



ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

*

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

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CONTENTS

- | | | |
|--|-----|---------|
| 1. Sri Sri Ma's Utterances | .. | 89—91 |
| 2. Mātri Satsang—Swami Bhagavatananda
Giri | ... | 92—103 |
| 3. Divinity's Treasure—Marge Hendel | ... | 104 |
| 4. Sri Sri Ma : The Unrevealed Revealed—
Ma Das | ... | 105—128 |
| 5. Some Typical Dialogues with Sri Ma—
Anil C. Ganguli | ... | 129—142 |
| 6. The Teaching of Sri Anandamayi Ma—
Ma Suryananda Lakshmi | ... | 143—160 |
| 7. The True Tzaddik—Parvati Alexander | ... | 161—166 |
| 8. The Yogi—Brahmachari Gadadhar | ... | 167—168 |
| 9. Mātri Līlā | ... | 169—176 |

“He that cleaves to wealth had better cast it away than allow his heart to be poisoned by it ; but he who does not cleave to wealth, and possessing riches, uses them rightly, will be a blessing unto his fellows.

It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life, wealth and power.”

—*Gautama the Buddha*

“The Guru should be regarded as the direct manifestation of God. Only then can the disciple have faith in the mantra given by the Guru. Once a man has faith he achieves all.”

—*Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

“If there is one endearing term in human language, more lovable than any other, it is the word ‘mother’. The very thought that God is our mother brings us very, very close to Him, and our goal in life is to approach this Mother as swiftly and as easily as possible. Therefore, to consider God as our supreme Mother is the easiest way to approach Him.”

—*Swami Ramdas*

SRI SRI MA'S UTTERANCES

(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi", Vol. VIII.

A lady asked: "Ma, why should the Gods be worshipped? What does one gain by doing pūjā?"

Mataji: God Himself is attained by reverence and worship of gods.

Question: Then how should I perform this pūjā?

Mataji: Follow the instructions given by your Guru.

Question: But I have no Guru and I do not know whom to choose as Guru?

Mataji: Choose the person to whom the heart surrenders in love and reverence.

The lady's husband was at that time in jail as a political prisoner. She was therefore specially concerned about him.

Mataji therefore said "Look, nowadays you are worrying about your husband day and night, because you are his wife. Before you married him he was a stranger to you and you had no occasion to think about him. Similarly one must first of all establish a relationship with God by means of worshipping any one of His forms which may capture one's heart. This bond of familiarity will grow in intensity and fill you with thoughts of God Himself. Through this husband (Lord)*, *pati*, happiness comes to you as well as sorrow. But

* The word *pati* means 'Lord' as well as 'husband'.

from that Supreme Lord (*pati*) bliss and bliss only is derived and no sorrow. However, even your husband is a form of that Supreme One, so if you think of him constantly as such you will be thinking of God. All are His forms, He alone IS.

* * *

Question : Is it not possible to destroy the effects of bad karmas by engaging in good actions ?

Mataji : Look, this body is like a musical instrument. You hear the tune that you play on it. You ask questions and the answers are elicited also by you. I have nothing to say. However, it is a fact that there are certain actions by which the effects of previously done actions can be annulled. For example a child is in ignorance. On being educated his state of ignorance is dispelled. Or, suppose a mirror is dirty ; by being polished it becomes clean and shiny. There is another opinion that even the liberated (*Jivan-mukta*) has to experience the effects of his *prārabdha** karma. This is to be endorsed as well. Yet it may also be said that on the dawning of knowledge (*jnāna*) no vestige of karma can remain. The fire of knowledge which consumes everything, would it leave a little bit of karma untouched ?

* * *

A sadhu asked : "How to get rid of sorrow ? There is no cessation of the sense of deprivation."

* *Prārabdha Karma* That portion of one's past actions which are found to fructify in the present life and cannot be averted. It has brought about the present birth with its particularities of time, place, family, disposition, etc.

He meant that even a state of voluntary mendicasy could not dispel the sense of want and bring about a feeling of self-sufficiency.

Mataji : Because you are an alien in a foreign country, you suffer from restlessness. In one's own country one is at peace. Search for your 'own country', your own Self. Because of multiple desires one creates a foreign atmosphere for oneself. When one belongs to oneself, realizes the One Self, then one is at rest. No sense of want disturbs one because one is at home.

Self Surrender

Resigning ourselves to God in all aspects of our being constitutes real self-surrender. This is achieved by following a path of self-dedication in which we recognize God's will as supreme. Resignation of our will to God's will is the first step in our struggle on the path. This means that we take whatever happens to us as willed by the Divine for our good, because God is all love, goodness, peace, joy, compassion and forgiveness. From such a God no evil can come to us. In this staunch belief we take whatever He determines for us as meant for our good.

—Swami Ramdas

MĀTRI SATSANG

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

(Translated from Bengali)

(9th Samyam Mahavrata at Atma-Vijñāna Bhavan, Rishikesh from April 15th to 21st, 1959.

April 15th, 1959

Question : Why have we come to Rishikesh ? What is the particular virtue of Rishikesh ?

Mataji : What is called Rishikesh ?

Pandit Sundarlal : The Lord of the senses is called 'Hrishikesh'.

Mataji : This is a place for Rishis in peaceful surroundings, a place for *tapasyā* ; how many ascetics have not performed their spiritual practices here in the past, are doing so now, and will continue to do so in the future. On coming here the mind automatically becomes tranquil.

Question : Have you noticed anything out of the ordinary on this first day of the *Samyam Saptaha* ?

Mataji : I have no *kheyāla* to speak now ; but wherever this body may go something or other like this keeps on happening. Here also this has been the case. What am I to say ? Shall I disclose it ? The *kheyāla* to tell everything does not always come. Although in the eyes of the world this may be misunderstood as timidity on my part, yet here everybody is my father, mother or friend, so the question of shyness cannot arise.

On the first day this body had sight of a Mahātmā as clearly as you all are being now seen by me. There was a huge crowd, and in the midst of this multitude the Mahātmā was present. He showed much loving-kindness for this body—after all it is a tiny little girl. But it does not occur to me to disclose everything. He did not fondle me as one usually fondles an infant, still he showered his affection on me. This body was lying on a bed without any covering or rugs ; but he let me lie down on his bed, a beautiful bed, the like of which this body had never used before.

He was a famous Mahātmā, I asked him : “Baba, is this your bed ?” He replied : “Yes, this is my bed.” We talked of highly spiritual subjects. The next day a *bhandāra* (feast) was being given. So he fed me with choice morsels, just as one feeds a child with loving attention. There is a lot more to be said but there is no *kheyāla* to speak out.

Question : Please tell us which spiritual subjects you discussed !

Mataji : There is no *kheyāla* at present to talk about this.

Question : What was the appearance of the Mahātmā like ?

Mataji : Very beautiful, clad in saffron robes. Rishikesh is a very special place.

Question : Have you the direct experience of what Rishikesh really is ?

Mataji : Rishikesh itself is an experience, a very special place. One can hear the uninterrupted music of Ganga and gaze at the Himalayan range that towers like a yogiraj; the atmosphere is hushed, serene, solemn. Whether you are bent on it or not, your mind will become tranquil of itself. Just as the sun shines on all without distinction of place or object, so does the influence of Rishikesh affect everybody without exception. There is no similar inspiration in other towns. The atmosphere of this place is very wonderful. If you come here you will fall within the orbit of Mahātmās who have forsaken everything and gone out in search of God. Whether you desire it or not, you will have to obtain the vision of God. The sublimity of Ganga will certainly have a calming influence. Moreover the devotion of all bhaktas is also prevalent here. It will affect your thinking. Here you are bound to gain something or other. Once you have seen this place, even the memory of it will be beneficial to you.

Question : During meditation sleep overcomes me. During *satsang* as well I feel drowsy.

Mataji : Just as when you touch fire you will naturally be burnt, so when you come here this place will exert its inherent influence on you. This spot is ideal for *samyam*. At this time it is specially beautiful; wherever one looks only *vratis* (partaking devotees) can be seen. There are no other crowds here. Keep your mind as open as you possibly can and absorb what you get. This body always asserts that God's grace is incessantly

pouring down. Keep your vessel the right side up and it will surely be filled.

Question : Yesterday there was *darśana* of a mahātmā. Was there any *darśana* today ?

Mataji : There is no *kheyāla* at present to talk about it.

Question : In Somnath in Saurashtra, in front of Śiva temple, everybody took photos from outside. As light fell on the face, all the hair on the head came out white.

Mataji : It is you who took the photos, you should be aware of what happened.

Question : Where did the light come from ?

Mataji : Now also everything is present, even the sun. Where the opposites of seeing and not seeing have remained, there will be "yes" and "no". Everywhere all kinds of things may happen in all kinds of ways. Just as you are father, husband and son all in one, all things exist at the same time. Surely, what you just mentioned must have been Śivaji's *līlā*.

Questioner : Ma, you make everybody dance to your tune ! (General laughter.)

Mataji : Pitaji has learnt even how to surpass the Guru. This body never makes any one dance to its tune. You all are full of love, affection and compassion and so you have come here to give *darśana*. How gracious you are to listen to this little girl's talk ! This body does not even know how to perform service. Making others dance one watches the fun. But here (with Ma) there are no "others," nobody is separate. All are my fathers,

mothers or friends— all are mine, nobody is distant. This body does not even know how to talk properly, it does not observe the laws and canons of language. How can there be any fear before my fathers and mothers ? There is nobody here to make me dance. It is you who dance and make others dance. Everyone and every thing are but *vigrahas*¹ of God, nothing else exists. This is why this body says, it is you who perceive others as separate ; but here there simply are no others.

Question : Is there any possibility of quarrels arising ?

Mataji : It is your job to perform *japa* and meditation. Don't worry about disagreements. Endeavour to be absorbed in your own thoughts, which means thoughts about God, thoughts concerning Supreme Truth, be engrossed in your Self. Sorrow arises from the sense of separateness. Where duality has remained there only quarrels and disagreements arise. Why think along those lines ? Be content to stay with yourself, within your own Self. When life is based on duality in this dual world, fears and dread come into being. This is very true indeed. You are your own veil of ignorance. Is it not so ? Admit it !

Questioner : I do not understand all this.

Mataji : Egoism, the sense of "you" and "I", this is the covering veil.

Question : But the devotee and God are certainly two, so there is duality here also !

1. *Vigraha* Concrete External Presence as Form.

Mataji : Between God and the devotee there is no veil of ignorance. The devotee is God's permanent servant. How can there be any veil of ignorance here ? If there were, how could one speak of a permanent servant ?

Question : What exactly does "permanent servant" (*nitya dāsa*) mean ?

Mataji : Don't you know that it is said, when Mahavira (Hanuman) was asked ; "Who is Rama ? What is your relationship with Rama ?" Mahavira replied : "Seen from the level of the *Ātmā*, Rama & I are one. On the plane where there are parts, He is the whole and I am a part of Him ; and from the point of view of the world He is the Master and I am his permanent servant."

Where the one *Ātmā* is, there can be no such thing as idea and its expression as creation (*driṣṭi-sriṣṭi*). The power of burning is equal in fire and in a spark of fire : Just as fire can burn something, so can a spark. In the one *Ātmā* only all this is possible.

Questioner : But all this cannot take place without God's Grace !

Mataji : Where there is a receptacle for grace, the Giver of grace and the supplicant, there grace will certainly be obtained. You all know that this body keeps on repeating : the grace of God Almighty is incessantly being lavished. Keep your vessel straight side up and it will be filled ; but if you hold it upside down, the grace will flow away.

April 17th, 1959

Question : People say, one should surrender to God. Has it to be achieved by oneself or does the Guru make one do it ?

Mataji : You are a pandit, why don't you explain ?

Pandit Sundarlal : If I were a Guru I should speak.

Mataji : You will hear exactly as you sound the instrument. To whom is one to surrender oneself ? Surrender comes about spontaneously. Self-dedication by effort is a particular action, but entire and total surrender happens of itself.

Pt. Sundarlal : Please don't twist your words !

Mataji : Surrender to whom ? To one's own Self. Just as a small child solely relies on its mother. However, the relationship between mother and child is based on ignorance and attachment through delusion. There is attachment in both. It is the mother's nature to do everything possible to keep her child happy, but she does not fulfil every one of its obstinate demands. A mother is the ideal of affection. But there can be no true love (*prema*) between human beings (*jīva*) ; real love (*prema*) is only between *jīva* and Śiva. To whom should I surrender ? To my Guru or to my Divine Beloved (*Iṣṭa*) ?

Question : Yes, tell us !

Mataji : Where one's Guru and *Iṣṭa* are, there nobody is separate. This is why I have said that true surrender is to one's own Self.

Questioner : I still don't understand.

Mataji : When saying “I”, who is this “I” ? One does not know because of the covering veil of ignorance (*pardā*). What does “*pardā*” mean ? *Pardā* (curtain) means *para-dwāra* (a door to something else), that is to say, a *pardā* presupposes the existence of a second. In the material world there is bound to be a concealing screen. Every *jīva* is in reality Śiva. But where the *jīva* is Śiva, how can there be a hiding curtain ?

Pt. Sundarlal : You talk to us from a very high level !

Mataji : Fundamentals have been spoken of. Now, when one asserts that when the roots of a tree are there, then flowers, fruits and everything pertaining to the tree will develop—so surrender cannot be to another.

Of course, this body babbles like a child, while you are all learned people. Surrender yourself to your Guru or *Iṣṭa*. If the action of surrender were not already inherent in you, one could not say “surrender yourself”. Exactly as your Guru bids you to, engage in kirtana, meditation, *japa* and so on. In this endeavour utilize to the full the energy that you are spending on following your vocation and earning your keep. The rest God Himself will provide to make it complete. So long as there is a desire for sense enjoyment one has to be in a body.

To aspire to Knowledge is natural to man, because in Reality he is indeed Knowledge, he is the *Ātmā*, so the cover that conceals this fact is unbearable to him. Try to discover what you really are !

Samyam means a way of life whereby all your intemperance is brought under control. Through *Samyam* the road to Immortality will be opened up. Bābā (Mahamandaleswara Bhagavatānanda) has declared to day that “just as a piece of iron can be beaten into any shape after having been heated up, so also can the mind be shaped.”—By doing so will be revealed what you really are, your true Self. Genuine surrender will come about spontaneously.

As long as one has the energy to act, it is right to perform auspicious actions. By persisting with this the fact will become evident that “He is none other than you”, in other words “Soham” (THAT am I).

Question : Does iron approach the magnet or does the magnet attract the iron ? Do you attract those who come to you or do they come of their own accord ?

Mataji : I do not bring anyone to myself.

Questioner : I shall parade before you ten such persons !

Mataji : All right, do so ! (Everybody laughs).

Questioner : Self-dedication can only be to the beloved.

Mataji : Yes, unless he is one's own it cannot be done.

Question : If first of all you become most precious to me, then I shall forsake my hearth and home and come to you. Is this due to attraction from your end ?

Mataji : Baba, this is attraction on your own part.

Pt. Sundarlal : Please speak out straight !

Mataji : It is you alone who exist, there is none else. You appear as non-achievement and also as achievement ; You are in the form of both vice and virtue. Attraction originates from His end. When the self is surrendered to the Self, then there will be Revelation—when this attraction becomes evident there will be Revelation.

Question : Are there different types of attraction ?

Mataji : There are infinite kinds of attraction, just an infinite number of trees can derive from a single seed. There is infinity in the one and the one in the infinite.

Question : Do you call those whom you want ?

Mataji : This body neither calls anyone nor does it remove anyone, it does not talk to anyone nor partake of anyone's food.

Questioner : All this is mere deceiving on your part.

Mataji : This body does not deceive any body. Sitting here on the bank of holy Ganga this body will surely not utter any falsehood. That you see deception shows that you yourself are the wilful, fanciful ruler.

Question : Why don't you make us love God's name ? What kind of a person are you ?

Mataji : Yes, what are you like ? Only when you make the Name your constant companion you will come to love it. Just as water is struck by continuous digging into the soil, so will your devotion for the Name become profound by sustained practice. So long as this does not happen continue to repeat His name.

Today I saw a shadowy figure sitting to the north facing the Ganga. He was clad in white garments and had long hair. Then I saw another person sitting on an *āsana*, also wrapped in clothes. Uncovering his face I saw he was none other than Mahāvīraji. When Sri Ramaji's pūjā was being performed this morning on the occasion of *Rāma Navami*,¹ a photo was taken of Sri Rama, I beheld his feet floating in the air. Later I saw him as a boy. As soon as I noticed the feet in the air, I at once asked Kantibhai² to provide a foot-stool. Furthermore, do you know what I observed behind Mahaviraji? Someone was lying in *savāsana* (dead pose) and someone else was performing *kurmāsana*. Thereafter I beheld the feet and Sri Rama as a child.

Question : Who was the other person ?

Mataji : Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra was there and Mahāvīraji, His attendant. The Lord did not appear as a youth but as a child. Mahāvīraji was sitting down below.

Question : So many people are sitting in the hall. Where was Mahaviraji sitting ?

Mataji : Do you imagine by sitting in the hall you have filled it? In fact there is nobody here, the whole hall is lying empty.

Question : Who was the third person you saw ?

Mataji : Must have been one of his companions.

1. *Rama Navami* is Sri Rama's birthday, usually in April.

2. Swami Bhagavatananda Giri.

Question : You would surely have recognized him. Please tell us his name !

Mataji : He did not disclose it.

Question : When did you see Lord Raghavendra and Mahaviraji ?

Mataji : During *mouna* (silence).

Question : Were they mahātmās in *savāsana* and *kurmāsana* ? Who were they ?

Mataji : Names must not be disclosed. This body does not speak of the future. Baba had said that this being the bank of the Ganga, how fortunate we were to have this wonderful opportunity of listening here to discourses of mahātmās. At this time everything got ready by itself for such a function. Those who were fated to participate have come and those who have not come were not destined to take part, so they are absent.

“Believe me, saints’ outlook is different. They feel really that suffering and comfort belong to the same category. They remember that whatever He does for them is for their benefit. So says Farid.”

—Baba Farid

DIVINITY'S TREASURE

Marge Hendel

It's the beauty of Her twilight hour
And countless hearts sing Her name
And countless souls are raised to regions supreme
Regions of blessedness, ecstasy, light and peace.

Divinity's Treasure has descended this era
From heights of the bountiful heavens
Forging our souls from Her beacon of light.
Divinity's Treasure—who is Mother Divine...
Our Ma...Sri Sri Anandamayi.

Of unimaginable splendor is She, Anandamayi,
our Ma,
Created in God's own glorious image,
On the throne of transcendence, as Soul of the
universe,
Sharing Her gifts, divine.

She crowns the firmament with gentleness and love,
And moves with poise of an angel.
Our globe is wrapt in Her infinite heart...
Our burdens are laid in Her outstretched hands.

The blissful Mother resides amongst us
And calls us to darshan each day
To rise to Her splendor, serenity, love,
To crown each moment with strength of Her
blessing.

A benediction is Mother—blissful, sublime and
sweet
Strong, beyond mortal conception,
Omniscient beyond mind's comprehension.

To live in this age in the arc of Her being
Is treasure and gift beyond words
Is love and gratitude, peace and beatitude,
Elevation, redemption, release.

SRI SRI MA : THE UNREVEALED REVEALED

SVAKRIYA SVARASAMRIT VOL. 1*

Explanatory Survey

Ma Das

The Supreme Ultimate Reality is the *Bhūma* (Divine Ground)—the undivided imperishable ONE-NESS—and It alone IS. This is the Truth, the final verdict of our sacred scriptures. Again, this sole causeless Cause, the source of everything in the world and beyond, is the immortal *Svarūpa* (Self) of all creation. And the publication *Svakriya Svarasamrit* contains an authentic record of the rare revelation of this *Svarūpa* through different phases, aspects and activities in the divine life-movements of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi—the Uncreated in peerless manifestation—and Her inseparable mother, our Gurudev Sri Sri Muktananda Giriji Maharaj.

In the phenomenal world, based on the divine deception of duality, the mind—itself a product of the grand Illusion—perceives and accepts as real, the apparent two-fold aspect of actor-action in all activities. But where the *niravārana* (unveiled) Self-emanated emergence of the Supreme Itself,

*English version of the first of the three volumes published so far in Bengali in the series under the title 'SVAKRIYA SVARASAMRIT'.

the undifferentiated ONE alone is and no other, there, all movements are naturally spontaneous, effortless and without any differentiation of actor-action. And this is *Svakriya* (*Sva*: Self or Supreme, and *Kriya*: action), which cannot be comprehended in the domain of the mind, as it belongs to the region beyond the reach of man's intellect. However, if a rough simile would help, one could perhaps say that *Svakriya* is like an oceanic wave which is spontaneous self-movement of the sea.

Also, existing simultaneously in that ONENESS are two other aspects represented by the term *Svarasamrit*: *Svaras*—the divine *ras* (sweetness) in identity with *Sva* (Self) and (*Sva*) *Amrit* (literally no death)—the innate immutability of the Supreme. Hence the elaborate English equivalent of *Svakriya Svarasamrit* (the Bengali title of the book) is “Spontaneous self-movement as undifferentiated actor-action, Sweetness in Identity with the Self and Innate Immutability of the Supreme”. This is more or less the utmost that can be conveyed in words to explain the awesome, though most appropriate title of the book under survey.

The phenomenon that is Ma Anandamayi defies all description, since it is not just a phenomenon but phenomenon, noumenon and beyond both at the same time, and the same applies to Her mother (our Didima) Giriji Maharaj, the ‘supreme great receptacle’. These two are ‘two forms of the same ONE—Mother, Daughter—the two indeed are ONE; the ONE, in fact, is two, as it were. The receptacle is His own creation and because He will

reveal Himself, is not this particular form too His only? It is only in the lineage of this family that what the mind cannot imagine as something that can happen has happened'.

BROAD OUTLINE

Svakriya Svarasamrit begins with 'a general survey of the various aspects of life pertaining to this lineage, based as they are on the way of *Rishis* alone', revealing, in the background of rare spirituality, inspiring harmony and refinement in a superbly holy environment.

Both in this, the maternal home of Ma, as well as on Her paternal side, were families of hereditary Gurus—the descendant-disciples of *Rishis* Bharadwaj and Kashyap respectively. *Dādāmahaśaya* (Ma's father) was a most unusual person, in that 'at all moments, he was *tatrūpa* (with that Supreme aspect) only, and this was just a natural way with him'. In Didima (Ma's mother), there was an unwavering serenity of constant awareness under all conditions, with the three of them (father, mother and daughter) as *Triveni Sangam* (confluence of three rivers Ganga, Jamuna and the invisible Saraswati). Along with all this is presented a vivid picture of the traditional social discipline of those days in the context of the prevalent social ideal of high spirituality, with the *Śāstras* (holy scriptures of Hindus) playing a significant role, and rituals as powerful instruments to further spiritual growth.

The priceless divine utterances of Ma, generally as replies to questions in different contexts and liberally interspersed all over the publication, constitute a very special feature, and, of course, a subject of vital interest is the discussion on the *Svarūpa* (Reality) of Ma. Then, there are several other topics of great value. Out of them, those included in this survey are 'Visions of Giriji—their essential nature'; 'That, That and That alone' and 'An Instrument in His hands'.

MA'S MATERNAL HOME

Ma's ancestral homestead on the maternal side was in the village of Sultanpur (now in Bangladesh), in the district of Tripura. In this family lineage, there appeared 'a great spiritual figure whose status and reputation were acknowledged as those of a *Jagatguru* (world teacher). Also, from the unknown past, there had been successive generations of many pandits in this family; and persons expert in spiritual rites, *sādhakas* (aspirants) and yogis as well took birth here'.

Ma's Grand-Parents—Ma's grandfather, Ramakant Bhattacharya had all the distinguishing features of a righteous brahmin, namely 'adoption inwardly and outwardly of the ways and methods which help to abide in truth, bring truth to light and become a centre of natural attraction for society's regard and devotion'. A Sanskrit residential school was at his home. Students and *śiṣyas* (disciples) who sought learning, came from remote places to the home of the Guru and

acquired knowledge while remaining under his care and devoted to his service (*seva*).

Befitting his exalted, noble personality, was his life-partner—Ma's grandmother—Hara Sundari Devi. She died early, when her daughter—Ma's mother—was only seven years old. However, it was learnt from Ma that 'She had heard that Hara Sundari Devi was also endowed with great beauty and virtuous qualities. Wherever she happened to be, the environment around her appeared to be radiant, as it were, through the effulgence of her beauty'.

Rituals Promote Spiritual Development—Worship, prayer, etc., all aim at that ONE, the Supreme, as the objective. 'The *ānanda* (bliss) of the ONE alone spreads out into infinite receptacles, while the infinite receptacles realize their cherished objective with the fulfilment of their resort in the lap of the ONE. It was as if this great ideal blossomed in all kinds of activities and rituals performed in this house'. And whenever these were undertaken, the environment, then, was such that there would be 'a centring of the entire energy of the village with enthusiasm and jubilation around these *pujās* (ritualistic worship), festivals, etc., with offers of assistance in sincere cooperation, as if one exercised the right to do so in one's own house'. And, of course, in all such activity, Ramakant Mahāśaya took the lead. 'Remaining at the forefront and observing scriptural rites in their unalloyed form, he would get executed, with flawless skill, all such rituals, etc., to perfect con-

clusion according to the injunctions of the *Sāstras*. In all such rituals and the like, he maintained the same ideal throughout his life and thus a model for perfection was sustained in an ever-living spirit'.

Ramakant's Grihastāshram—The second Chapter gives in detail the various aspects of the *grihastāshram* (life of a householder) of Ramakant, Mahaśaya. About his residence, the description covers his flower and fruit gardens, the Outer Section for men and the Inner Section comprising the residential part for ladies, the temple of the family deity, *Sri Sri Lakshminarayan Śalagram Śilā*, etc.

The outer apartment in the Section for men was suitably set up as a place for meeting, conversation and exchange of views among people from all stratas of society, Hindus and Muslims. 'The speciality in these meetings was the feeling that all were one's own and a spirit of friendliness towards all castes—*brahmins, kshatriyas, vaisyas, sudras*, etc., with respect, kind treatment, love and affectionate regards, as appropriate for each individual. To accord such a welcome to all was a distinguishing feature of this family'.

There were different types of seats for seating the visitors, and each visitor occupied the seat meant for him in accordance with his status and traditional place in society. 'Preserving the special ideal of the supreme spiritual goal of this family as the distinct common chord through all affairs, provided the background of this meeting place.

Continuing over a long past, and particularly within the atmosphere as it then existed, what a beautiful pattern of state of affairs was there !”

Traditional Social Discipline—What was the basis of this traditional social discipline ? ‘What is mentioned in the *Śāstras* was, indeed, followed by all classes’, keeping the spiritual ideal in view. There was then no confused conception of human rights as such, but obligatory right for each. For instance, ‘the actions of a brahmin had to be what was befitting a brahmin, to reveal what a brahmin essentially is. This too, indeed, has to be borne in mind that as the *Śāstras* declare, a brahmin is he in whom *Brahman* (Ultimate Reality) stands revealed’. The brahmin, and not political power or money, was given the first position in society because of this consideration.

About the spiritual ideal, ‘injunctions in the *Śāstras* regarding regulations for each caste are laid down to help one who has undertaken the journey for Self-realization from where he is stationed in order to reach his own objective’. All this was clearly grasped by all sections of society, and in keeping with that ideal, there never could be, for instance, a controversy in occupying different kinds of seats meant for people of different status and traditional place in society. It should be remembered that when the social ideal is high spirituality, ‘there is love born out of the understanding that there is only one *Ātman* abiding in all, and then, in that state, a spirit of pleasant friendliness will always be there whatever the type of activity based

on his caste, religion and work may be his means of livelihood'.

Significant Role of Śāstras—In reply to a question on the importance of the various relevant activities and rituals, Ma said, "At that time, a sincere effort was made to submit to the injunctions of the Śāstras. To the extent that this was done, there was an awakening of Śakti (spiritual energy) and so this, indeed, had connection with the background of such activities and rituals. The significance of abiding by the disciplines as codified in the Śāstras is to commence the journey for the awakening of a succession of inner Śaktis (powers)... The quest of Truth through observance of such a code of discipline leads to peace and self-possession, signifying Supreme Knowledge, which is beyond knowledge and ignorance. For such a revelation to take place, there is no other alternative way—none, none, none at all!"

Inspiring Harmony and Refinement—In the grihastāshram of Ramakant—naturally a joint Hindu family—there was, in keeping with its high spiritual ideal, an environment of perfect discipline based on a feeling of oneness among all and a very high degree of refined restraint, wisdom and love on the part of the elders. Among the ladies, in particular, where we see so much disharmony these days in similar circumstances, there was full understanding and ideal harmony in the home of Ramakant.

In each activity of the home, the house-mother (the head among the ladies in the house)

was the central figure. With love and affection, this house-mother 'would keep everyone enthusiastically engaged in work, inspiring them with her own example. With the cutting of jokes in between, now and then, as appropriate to the occasion, delightful harmony too would prevail in their midst. Indeed, in all affairs, the principle of truth was specially followed. Reporting with a prejudiced mind in favour of someone—such partiality was totally absent'.

The discipline was of such a high order that while everyone accepted cheerfully the decision and direction of the house-mother, she herself was all level-headedness with sobriety all the time, 'and as to mental agitation on her part, the question simply did not arise'.

In that truly affectionate environment, 'fault-finding was, of course, never indulged in, and self-importance was non-existent'. In this context, 'we have heard Ma say: indeed, the tendencies which are uncivilized, unrefined and lacking in culture, prevent progress on the journey aiming at the Supreme Objective. In fact, they are a great hindrance, as they create obstacles on the path. One should remain aware of this'.

PATERNAL LINEAGE

Ma's grandfather Trilochan Bhattacharya was a resident of the progressive village Vidyakut, also in the district of Tripura. Proficient in learning, culture and the art of handling social affairs, he was also a handsome person. And it was to his

