

Ananda Varta



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

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The ceaseless never-ending current of divine Mercy and Compassion ever flows forth in that current our should bathe.

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayi

There is no sinborn out of any deed, word or thought which is not destroyed by the Power at Nama.

Sri Sri Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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Man must go out in search of that which is concealed behind the world. He should choose an abode that will make it easy for him to proceed to his true Home.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Whatever result you achieve in Satya Yuga by dhyama, in Treta Yuga by performing yagna and sacrifices in Dwapara Yuga by doing service to God Kaliyuga you can get the same result by only singing MyNama.

Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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MATRI VANI

Keep your mind ever surrendered at the Guru's lotus feet. The quest after Truth and to be truthful is man's duty. Do your utmost to remain anchored in truth and spend much time in the contemplation of the Lord in a quiet secluded place.

A man can be recognized as a human being by the worthy character. A human being is in fact a traveller towards the realization of the superman. Each one should advance with his sphere and SAT-SANG will be helpful in this pursuit.

To have obtained human life is extreme good luck. It is God who creates, preserves and again absorbs into Himself. The desire to attain to the realization of this must awaken in man. Therefore, it is man's duty to be constantly engaged in JAPA, meditation, the remembrance of God, worship, the perusal of scriptures, prayer, singing the Lord's praises, attending religious gatherings or doing service in other words, to be pledged to practices and activities that will help to make his pilgrimage through life successful.

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



Worldly happiness alternating with periodical troubles that cause much sorrow and characteristic of the householder's life at every step. With great patience endeavour to do your duty to the best of your ability. Always pray for God's grace.



To be born as a human being is a rare boon. In spite of having obtained this great opportunity one does not give time to the contemplation of the Beloved, one will have to ask oneself: "What have I been doing"? To neglect the contemplation of Reality means to take the road of death.



To remember that God is in all action, in form as well as without form and to pray for His grace is man's bounden duty as a human being. In order that Truth may be revealed concentrate on the practice that brings about inner awakening.

Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma And the Great Tradition

Professor Debiprasad Bhattacharya

[Previous Issue Contd.]

On another occasion, a few weeks later, in faraway Cox-Bazar in Chittagong, She was asked a similar question regarding the relationship between Divine mercy and Karma. With characteristic promptness she answered "Well, you see, the relation between the two—Divine grace (mercy) and karma is like this". Then she took up a flower in her hand. Then, addressing the speaker, said : "Suppose I am offering this flower to you, and you are stretching your hand to receive it. In a similar manner Grace and krama work together. Its somewhat like this".

With this simple, prompt gesture she illustrates, vividly and beautifully, the simultaneous and harmonious operation of karma and krpa, and this, it should be noted here is in perfect accordance with the Shastras, where—it needs to be emphatically pointed out—there is no such thing as "ahaituki krpa (grace without cause), "daiva" and "purusakara" (divine dispensation and human effort) both are recognized. She too rejects, unequivocally and emphatically, the widely accepted and extremely popular concept of "causeless grace" (ahaituki kripa) Here, her repeated insistence on tapasya and 'karma"—a term which she used to imply spiritual activity. And she clearly (not strongly, for her manner of speaking was invariably mild and gently, often accompanied by a smile—a smile which was never sneering or sardonic, but always good-honored and kindly) deprecated the current and widespread sentimental effusion on krpa. Sometimes she would even suggest, gently but

frankly, that the speaker who questioned her on the subject (of Krpa) hadn't the faintest notion of what it is like, for in order to understand krpa. It has to be felt, to talk about krpa before that, is some what pointless, for it is not an intellectual concept, but an experience, which has to be felt in order to be really understood.

This indissoluble relationship between karma and krpa, repeatedly pointed out by Sree Sree Ma, leads inevitably to one of the central tenets of the Great Tradition : adhikara—bheda. What it means in effect is simply this : everybody is not fit for everything, that capacities differ, and so do right too Sree Sree Ma fully accepts this immemorial Indian doctrine, and made her position perfectly clear on many occasions. I give here one token from Sree Sree Ma Anandamayee : Vol.—IV.

It was in Almora in 1937. A gentleman asked her one evening : Mother ! Everything we have heard, is accomplished just by seeing (darshana) of a Mahatma. And yet you are constantly urging us to act—to perform karma in order to get any result. But when we have once seen you, should everything be fulfilled through this darshana alone ? Sree Sree Ma replied : “What you say is indeed true ; through darshana all can be accomplishhd. But what is darshana ? One must first develop the capacity (and hence adhikara the right) for it. I urge you to do karma precisely because karma enables you to develop this capacity—adhikara Mere words without Karma will lead to nowhere. You haven't passed the Matriculation Examination, yet, you are

asking about the way to pass M.A. Examination. It's no use.. Exert yourself a little, you will certainly get the fruits."

Although she was easily approachable and unfailingly kind and affable to visitors, she didn't answer every question by anybody. Sometimes, she would smile, and say nothing. On other occasions, she would be gently evasive, saying with a childlike smile : "I am your little daughter, how can, I teach you" ? On yet other occasions—and they are the most relevant in our present context—she would simply refuse to answer a question, remarking, in a characteristically passive voice : "All questions are not answered". This is the way she responded to a young man who (in 1936) wanted to know from her whether the sacred syllable "Om" has a form, what was really meant by that cryptic remark was that whether a question is to be answered depends on the fitness and capacity of the person who is question is to be answered depends on the fitness and capacity of the person who is putting the question. Besides, he must be serious. In this case, the young man was evidently not in earnest.

In this connection a frequent and very characteristic statement by Sree Sree Ma deserves particular mention. It is this. She would often say : "I do not say anything. It is you who make this body (meaning herself) say all these things you hear". This apparently enigmatic, indeed hardly intelligible statement has in reality, a profound significance (Many of her statements, as a matter of fact are of this kind). This is not it must be made clear—the

spiritual passivity I have mentioned above ; it is something quite different. What she actually intended to convey by these strange words is this : The answers came naturally and spontaneously if the questions were of the right kind and asked by right persons. And this is in complete accordance with the Great Tradition. It is in other words, the immovably old Indian concept of adhikari—bheda. There are innumerable examples in our sacred texts of this phenomenon, namely, right response coming out from the lips of great sages when faced with the right questions from the right persons.

From what has been said above, two things deserve to be noted for their direct relevance in our present context. The first is her extraordinary etymological ingenuity displayed by the way she interprets words. We have found an example already in her derivation of the work "tapasya" as tapa + saha (enduring heat that is physical hardship). Another example of sadhana as Sva + dhana (= One's own treasure, inalienable possession). There are many other examples of this such as samsara (where feigning or make-believe is the main thing) and "Duniya" (= that which is concerned with "two", that is the world of duality) of these the first three tapasya, sadhana and samsara are Sanskrit words. Needless to point out that these derivations, notwithstanding their remarkable ingenuity, are not grammatically impossible (unassailable). Here, it may be pointed out is an outrage on Sanskrit grammar, and as such marks sharp departure from the Great Tradition.

This however is not true. So far from being flagrant violations of our ancient philosophical tradition, such grammatically indefensible and etymologically dubious derivations of words has been an old and established practice in our sacred texts right from the Vedic times. The Brahmanas abound in such constructions; and examples are not altogether lacking in the Upanisads. Even the derivations of the word Brahman (brhanto guna yasmin iti) seems to be dubious etymology. So is purusa (puri sete iti Purusa) So, even here, that is in the way in which she makes familiar words yield a new deeper meaning by a subtle etymological twist—she is not flouting tradition but unwittingly and brilliantly continuing it.

Now I came to the second point, which is of utmost importance from our present standpoint. It is the use by Sree Sree Ma of a large, incredibly large number of technical (Sanskrit) terms of Indian Philosophy. Even if she just made use of them in her discourses, it would have been surprising enough, considering, her total ignorance of Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy, but when we remember that she used these terms in a clear luminous comprehension of their meaning we are struck with amazement. (Here, too, she bears a striking resemblance to Sree Ramakrishna).

We have, for instance, heard her mention words—nama and rupa—words that occur many times in the Upanisads (that is Vedanta); and she uses them in the correct Vedantic sense. And it is significant that in referring to the ultimate Reality, she uses the two Vedantic terms signifying it,

namely, Brahman and Atman more often than the more familiar Isvara and Bhagavan. No, even this statement is not quite correct, for the term that she uses to indicate the Supreme most often, more often even than Brahman, is simply "That" or "One". And this mode of designating Reality—a mode that seems closest to the heart, is essentially Vedantic it is Vedic as well, for in the Upanisads (and even sometimes in Rk-samhita) the supreme Reality is often referred to simply as "That" But the key-word. The one word that lies in the very heart of her teachings as we shall see later on, is "One".

Incidentally, it is remarkable how often the word "Jivanmukta"—another Shastric and Vedantic term—comes up in her discourses, and whenever she speaks on this subject, the picture she give of the Jivanmukta (liberated even while remaining in this body) it is extraordinarily clear and vivid; and the subject is so close to her heart that sometimes it seems to come-up almost out of context. I give below an example of this, her unmistakable fondness for the subject—almost at random.

It was Almora, in 1937. A visitor asked, among other questions, why it is that we become so involved in the Cosmic play. She replied; "The reason is, we don't really understand, if we did, we would participate in the game, but couldn't be lost in it. The Jivanmukta purusa (men who are liberated even while alive) too are found to play the game, but without bhoga (enjoyment). So, no fresh Karma is generated. The play goes on for sometime on account of

prarabdha karma (that is, the karma that gave birth to the present bodies and operates till death); it ends when prarabdha is exhausted. It is just like the potter's wheel, which continues to rotate for sometime even after the potter withdraws his hand." —(Vol IV—Page 227).

This is only one example and these words were altered by her when she was forty one; that is, less than half way through her life: Strewn throughout the momentous memories by Gurupriya Devi there are innumerable passages dealing with the state of the liberated soul in this body Jivanmuktabastha. The clarity, vividness and precision of these passages strikes me as profoundly significant in view of the fact these were uttered by a person who had never read the shastras where the state of the Jivanmukta has been described. The conclusion is, therefore, irresistible that what she said on the subject was based on personal experience. As a matter of fact, whatever she says on whatever subject relating to the life of the spirit produces an overwhelming impression of directly felt experience, and her utterances on the state of the Jivanmukta constitute no exception.

In describing the operation of prarabdha karma of the Jivanmukta, she uses the the metaphor of the potter's wheel; elsewhere, she employs a more modem image—that of the electric fan for which goes on rotating for sometime after the switch is turned off. To discuss splendid vividness and marvellous aptness of her similes and metaphors will demand a separate study by itself; I just mentioned that two metaphors in passing. What concerns us here is the term

“prarabdha” —another technical term from our shastras that she often uses in her discourses. Another such term that keeps recurring in her recorded utterances is samskara; as for adhikara—it has already been mentioned. And these are only some among many others of a similar nature.

Apart from these more or less philosophical concepts, culminating in the Vedantic “One”, there are others which have an immediate and intimate relevance for the sadhaka.

Many people, including sadhakas had at their request, private audiences with her. It is in a sense, a pity for all of us, for these conversations could not be recorded (even by Gurupriya Devi). Even so we have recorded utterances in divine abundance, thanks chiefly to Gunpriya Devi. Every aspect of the life of the spirit has been covered by these conversations, every detail explained and illumined by the light of knowledge. The same luminousness of direct experience is here overwhelming in evidence. She is not dealing here with philosophical concepts which may be dismissed by sceptics as intellectual constructions, but facts, of the spiritual life, and with these spiritual phenomena all enter the realm of tantra and Yoga.

On numerous occasions, and for more than forty years, on being asked by sadhakas she spoke on japa, dhyana and samadhi. Here as elsewhere, the same clarity and precision, the same subtlety of fine distinctions, above all, the same luminousness of direct knowledge scintillates through her utterances: Here is passage which I quote from a remarkable

book by an anonymous, and astonishingly perceptive foreigner (a German) :

“Question : How does the state of ajapa come ? Is that japa continuous during sleep ? Does this not indicate that one is in state of ajapa ?

Mataji : How do you know that you are doing japa during sleep ? By awaking up with it ? But are you ever awake ? You are asleep even now ! First put your whole ‘I-ness’, your effort, your entire strength and capacity into practices like japa and dhyana etc. and then the state of ajapa will emerge of itself. Some people say : “What is the good of such a state Simply to go on spontaneously doing japa day and night ? Oh no, not so, you will then become japatita, that is to say, you will transcend japa go beyond it, and then the svarupa, the essence of things will be revealed.

When practising japa in rhythm with one’s breath, the japa, in the case of some sadhakas mingles as it were with the breath, becomes associated with it so indissolubly that breathing without it is impossible and thus it continues throughout the 24 hours. This is called ajapa.

—(As the Flower Sheds Its Fragrance—Page 90)

The definition ajapa is a marvel of lucidity is one of the best I have come across. To countless seeking after the truth, including not a few foreigners, she explained here to meditate, varying her prescriptions, characteristically, according to his or her adhikara. And as for samadhi—She describes and analyses all the various stages of both savikalpa and nirvikalpa samadhi (she uses these two terms instead of the

older and traditional samprajnata and asamprajnata of nirbija presumably because the latter one is less known to the general public) with a thoroughness, subtlety and wealth of significant detail (that is possible only for a person who has personally gone through them, and when we first hear her speak on the subject she is not more than forty.

I have mentioned above, stages of samadhi. It is remarkable and very characteristic of her that in replying to questions she often categorizes a state of consciousness or a spiritual activity into several level in an ascending order. To illustrate this, I choose an example among many others. She is speaking (in 1955) on the subject of prayer. I cannot quote the entire passage for lack of space, but content myself to the last paragraph (Her teachings (Upadesa) do not, it should be noted in passing, lend themselves to compression ; they must be either be reproduced in toto or left alone : they cannot be summarized, for the subtle nuances—and her statements are full of them—will be lost). After distinguishing with characteristic thoroughness and precision, for levels of prayer, she defines the forth and the highest as follows.

“There is a further state when one does not pray at all. One feels, “God does all that is necessary, so, for what am I to pray ?” Then in the firm belief that He provided for all the needs of his creatures, one becomes free from worry and remains absorbed in deep meditation.”

—(As The flower Sheds Its Fragrance—Page 92).

Now this again, is in complete consonance with the Great Tradition, for the great sages, the rsis of old not only classified concepts into clearly defined categories, but carefully distinguished states of unconsciousness of spiritual states, into several stages or levels in an ascending order. (Here too, it may be noted in passing, the all-important concept of adhikara becomes relevant). To cite an example, I take a well known passage in the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, the classical and supreme expression of the Great Tradition. The Blessed lord first tells Arjuna to meditate in Him with one pointed concentration. Failing this, one should resort to "Abhyasa-Yoga" which means— constant, sustained effort for meditation. If one is unable to do that one should perform all works for God. And, He adds, finally, "If you cannot do even that, try to perform all acts renouncing all hopes for the fruits (results)". Hence the division into four distinct categories (or levels) is made clearly according to one's capacity or adhikara. Distinctions and classification of this kind, according to one's respective capacity or adhikara. Distinctions are to be found everywhere in our Shastra and demonstrate the wisdom of the ancient sages of India. In her clear and subtle distinctions between spiritual stages Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma, though born in modern times, shows in a supreme measure, this wisdom of the ancients, I would like to mention in this connection one more little detail, it is both relevant and most interesting. It is regarding the state of sleep of an illumined soul, a Jnani. "Does a Jnani, sleep like

the rest of us ?” She was asked about half a century ago. Her answer was, “No”. Then, she went on to explain, as she always did. The Jnani, she said, never sleeps. He is always wide awake, even when to all appearances, he is asleep ; for once a man is established in the consciousness of the Self (Atman), his state of knowledge never deserts him even for a moment. Sleep, therefore, in the sense in which we use the term, does not exist for him.

This again, is whony in agreement with the revelations, in our Shastras, A look at the Yoga—Shastras of Patanjali will confirm this. According to Patanjali, sleep (Nidra) which is one of the five mental phenomena (Cittva-Vrtti) is suppressed (Niruddha) along with the others in the highest samadhi. Establishment in the Atman-Kaivalya - is a higher stage even than samadhi, he has attained the highest state attainable by man, namely the state of the Jivanmukta. True, he has no needs to suppress. Anything, including the cittva-vrittis (mental Phenomena), even when they arise, he does not reject them, nor does he welcome them, as the Gita says about the gunatita purusa (the man who has risen above the three gunas). He just looks on remaining a detached and indifferent (Udasina) spectator of all his mental goings as including sleep (nidra).

Whenever any one questioned her on the truth or validity of any of our old religious belief and traditional concepts of Indian spiritual philosophy, her answer would always take in the affimarive. If semebody asked, for instance,

is performance of sradha ceremony necessary and beneficial ? She would answer. "Yes". Is a Guru necessary for the seeker of Truth ? "Absolutely so". (By a Guru she meant of course, a real Guru as opposed to a false one. She repeatedly warns us against the latter. A wrong choice here, she tells us emphatically, may lead to disastrous consequence.) Are there really spirits ? (Disembodied souls) ? The answer again is a prompt "Yes" Do the six centres (Satcakra) along the central channel of spiritual (Susumna) really exist ? "Certainly".

Instance may be multiplied. I have cited only a few for illustration. It should be remembered, however, that the affirmative "Yes" is in every case, the beginning of the answer, it is followed invariably by a clear and detailed explanation. Why for instance, the performance of Sradha benefits the performer as well as the departed souls for whom it is done, and how, sometimes, this is followed or preceded by a story vividly narrated, for she is a fascinating story-teller.

All this is profoundly characteristic of her and so deserves to be noted. But the point I want to emphasize is the almost invariably affirmative reply which clearly demonstrates that she accepts fully and firmly that has been revealed by the ancient sages through the Shastras.

From our present point of view this is a fact which has a tremendous impact. The reason is this : If she found any of our age old traditional beliefs and concepts concerning the life of the spirit contradict her direct perception of the nature of things, of Reality, she would certainly have said

so, if she found any of the shastric injunctions and prescriptions observed and devoid of meaning from her direct knowledge of causal laws in the realm of the spirit. The fact—and a very remarkable fact is that, one can hardly recall a simple instance of her having said so.

For those who really believe that Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma had a direct knowledge of the nature of Reality but do not accept, for less respect, the Great Tradition—this is very important. For it clearly shows that it is impossible to adore Sree Sree Ma and at the same time abjure what I have called the Great Tradition.

This is one side of the matter. The other side is this : it is impossible to accept and believe in the greatness of this Tradition and at the same time remain indifferent or sceptical towards Sree Sree Anandamayee Ma. If, respect for the Tradition and adoration of Sree Sree Ma as a supreme embodiment of this Tradition do not go together, one is apt to suspect that something is wrong. If respect for one of these two is combined with indifference, if not irreverence, towards the other, the person in question must have failed to understand with the one or the other, he has to reject both or accept both. And this is true of every Mahatma or a great soul who has attained enlightenment in or outside India, for the Great Tradition whose revelations culminate in Vedanta, the ancient, original Vedanta of the Upanisads, is the inalienable possession of every human being and the common heritage of mankind.

Finally, a question remained—a question that has been waiting for an answer all the time. It is this : How does Sree Sree Ma herself look upon this Great Tradition ? Does she refer to it at all ? If so, how, and in what terms ?

From what has been said above the answer to this question will have, I hope, clearly emerged ; and the answer is : Sree Sree Sree Ma herself. For what I have been trying to show throughout this study is to show that she is a supreme embodiment, in recent times of the Great Tradition. Nevertheless, if even this is not enough, if a more direct and specific reference by her to the Great Tradition is called for, here is one. It is a passage (from the Diary leaves of the most remarkable anonymous foreigner—presumably a German by birth) in which in the summer of 1955 in Solan, Sree Sree Ma clearly states her views on education—what she means by real education. “If the growing child, the adolescent thoroughly understands that man’s true vocation is to find himself, if he realizes that all knowledge is only a preparation for Brahmavidya, the knowledge of Reality, if at the same time he is taught how to control body and mind by living the simple, frugal and disciplined life of a brahmachari, so that all his energies may be available for the Quest that alone is worthy of man, he will have had learnt the art of living. Whether he chooses the shortest, and renouncing all worldly attachment straight away, take sannyasa or whether he first passes through the stages of the householder (grahastha) and of the anchorite (vanaprastha),—the path of self—realization and Immortality is open to him.

—(As the Flower sheds its Fragrance. Page 85)

What the ancient sages of India, the great rishis of old meant to her the profound esteem in which they held their sublime wisdom, comes out in that one word—Brahmavidya, for it is to them, and to them alone, that we owe this Brahmavidya, the greatest gift of India to mankind. And this very word—Brahmavidya—keeps recurring in her recorded Utterances during a period covering almost half a century, for it is the central theme of her teachings. Now to utter this word is to remember with a deep sense of gratitude,—as Shree Shree Ma herself did, on countless occasions—the rishis of old, the great seers of ancient India to whom the supreme Knowledge had fully revealed.

And in the passages Quoted above it is not only Brahmavidya but a whole way of life has been depicted. It is the Indian way of life par excellence divided into four asramas (—stages of life); Brahmacharya, grahastha, vanaprastha and sannyasa. And the goal of this complete, four-stage life of man, visualized by the ancient rishis of India, is knowledge-knowledge of the self (Atman) or Brahman (Ultimate Reality) To this final goal of human existence she repeatedly and insistently directs our attention, and the insistence has overwhelming impact of her words as all seekers after the Truth, coming as they do straight from the divine source of the Great Tradition.

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SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE AND SHREE KRISHNA'S JANMASTAMEE

(Sujata Biswas)

Shree Krishna, the Supreme Lord comes to earth full of
Mirth Within the cell, full of hell of human bondage Ma is
born,

to adorn

the earth with fragrance, as the greatest sage.

Krishna's birth is encircled by bors of prison

Ma's birth—from the eternal sleep of Narayan

is awakened by the Mango Crove

bordering the stars of the horizon.

But in the true sense,

both Deities are transeendentally free

Supreme Power

Shree Krishna on his bower

Ma—kind and blissful Omnipresent every hour.

Visi a comes to Devaki in the prison to take his birth

Ma Anandamayee—Kali from Kasba comes personally
to Moksadasundari

and there is no dearth of devotion and emotion in the
formalities of devotees who sincerely follow, the
Mother's magical hallo.

Baba Vasudeva carry Krishna on his head

Ma Moksadasundari, Baba Bipin Behari carry

Ma in their heart wherever they tread.

Ma Purna Brahma Narayan descends from

Vaikuntha to illuminte all with divine light :

and take away the plight of devotees

for their delight !!

“JAI MA”

Note :—(Meaning)—bower—A bird of the bird of the
paradise family.

SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE AND SHREE KRISHNA'S JANMASTAMEE

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Durgutsava at Varanasi

by Mili Bhattacharya

We witnessed the Saptami-puja at Lucknow. Mahanagar was nicely decorated this year. Bhutnath observed their silver jubili this year 1998.

In the afternoon of Austami, we started by train for Varanasi and reached home. In the house, they were just ready to take meal after visiting Puja-pandels. On the Dasami-day we saw many images of Durga to pass through the broad-road one after another along with sound of Dhak, Dhol and Patakka. Standing on the road-side, we saw many devoties to dance along with music. Only we (not the children) two went to see the Dashahara scene. There were many police to control the procession. Walking few minutes we came to Kedarghat. How nice Ganga looked ! Without a chance such gorgeous scene is not always available. I think myself a fortunate one. Bharat Sewashanghe kept their image on a big boad and they offered Arati. The entire place, excepting mother Durga, was dark. She was visible and sound of mahalaya strotra was resounding all over in the sky. Someone delivered a lacture on Swami Vibekananda, who is the pioneer to organise Sarbojanin Durgutsava. Some of the Sangasis played with sward, knife and other weapons. They did all these games infront of the Durga-image on the dark of the big-boat. How nice that looked infront of mother Anandamayee ? On all the stairs of Ghat, we all spectators, were standing to she that miracle

scene. People were carrying images one after another down to the stairs for immersion. Taking the images, far from bank, in small boats, devotees were immersing them in the Holy Ganga. No party was allowed to go to the middle Ganga ; because there was strong current in the river. Within allover darknes, only the Gods & Godness—Lakshmi, Swaraswati, Kartic, Ganesh and what to say of mother Durga, all were shining, one after another, all the images were sunkar. Only the big boat, carrying Durga Thakur of Bharat Sewashram remained unmerged. All the Gods seemed to me alive, more better than men. I saw this wonderful scene for the 1st time in my life. Lakshmi Thakur seemed smiling, When they were trying to take down Durga, it seemed to me as if the is not willing to. All the people of the boat up-helded her from the boat and immersed in water. We took shantijal and came in sense from self forgotness.

QUEERISH COLOURFUL LEELA OF SRI MA

Dr. Premlata Srivastava

[Previous Issue Contd.]

Ma, in a very cheerful mood threw morsels of yoghurt into the mouth of the devotees, who came running to Her specially to get the Prasad this way. Ma's Leela was so pleasant, so wonderful. The morsels spread out of mouth made designs on each other's face. Everyone giggled and Ma enjoying the devotees laughter and happiness.

Ma's kindness was limited not only for human beings but for birds, animals, even the wild animals too. In Kashi the pot used for doing Aarti during Geeta Jayanti Mahotsav is designed like snake. It is said, years ago during Geeta Jayanti celebrations at Vindhyaachal someone killed a snake. Ma was pained to hear this news. Subsequently, she asked this pot for Aarti, be designed like a snake, so that at the time of Aarti, the snake is remembered by the people. Where else can one find so much compassion ?

Here is another instance of Ma's sweet Leela with Her children. In 1979 during Ma's birth celebration in Bangalore, Ma was sitting at the corner of the stage and function was on. A boy child went upto Ma, gave Her a flower and prostrated. Ma pulled him closer and caressed his hair. What happened thereafter was a stream of children, coming to Ma one by one and Ma caressing everyone of them and giving Her blessings. In this way, hundreds of children got Ma's blessing that day.

She used to be so happy with things of apparently little importance. It was like the immense happiness a baby gets when she is given a doll.

Once, Durga puja was being organised at Delhi ashram. At evening time, Ma was seated on the podium when a gentleman came upto Her, placed a big 16 kg tin and showed something to Her.

Ma was very much pleased. Her eyes brightened. She immediately began distributing what had been brought to Her. They were toffees. It was a pleasure for the devotees to collect toffee from Ma in that great mood.

In 1982, Ma was in Vrindavan during Holi : she was not keeping well. So it was learnt, this time she would not play Holi (gulal). However, devotees will be allowed to pay obeisance to Her by putting colour on Her feet. On Holi morning, Ma put a colour mark on the forehead of devotees who went to Her for Her blessings. At 10 o'clock, she was seen in the verandah of Chaliya mandir. She began playing Holi by throwing dry colour powder on the devotees. Then she picked up a squirt and sprayed colour water all around. This was an unforgettable scene ; the face of spray in one direction, and colour sprayed in another direction. She sprayed the coloured water so quickly and comprehensively that no one was spared. It was perhaps the last major get-together in which the devotees swam with Ma in the ocean of Joy.

Didi Ma with Ma

The relationship of Ma with Didima was supernatural.

Didima used to call her, 'Your Ma', while Ma called her Giriji. Ma held Didima in great esteem.

Before going out of the ashram, Ma always used to touch Didima's feet in great reverence. Once, in a hurry at Kashi ashram she forgot. However, immediately after coming out, She remembered the mistake and then and there in the lane she prostrated as if before Didima.

According to eyewitness Ma used to do this prostration in a spring-like action. Later, on Didima's insistence, she stopped this tradition.

Calm and quiet, Giriji was always busy in doing puja. When asked for whom she is constantly busy in doing Japa, she would reply "for the welfare of her dependents." When devotees came to pay obeisance to her and touch her feet she would bless them by touching devotees head with both the hands. She would discuss religious topics with them. But Giriji was most happy in Ma's company. She took sannyasa to be in Her constant company. On devotees repeated queries about Ma's earlier life she disclosed with great hitch.⁴ "Your Ma is the personification of several avataras that you see. She saw the avataras, not as images but full of life, in action."

Ma used to say, don't talk all this in my presence. Didima once recounted a shahbagh incident.

It was during Kali puja (1925) which Ma agreed with difficulty to perform on Bholanath's request. First your Ma put vermilion (sindur) on Kali and uttered hymns in praise of Kali, then started the puja. Gradually, she went into a

trance. Asking Bholanath to give Her flowers meant for puja she tried, but actually could not offer them to Kali. Then she asked Bholanath to perform the puja. She sat beside the image of Kali.

'Before Bholanath took his seat-he saw Ma in a different ecstasy. Ma asked all devotees to close their eyes. Everybody did except the gardner's wife who was standing out in the garden. Your Ma called her aloud to comply with the request.

When Bhola Nath sat for puja, we all opened our eyes. We learnt the reason why we were told to close our eyes was "Ma's change in appearance Her cloths fell off, Her face turned bluish like Kali and tongue hanging out. I saw Her intensely and left the place."

We asked Didima that it said she intended to touch Her feet at that moment but changed her mind at the last moment.

Didi Ma said "yes, that is true. But then I thought how could I give 'Anjali, to my daughter ? Therefore, I offered the holy leaves of Bel and flowers to Kali instead. At the time, Bholanath and Ma were having their Prasad after Puja somebody indicating me said, Ask Ma, whom she was offering her Anjali ? I said to your Ma,— "I intended to give you, but offered it to Kali."

A very interesting incidence Srimad Bhagavat mentions that Sri Krishna shwed her mother Yashoda the entire universe in his mouth and as soon as her parental emotions were replaced by Sri Krishna's majestic grandeur He put a veil of ignorance before Krishna's majestic grandeur . He

put a veil of ignorance before Yashoda as He was to perform many leelas later. Similarly Didima also left at that moment that Ma was, after all her own daughter.

On Jhulan festival day at Vindhyachal ashram in 1943, a manifestation of Ma's leela was witnessed. In the afternoon, three virgin girls were worshipped (Kumari puja). After the Aarti when the priest began to touch their feet Ma asked them to bless the priest by keeping their hands on his head and wish him well"

Didi was sitting close by. She requested Ma to allow all of them to pay obeisance at Her feet and she would bless them and say something in similarity. Ma said with a smile to Didi-"what you have started now?"

Prompted by Didi, everybody started paying obeisance at Ma's feet. Taken aback however, Ma readily consented to give Her blessings by putting Her hand on their head. Those who were not present on this occasion were also called. Didi watched with great admiration this magnificent Leela of Ma and said "whenever you start doing something, perfection and beauty blend so splendidly that, the delight of the occasion is intensified manifold.

Meanwhile a devotee asked whether Didima too will come to seek Ma's blessings? Ma said "yes, please call her too" Then she muttered "now this body, and Giriji's body will be united into oneness. Yes, it is one and same. See, if Ma could do it..."

When Didima came to the venue, Ma got down from Her seat, asked Didima to lie down on the ground upside down. Curious devotees looked on as Ma too lay down

Herself in opposite direction in a manner, so that Ma's head touched Didima's feet and Didima's head too touched Ma's feet Lying in that position. Ma said "who blesses whom ? Everyone is One only. I pray to Him. "She further said, "only one" it is from one to two, and from two comes out one. He is the one who despite limits, is limitless. He is also the one who has no restrictions, but appears to be restricted and without appearing limitless looks like limited."

Watching this bewitching Leela, devotees fell at Ma's feet. For sometime, they all were in a unique serious mood.

Once, Ma was going away from Vrindavan ashram where Didima was staying. Before leaving the ashram, Ma asked Didima—

"Stay well".

"You too Ma, "Didima said, "come back soon".

Ma said, "this body is only due to your blessings. If you keep yourself well and bless, this body will keep well".

Ma's words filled Didima's eyes with tears. "Namo Narayan, Namo Narayan, Namo Narayan," Ma touched Didima's feet and left.

How intensely beautiful and heart touching leela was of Ma and Didima ?

Once during the 'Rakhipurnima' celebration in Vindhya-chal, a lunar eclipse occurred. Therefore, the kirtan recital continued till 3.30 am Ma had Her, Self-initiation during midnight of Jhulanpurnima (1922) hence devotees prefer sitting in silence doing Japa during this time. It was still

dark at 4.00 am, Ma asked Didi "will you not go for a bath at the Holy Ganges ? "Didi said" No, I will not go,"

Ma quickly came out of Her room, Didi said, "Ma, are you asking whether should I go now for the Holy bath ? If you ask me, I will go for it".

"I am not asking you to go but I am going for the holy bath," said Ma and went to Didima's room and asked her "Ma, will you come for the Holy bath ? Didima, who was asleep, got up. Ma then put Her head at Didima's feet and said, "I'm taking the Holy bath." Ma remained in that Position for sometime. Didi Hariramji and Udasji also came in and witnessed this spectacle. Didi promptly said, 'Ma, you taught us a good lesson. Now, we will also keep our head at your feet and take the symbolic Holy bath".

She did it followed by Hariramji and Udasji. When they touched Her feet, Ma said, "Please don't do it".

Didi said, "No, we will not this, today,"

Everybody touched Her feet, people who were sleeping or doing kirtan were also called in to take Ma's blessings.

Ma's 'Kheyal'

Ma's 'Kheyal' is a word very familiar to Sri Ma's family of devotees. It is not the subject of logical analysis but is transcendental, beyond the range of senses. We want to be in Ma's Kheyal but donot realise it even after getting it.

(Contd.)