.

19 May 1938 Thursday

Yesterday we received the reply to the telegram and Ma has written, "The *murti* of Kali in its present form may be given its permanent *Samadhi*; it is no longer necessary to continue the worship of the *murti*." Today as per Ma's orders, the door was permanently sealed with a brick wall. The worship to this Kali has stopped in the thirteenth year. It started in 1926 and now in 1938, following the very last *puja*, the door has been sealed. Everyone was visibly saddened by this.

20 May 1938 Friday

Ladies are coming everyday for *kirtan* as if the celebrations were still going on. We received Bhupatidada's letter in which he wrote, "Before receiving your telegram, Ma was telling us about the incidents surrounding the Kali *murti* many times. After receiving the telegram She laughed, saying, 'I have told you about all this already. Anyway now the Kali idol can be given its eternal *Samadhi*. I had also told Khukuni about this earlier."

21 May 1938 Saturday

In offering homage to Bholanath's soul, the *Sadhu Bhandara* was arranged and *kirtan* was performed from dawn to dusk. At dusk while the ladies were singing *kirtan*, Bhupatidada's letter came. He wrote that Ma again has had fever since yesterday. For the last few days Ma had been talking a lot and appeared quite normal; now She has this fever and is nauseous. The fever goes up to 101/102 degrees. She has had fever since 15 May. This news caused us extreme worry. With a weak body, getting unwell so frequently only She knows what She would do. Everyone was quite saddened.

22 May 1938 Sunday

There are many ladies here for today's *kirtan* which is being sung with a lot of enthusiasm. Day by day the ladies are enjoying singing *kirtan* more and more and some fortunate ones even feel the presence of Ma. This enthusiasm does not seem to ebb and many are coming on a daily basis. Bhupatibabu has written another special message to Kuladadada saying that in place of Pitaji (Bholanathji) Swami Akhandanandaji would be giving *diksha*²² as per Ma's instructions. Swamiji always thought he was not qualified to give *diksha*, so was not keen on doing it, but because it is now Ma's command, he has agreed. There were only a few applicants for *diksha*.

23 May 1938 Monday

There is no news about Ma and we are all worried about Her. Bhupatibabu has written, "On Saturday there will be a *bhandara* in Haridwar and on Sunday at Dehradun. After that what Ma does we do not know." Hence everyone was keen to know what Ma would do after that, but there is no news as of now.

24 May 1938 Tuesday

In a letter from Ramtaranbabu sent from Calcutta we found out that last Wednesday Shachibabu went to meet Ma in Dehradun. He is supposed to come back on Monday. He took leave for five days. He added that last Saturday a *bhandara* was organized in Birla Temple in the memory of Bholanathji. Even today there is no news about Ma.

25 May 1938 Wednesday

We received a letter written by Shachidada. After reaching Calcutta from Dehradun on Monday, he wrote, "I went to meet Ma for two days and during these two days I had a lot of joy which I still carry within me. Ma had fever but She is all right now." Today Swamiji gave *diksha* to one or two people.

26 May 1938 Thursday

In one letter Bhupatidada said, "A memorial is to be built for Bholanathji in the Dhaka Ashram. After many pleas, Ma has finally indicated the exact place where it is to be. Today in Yogeshdada's letter we came to know that Ma is fine other than a slight ache in the hands. The *bhandara* was completed properly on Saturday. Very soon Ma might go for a change of place. No more news today."

We have been in a terrible storm since yesterday although the number of ladies coming to the Ashram remains unabated. Today they have come and done *kirtan*. Khuki (Nagendada's daughter) does not seem to have any issues about coming to the Ashram and she enjoys singing immensely. Khuki, Belun (Prafullababu's daughter) and Belun's mother can sing quite well so they play the harmonium while they sing *Namu kirtan* one after another with others joining in. Ma's photograph is beautifully decorated with flowers by the ladies, then afterwards they settle down to sing. Kanu Brahmachari got the men together and has started *kirtan* on Saturdays. Every Saturday there is unceasing singing of the "Name" for twenty-four hours. Kuladadada finishes his worship, *Yajna* etc. in the temple from early in the morning and leaves for his office by 11 a.m. Now-a-days he takes only fruits and *charu*²¹. Kanu does the Shiva Puja and is continuing with his studies; Atul Brahmachari starts his work early in the morning, cooks the *bhog*, does the worship of *Pada Peetha*²⁴, and then Shiva worship in Siddheshwari Temple. So the activities of the Ashram continue. Kalachanddada and his aged mother came to the Ashram six months ago. He looks after his elderly mother, cleans Ma's hut and looks after the accounts of the Ashram as brahmacharis are prohibited from touching money. Householder devotees return from the office and after a wash sit near Ma's hut or some recess of the temple and do *japu* and meditation. Most of them return home after *sandhya kirtan*²⁵ and *arati*. After everyone leaves, an atmosphere of profound stillness prevails. The place is highly charged with spiritual vibrations and then there is this vast quietude of the fields.

27 May 1938 Friday

There is incessant storm and rain. It seems there will be a deluge. In spite of this a few people have come to meet us. No news from Ma.

28 May 1938 Saturday

It is *Amavasya* (new moon) today. In keeping with the traditions of the past Kuladadada did Ma's worship in the stillness of the late night. After sundown the

storm and rain have diminished a little and a few people came to receive *Prasad*. In spite of the weather, Shree Hemchandra Nag's wife and Dhirenbabu's mother came at night for offering worship; they watched the worship and did *japa* sitting on the verandah of the temple. At about half past twelve everyone took *Prasad* and returned home. Manik wrote a letter on 10 *Jyeshtha*, Tuesday²⁶. It was sent from Dehradun and just this evening we received it. He writes, "Most probably tomorrow, Wednesday, Ma will go to Mussourie. She is supposed to stay at the Arya Samaj Dharmashala. Birendada, Bhupatidada, Abhay, Dasu and Ruma Devi are accompanying Her and I might also go. Ma has sent Nishibabu and Mashima (Maternal Aunt) to Solan and Godavari has been sent to Sevashram in Haridwar." In another letter enclosed in Manik's letter, Shiv Shankar Kaviraj writes "Didi, Nidhu and I are leaving for Dhaka today; we might get delayed en route for 2-3 days." There is no more news.

29 May 1938 Sunday

We hoped that Shiv Shankar Kaviraj would come today but he has not yet arrived. We had planned to go to Calcutta tomorrow, but upon deciding to meet Kaviraj Mahashay and hearing about Ma's well being, we have postponed our trip.

(to be continued)

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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.
 13. If She were only fierce we would not be able to survive and if She were only soft there also would be no progress
 14. The celebrations for Janmotsav, Ma's "birthday" celebrations
 15. 17 May 1938
 16. *Puja* performed on the lunar date of Ma's "birth"
 17. 19th lunar date the fourth phase of the waning moon in the dark fortnight after the full moon day
 18. A Tantrik design symbolizing a deity, carved on metal or crystal or painted on paper
 19. Hari-loot, meaning indiscriminate throwing of *Prasad* in the name of Hari (God)
 20. Narrative and lyric devotional songs composed by Vaishnava poets
 21. Knots of attachment and impressions (*sanskaras*) of past karma
 22. Initiation by the Guru wherein one is given a *mantra*
 23. Rice cooked in milk and honey over the fire of the *havan kunda* (fire sacrifice pit)
 24. Sacred footstool holding Ma's footwear
 25. Evening *kirtan*
 26. 24 May

SVAKRIYA SVARASAMRITA

VOL. V
(Continued)

LOVE ON PHYSICAL PLANE HAS NO PLACE IN THE REALM OF ALL-LOVE

Sriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya took Ma to Kheora from Sripur. It was almost after a year of marriage that Bholanath wrote a letter (to Ma). Ma was not used to reading letters; no one had ever told Her (to read a letter), nor had they taught Her (to read and write a letter). It was a small village with no post office. There was a post office in another village, and a postman from there carrying mail (of this village) would deliver it to one person of this village, and the villagers would sort it out and distribute it among themselves. Kheora was the place of Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya's maternal uncle; hence many people there were related to Ma as grandfather (in village relationship) . Ma had acquaintance with all in that village and everybody looked upon Ma with affection. When that letter arrived, there was an uproar to tease Ma : 'Now Nirmala has received a letter from Bholanath!' Ma remained in a serious mood and kept looking down, as if She had not heard anything. She kept moving away from them in a way as one in embarrassment.

That letter was given to Sriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi. In order to catch Ma's attentions she kept it at a place where Ma moved about. As for Ma, She never took notice of it, neither did She pick it up. In those days, it was a matter of embarrassment for the mother to hand over such a letter to the daughter. Here the daughter was also shy; She would not do anything which would adversely affect the appearance of Her *bhava* of shyness before everyone. So what was to be done? Some members of the family assembled (to find a way out). One of them suggested that the letter be dropped in front of Her while She passed by. Sriyukta Mokshada Sundari did just that. But, as they did not say anything about it to Ma, so Ma moved about in Her own (usual) mood (without picking up the letter).

After quite a few days had passed, a second letter came from Bholanath. Now, this second letter has arrived! Sriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi started worrying terribly, as Bholanath might be annoyed on not getting any reply. Realizing the situation, two or three persons again got together, read both the letters and made out a draft reply. A grandmother of Ma then went to Her and said, “Here is this draft, you just make a verbatim copy of whatever is written in it and then give it to me. You have not to do anything else. None had told Ma how a copy is made. Keeping (the draft) before Herself, She copied each word exactly in the style and in the place it was written and then returned the piece of paper without any comment. Later on, when Ma was at Bholanath’s place, he asked Her, “Were the contents of the letter written by you?” Ma related the whole incident. Feeling as if somewhat hurt, he said, “Had this been known before, who would have cared to write the letter? Well, our parents have united us; did you not feel even like enquiring about my well-being?” Ma rejoined, “There was no *Kheyala* at all about it.” Bholanath then said, “Supposing I pass away, I do not live!” On this, there was not the least sign of a different feeling visible on Ma’s face, as though She was the same in all circumstances. In the same complacent, simple and artless way, She replied, “Not there, well, what will happen then?” Bholanath neither became irritated nor was perceptibly hurt even. He just said, “Your intelligence is that of a mere child. With age one becomes mature and then springs forth a response to love.” Today Bholanath is no more, but he had predicted correctly (about his passing away).

MA’S THREE-FOLD* EXPLANATION OF HER INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS THE QUESTION OF BHOLANATH’S SEPARATION

When questioned repeatedly on this subject, Ma said, “Look, if you bring a new earthen pot and it is broken, powdered and made one with earth, then, here you get two separate forms, but in these two forms there is One only—He alone is**. Do you know why you ask like this? You distinguish between the two and thereby reap the fruit of separation. The positive outcome of enjoyment of earthly goods is that one becomes happy on getting the desired object and miserable when deprived of it. In the field of enjoyment of sense object, where one is propelled by a desire, this (the

above fact) is, indeed, the fruit of one's action and it is there where it should be. Where there is no question of enjoyment and non-enjoyment, it is only "That", whatever you may call it. Indeed, *Baba*, it is "That" alone. Again, from the worldly point of view too, consider another aspect. Moving along a street, you may notice an electric bulb dropping on the ground and getting shattered to pieces. What do you do about it? On recalling this incident, when you relate it to someone, evoking it perhaps with a sense of fun and laughter, what explanation do you then put forth in terms of mental agony? To ensure that the shreds of the broken bulb do not hurt anybody, someone may rather carefully pick up them.'

* Firstly, there is the multiple manifestation which is false and one unmanifest that is real. This is explained in a separate note below. Secondly, from the purely worldly point of view, anything that breaks away is removed and kept away like the pieces of a broken electric bulb. And lastly, from the point of view of absolute Truth, there is no creation at all but only the One supreme Reality.

** In the earthen pot as it is and in the broken condition, what is true is earth. the name 'pot' and its form are false. Similarly, there is only Brahman alone that is real and all names and forms are false.

* *

Human beings have to be dwellers of the inner cave, so that the Supreme Being who resides withing may be revealed.

Matri Vani (Volume II)

MOTHER AS REVEALED TO ME

- Bhaiji

(Continued)

Whilst the disease was in full swing, I developed a very strong desire to eat boiled rice. The attending physicians would not allow me to have it. Niranjan appealed to Mother, saying : "Ma, Jyotish wants to take boiled rice; the doctors won't allow it. If he dies, we shall have one great grief that we could not satisfy this desire of his before his death." Sri Ma laughed and said : "When Jyotish has a craving for it, he should be given rice." After a few days *Pitaji* brought some boiled rice from Shahbag and made me eat it, but nobody noticed it.

In those days Sri Ma used to come to see me once daily. One morning She came very early and after She had left, Brahmachari Kamalakanta brought me some *Champak* flowers, because I would not have an opportunity that day to offer them at Ma's feet with my own hands. In the afternoon Kulada Dada brought me a lovely rose. The same painful thought recurred. The rose was kept on the table by the side of the *champak* flowers. That such lovely flowers could not be placed at Ma's feet disappointed me much. Just at that time She suddenly entered my room, went to the table and stood reclining to the left. She gazed at me for three or four minutes quite absent-mindedly and then left. I thought She had taken the flowers. Both were missing. Next day when She came I enquired about it. She said : "I don't quite know what I took, but I must have taken something from here. I went to the house of the Zamindar of Dhankora and gave something to a woman there. Then I went to the house of a Deputy Magistrate where a woman was ill and I left something there too." Afterwards, I came to learn that at the first house She had given the rose and at the second a *champak* flower. The sick lady recovered soon.

In this connection Sri Ma said : "Intense hankering after the Divine is the core of all worships, of all prayers. In our heart lie eternal springs of divine power and in every effort lie the roots of the creative, preservative and destructive urges of Being."

I am just reminded of another incident. During my illness *Pitaji* ordered that every day some rice *prasada* should be sent to me from Shahbag; but it was offered at the temple only at about 2 P.M. and the *Prasad* used to reach my house much later. Everybody in my home got annoyed to find me waiting for *prasada* so late in the day. On a particular day there was some adverse criticism of the whole arrangement at my place. It caused me so much pain that I came to feel there was no need of *prasada* being brought to me in the face of so much disgust and criticism amongst the members of my family. The day wore on; it was 2 A.M. at night. No *prasada* had arrived from Shahbag. It occurred to me that my reluctance to receive *prasada* with so much trouble was most probably the cause for the stopping of the arrangement. I wept and wept on my bed and the *prasada* arrived in half-an-hour. I learnt that Sri Ma had just risen from Her bed and ordered : "Go quickly, carry *prasada* to Jyotish at once." I was given to understand later that when during the preceding midday Sri Ma's permission was sought to send *prasada* as usual, She said, "No". So the practice of sending it was interrupted. In this connection Sri Ma said : "I don't do anything of my own will; you laugh and weep according to your impulses and your desires are fulfilled."

During my illness I went to Vindhyachal for a change. I happened to meet Mother at Calcutta on my way and requested Her to go there too. She did not agree. On reaching Vindhyachal I passed one whole night weeping for Her. Just one day later Mataji and *Pitaji* arrived there.

Sri Ma remarked in this connection : "The aim of all religious practices is to sublimate all egoistic impulses and given them a unified direction towards the Divine. As soon as the ego ceases to function, the 'Eternal Thou' will take its place."

From Vindhyachal I went to Chunar. Sri Ma also went there. One day She said : "Don't you ever go out for a stroll?" Next dawn She took me out with Her for a walk. On the level plains as well as on low hills we walked five to six miles and returned at 11 A.M. While coming down-hill I felt very weak and could hardly walk. Ma turned round and said : "Our house is not far off." In ten minutes' time an *ekka* turned up quite unexpectedly in a small lane; otherwise we would have had to walk one mile more to reach a carriage-stand. I was afraid that the great strain due to such a long walk might aggravate my illness. But no such thing happened.

Sri Ma said a little while later : "Both in this work-a-day world as well as in the spiritual sphere, patience is the main support."

At a little distance from my house, *Pitaji*, *Mataji* and myself sat on a lawn. *Mataji* said She would like to bathe with the water drawn from the well near the fort. She began to press for it like a little child. I said, "Let me call my servant". She replied : "No you must not". I felt puzzled. For in those places people finish drawing water from the wells before sun-down. I felt sorry that I would not be able to carry out Sri Ma's wishes. But to my surprise a man with lantern turned up at the well to draw water. He was persuaded to get water for Ma's bath.

Sri Ma said : "Whatever you seek can be obtained, provided the thirst for the object of your desire pervades every fiber of your being."

During my illness I spent some days at Giridih. One day, I was longing to see Ma, only to find to my surprise that She and Her whole party arrived the next morning.

After this change I returned to Calcutta. Even then there was spitting of blood when I coughed. My physicians advised me to pass the remaining days of my life at some healthy place.

Sri Ma ordered : "Go back to your desk in the office and resume your duties there." I went to Dacca. Both *Pitaji* and *Mataji* accompanied me to the office and left, after seating me in my own chair.

At that time Mr. Finlow, the Director of the Agricultural Department, was my boss. He loved me and had a great regard for me. He told me : "Do as much office work as you can; send the rest to my desk." He enquired : "Well, just tell me how you have recovered from that fell disease ?" I said in reply : "It is through the grace of *Mataji* who lives at the Ramna Ashram over there. She did not give me any medicine. Though I followed the doctor's prescriptions, Her mercy was my only saving." He said : "Amongst our people one hears of similar instances. I believe what you say."

One evening an old neighbour of mine, aged about 80 years, Shyama Charan Mukherji by name, came to my place. When the conversation turned to Sri Ma, I said : "It is through Her grace alone that I happen to be still alive." He blurted out : "Can one through anybody's grace live longer than one's predestined span?" In the

course of this discussion he suddenly became silent and went away a few seconds later. He returned next morning to say : "Do you know why I left your place so abruptly ? When we were talking about Sri Ma, I saw on the back rest of your chair a bright oval light like that of the sun. At that time there was darkness outside and no light in the room. I looked about and could not trace the source of such a light at that hour; so I decided to ponder over the phenomenon before telling you about it. After careful thought I have come to the conviction that everything is possible through the grace of a Great Being. Really, She has been protecting you all along."

A few months after his first darsana of Sri Ma, Niranjan told Her at Shahbag : "Ma, we very frequently think that after your Ashram is started, both myself and Jyotish will live there as *brahmacharis* during our next births." Ma looked at me and asked : "Why are you silent? Won't you be able to do so even in this body?"

Some three or four years later, when I resumed my duties after recovery, Sri Ma reminded me of the above talk and said : "Just think, how you have had your rebirth." Then She took a golden chain from Her neck and placed it on mine, saying : "From this day onward know it for certain that you are a *brahmachari* and that you have had your rebirth."

The little hut, eight by five and a half cubits, with verandahs on all sides, which I had erected in the *Ashram* according to my own ideas, was used by Ma. She would lie down on the two long verandahs on either side. She told me that I had been one of the *sannyasis* who used to dwell on that site, and the spot which I had unconsciously chosen for building the hut for Her, was the very place where I had passed my life during my previous birth.

I feel that it was my unique good luck to find Sri Ma's physical body resting on the very spot where I had carried on my *sadhana* during my previous existence. Probably my karma had directed such a course; for when I first saw Sri Ma, She appeared to me to embody all gods and goddesses in Her Person and I felt that She had been my presiding Goddess all through the series of my previous births.

From the latter part of 1929 for full three years, I used to go to Ramna very early in the morning with a desire to see Her first. For this purpose I rose from bed at 2 A.M. , finished my usual prayers and worship by 4-30 A.M. and then went out. On certain days it so happened that I confused the two hands of my watch, misread the

time and started much earlier. Hearing the clock strike in some adjacent house on the way, I realized that I had started far too early. In that case I would walk in the Ramna field or sit at the gate of Ramna Kalibari, waiting for the light of dawn. I entered the Ashram at 5 A.M. and walked about in the fields with Sri Ma, returning home at 10-30 or 11 A.M. On certain days I came back at midday or even 1 P.M.

I never sat in Sri Ma's presence. My whole body remained erect with a thrill of inner joy. When I was asked by anybody to sit down, I felt quite embarrassed. Sri Ma would usually remain quite silent during our morning rounds. She broke Her silence only in exceptional cases. I used to follow Her footsteps without a word.

(to be continued)

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List of Festivals

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|---|-------------------|
| 1. Sri 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji's
Nirvana Tithi | - 14th April 2018 |
| 2. Akshay Tritiya | - 18th April 2018 |
| 3. Adi Jagad guru Sri Shankaracharya's Jayanti | - 20th April 2018 |
| 4. Baba Bholanath's Nirvan Tithi | - 23rd April 2018 |
| 5. Buddha Purnima | - 30th April 2018 |
| 6. Sri Sri Mataji's Janma Tithi Puja | - 3,4th May 2019 |
| 7. Sri Sri Ganga Dashahara | - 24th May 2018 |
| 8. Guru Purnima Mahotsav | - 27th July 2018 |
| 9. Sri 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji's
Nirvan Tithi | - 17th Aug. 2018 |

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PADAPEETHAM SMARAMI

- Br. Dr. Geeta Banerjee

RAMNA ASHRAM, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

(continued)

Installing of Panchavati

In the year 1930, Baba Bholanath, directed by Shree Shree Ma, installed a Panchavati at the Ramna Ashram.

Samadhi of Sadhus at Ramna

While digging was going on for laying the foundation of Ashram at Ramna, a number of samadhis (tombs) were discovered in which sadhus had been buried. Among them, there were samadhis of earlier incarnation of Baba Bholanath, Bhajji and Swami Akhandananda (Gurupriya Didi's father), as told by Shree Shree Ma. Shree Shree Ma's Ashram was constructed there as a response to the prayers of the sadhus whose samadhis were there. Ma said, "These persons with whom in their previous birth, these sadhu mahatma had a relationship have come here again to work for the Ashram and more such persons will come for the work of the Ashram - Know it for sure. This Body has also come here to grant their prayer and will stay here as long as they wish." At Ramna, the Ashram was founded on the ground hallowed by the tapasya of the Sadhu Mahatmas. According to Ma's direction, those samadhis were preserved underground like before.

Three temples were constructed, the first one was a temple of Ma Kali, the second one was a Shiva Temple, and an impression of Shree Shree Ma's feet was installed in the third temple.

Holy land of the Giri Sampradaya

Shree Shree Ma said that in ancient times, this holy land of Ramna was the place where many Sadhus of the Giri Sampradaya (one of the ten sects of Sannyasis) had lived and performed tapasya. Swami Akhandananda too received sannayasa diksha from Swami Shankarananda Giri of Kambhal. Ma made Swami Akhandanandaji perform sadhana at the Ramna Ashram as Swami Akhandanandaji in his previous

birth belonged to the Giri Sampradaya Shree Gokul Thakur was once the proprietor of this land in the past.

Installation of the idol of Ma Annapurna, the Presiding Deity of the Ramna Ashram.

In 1929 on the auspicious occasion of Kali Puja, Shree Shree Ma had the Kheyal of installing the Vighraha of the Annapurna in the Ashram. Ma gave the following details of the idols of Ma Annapurna and Baba Vishwanath. The simhasana (throne) of Mata Annapurna was to be half a cubit high. Shree Shree Annapurna Ma would sit on the throne with her right placed on the left high. These would be a stool where her foot would be placed. She would hold a bowl in her left hand. In her right hand there would be a ladle extended towards Vishwanathji offering alms to him. To her right, Baba Vishwanath would be standing. He would hold a trident in his right arm, a bag for collecting alms hanging from his left shoulder and his two hands would be holding a begging bowl in a gesture of receiving alms from Ma Annapurna. Besides these two main idols, some other idols of great significance were sculpted and installed in the shrine scrupulously following Shree Shree Ma's instructions. Earlier, Ma had "seen" a small baby form of Ma Kali in space gliding down towards Her with stretched arms as if desirous of being received in her arms. In the vision, there was no image of Shiva below Her feet and the child Kali was alone. Ma had seen this vision with open eyes while she was sitting. Accordingly, a small Kali image was made and as directed by Ma, placed above Ma Annapurna on Her left side in such a way that it would seem She were flying in space. There would be no idol of Shiva below Her feet. Right above Ma Annapurna, there would be an idol of Shree Vishnu with his four arms (in a sitting posture). Below the throne of Ma Annapurna, there would be a murti of Shree Ganesh. For making all those idols, Ma gave Bhaiji a silver pitcher, a silver plate, a silver tumbler, four gold bangles and a golden chain of hers. These articles of silver and gold were given to the sculptor.

It took some time for the idols to be ready. In 1931 Shree Shree Annapurna Temple was constructed in the Ashram premises. The idols of Ma Annapurna, Baba Vishwanath, Ma Kali, Shree Vishnu and Shree Ganesh were duly installed in May 1931, during the Birth Anniversary celebration, of Shree Shree Ma. It was found that the silver idol of Ma Annapurna could not be fully viewed by devotees from distance. Hence it was decided to replace the small silver idol with a larger idol made of ashtadhatu and alloy of eight metals, such as gold, silver, copper etc. Ma

contributed more ornaments for its making. While the sculptor was working at it, Ma and Baba Bholanath used to visit the workshop regularly to inspect the work. Ma herself used to guide the sculptor with her instruction.

The sculptor's name was Janaki. It is believed that both the silver idols and the idol of ashtadhatu were made by him. It is also said that this ashtadhatu idol was his last piece of art; he passed away after that. The installation ceremony of this new idol of Ma Annapurna was performed during Ma's Janmotsava in 1932. The ritual of prana pratishtha was done by Baba Bholanath. On the last day of the Janmotsava, at midnight, the new idol of Ma Annapurna was installed. The one year old silver idol was given visarjan (immersion) in a large container filled with water by following the rules of the shastras. The new idol of Ma Annapurna installed on her throne was kept inside a shrine made of glass.

(to be continued)

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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 complied, 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.

Address : The Managing Editor, Amrit Varta
Shree Shree Anandamayee Ashram
Bhadaini, Varanasi - 221001

Children Page

GOD TAKES CARE OF HIS DEVOTEE

A sadhu lived in a forest. He used to spend the whole day doing bhajan, puja, etc. Of the scriptures prescribed for a saint's life, he would take God's name the whole day. In the evening he would come out of the forest and go to the nearby village. He would accept alms of only one chhalek of rice and return to the forest where he used to live under a tree. He used to cook the rice, offer it to God and take it as Prasad. That was the only meal he used to take in 24 hours.

One person asked to watch him daily take his food in this way. He wondered at the pleasant countenance of the sadhu and his peaceful nature. He would wonder as to who the sadhu was? Where did he live? His face is so shining with so much joy, then what an amount of joy must be filling his heart with waves of nectar. He would watch and think the same over and over again.

Days passed. At last one day that person followed the sadhu up to his hut. In reaching his hut, the person fell at the feet of the sadhu and said, I have taken refuge at your feet, please let me stay with you and serve you as your disciple.

The sadhu was puzzled and worried. What will happen now? He thought, I pass whole day in sadhan bhajan and to be just one Chhalek of rice as alms according to the rule I follow. I cook that much of rice and take my meal just once. accept more food as alms. If this person stays with me, what will he eat? I should not let him starve! This was the sadhu's worry.

He tried to dissuade the person, but the man was adamant. He would not change his mind.

After a lot of thinking about the pros and cons the sadhu came to the conclusion that he ought to accept whatever God would do.

So the person stayed on. At the time of taking food, he did not say anything. He did not accept any food offered by the sadhu but only the water with which the sadhu cleaned the rice before cooking.

Just as the fragrance of flowers attracts the honey bees, similarly, the fame of the saints attracts followers within a few days. another devotee came. He prayed, O Mahatma, you the splendour your greatness irradiates from you and it cannot be concealed. Please make me blessed with a drop of your divine qualities. Please allow me to stay with you. If you force me away, I will not leave, I will keep holding your feet until you let me stay.

The sadhu once more got plunged in confusion and worry. O God, what kind of test you are putting me in? When he could not glimpse any solution, he gave up thinking and accepted God's will.

When this person saw that the first devotee drank the water of the rice, he said, "I will drink the starch of the cooked rice." He refused to take any other food.

When the sadhu saw all this, he wondered and thought, "O what fool I am? God who has created this world and all the creatures living here, he Himself would make arrangement for the maintenance of his creation

We are ignorant; why we worry unnecessarily. If we leave all our worries at his feet, we shall not face trouble, there is no need to worry. Just as we do not have to carry our luggage on our heads once we have boarded a train, similarly, we need not carry the load of worries on our heads once we have taken refuge in God.

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

Matri Vani (Volume II)