

MA ANANDAMAYEE

AMRIT VARTA

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with the divine life and sayings of
Shree Anandamayee Ma

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CONTENTS

| | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|
| 1. | Matri Vani | ... | ... | 1 |
| 2. | Ma Anandamayee Prasang <i>-Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupta</i> | ... | ... | 3 |
| 3. | Mother and Her Playful Role <i>-Bhaiji</i> | ... | ... | 6 |
| 4. | "You, A Scion of the Immortal" <i>-Br. Gimeeta</i> | ... | ... | 8 |
| 5. | Ma's Technique of Bestowing Divine Love and Grace on One and All | ... | ... | 11 |
| 6. | Contemporary Saints and Sages : Swami Ramdas <i>-Vijayananda</i> | ... | ... | 13 |
| 7. | Destiny Maker Ma Anandamayi <i>-Shuddha Sattu Chukrvarry</i> | ... | ... | 17 |
| 8. | Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee <i>-Gurupriya Devi</i> | ... | ... | 19 |
| 9. | Bhagwat Saptah Blessing By Ma <i>-Ajay Sopory</i> | ... | ... | 24 |
| 10. | Let Me Grow <i>-M. ma</i> | ... | ... | 26 |
| 11. | Anandamayi <i>-Richard Lannoy</i> | ... | ... | 27 |
| 12. | Come, My Beloved, Come <i>-J.N. Dhamija</i> | ... | ... | 30 |
| 13. | The Key <i>-Sitarani</i> | ... | ... | 36 |
| 14. | Memories of Panuda <i>-Indira Malla</i> | ... | ... | 37 |
| 15. | Ashram News | ... | ... | 38 |
| 16. | Obituary | ... | ... | 41 |
| 17. | Book Review | ... | ... | 42 |



MATRI - VANI

Time devours ceaselessly. No sooner is childhood over than youth takes its place; the one swallows up the other. This cannot be grasped by ordinary perceptions. Change is observed only to a very slight degree. Actually appearance, continuance and disappearance occur simultaneously in one place. Everything is infinite-infinity and finiteness are indeed the same. In a garland the thread is one, but there are gaps between the flowers. It is the gaps that cause want and sorrow. To fill them is to be free from want.

* * * * *

Look ! When you see the bud of a flower, you perceive the bud only, whereas actually the full blown flower, the fruit, the seed, and the whole plant, are contained in that little bud. Manifestation is universal and unlimited, but your vision of it is partial, from one angle, dependent upon what, at a certain time, appears before your eyes. Look with an allround comprehensive vision and try to find out who a particular yogi, a particular individual in reality is!

* * * * *

For to know your self does not mean to know your body only ; it signifies the full revelation of that which eternally Is- the Supreme Father. Mother. Beloved, Lord and Master-the Self. At the moment of your birth, you did not know that you came into being. But when you have caught the Supreme Moment, you suddenly come to know who you really are. At that instant, when you have found your Self, the whole universe will have become yours. Just as by receiving one seed, you have potentially received an infinite number of trees, so must you capture the one Supreme Moment the realization of which will leave nothing unrealized.

* * * * *

The sense of want, of emptiness (abhava), and one's true being (svabhava), are in exactly the same place-in fact, they are THAT, and THAT alone.

* * * * *

You must bear in mind that when the sense of want becomes the sense of the want of self knowledge, then only the real Quest begins. Whether you call it the One, the Two, or the Infinite, whatever anyone may say, everything is all right .

* * * * *

Suppose a person is walking in the dark and a dog suddenly starts barking furiously quite close to him. What can be the matter? The man switches on his torch and finds himself confronted with a big, poisonous snake. By taking great care he is now able to elude the venomous fangs. Will the dog in this case have to be called his Guru or not? One may certainly object to it, for the dog did not bark for the purpose of making the man aware. But He who bestows awareness may appear in the guise of a dog.

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SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG

Vol. 5

—Late Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Translation - Sanjay Ghosh

(Continued)

21.04.1996 (8th Baishakh, Sunday)

Since Ma was scheduled to leave Dhaka tomorrow she did not go out anywhere in the morning today. On my visit to the Ashram, I found that Shree Shree Ma was sitting outside at the verandah of the Smriti Mandir. Shree Shree Ma was surrounded by lady devotees. Ma was exchanging a few words with those devotees who had come to the Ashram to meet her. The Professor of Sanskrit of Jagannath Collage was also present. He chanted Sanskrit hymns in praise of Shree Shree Ma. Someshbabu of 'Dhanmondayer' (a place in Bangladesh) has come to meet Shree Shree Ma. Shree Shree Ma directed Khukunididi to give some fruits to Someshbabu and the Professor.. Didi promptly complied with the order of Ma and gave the fruit to the Professor and Somesh babu. On receipt of the fruit from Khukunididi, Somesh babu commented, "Ma, it is like receiving *dakshina* (monetary remuneration for performing *puja*) before actual performance of the *puja*." I returned home after staying in the Ashram till noon.

On my revisit to the Ashram in the evening, I found that a large crowd had assembled at the Ashram premises. The entire field was covered by cars, motor cars and rickshaws. Ramayan *Gan* (song) was being performed in the Ashram. Shreeman Jotu performed the *Arati* of Ma in the evening. Immediately after, Sachin babu commenced his performance of *kirtan* (Devotional Song). When I returned to the Ashram, a little later, in the evening I found that the performance of '*kirtan*' was about to end. At the termination of the *kirtan* performance around 12 P.M., in the night, Shree Prafulla Chandra Ghose accompanied Ma to his house along with Haribaba.. They returned after about an hour and sat at the verandah of Smriti Mandir. We also sat near Ma. Ma asked me, "Do you not live at Bakshi Bazar?"

I replied, "yes"

Ma, "I came past near your home".

Shree Prafulla Chandra Ghosh resides at Armanitolla. There is no need to pass via Bakshi Bazar while proceeding towards the Ashram from Armanitolla . Hence, I presumed that Shree Shree Ma was making some mistake as she had never visited my new residence.

Hence, I replied to Ma, "No Ma, you did not pass near my residence".

Ma replied, "I have come via Bakshi Bazar. Your house is on road near Satya babu's house, isn't it?"

I said, "Yes".

I felt thoroughly ashamed and reprimanded myself on the very thought as to how could I ever presume that Ma can commit mistakes! I was ashamed to assess such a level of strength of my trust and confidence in Ma!

Actually, I never had the courage to think that Ma would ever keep in her mind such an insignificant affair as my place of residence. Ma further continued to say, "I thought I would call on your residence, however I restrained myself from doing so as it was already late at night and Haribaba was accompanying me."

We all started laughing as we enjoyed the conversation. After some more conversation Ma retired for rest. We also returned to our respective homes.

22.04.1946 (9th Baishakh, Monday)

On my visit to the Ashram in the morning I heard that Shree Shree Ma had gone to Jagannath Hall. She did not stay there for long. On her return she proceeded for her meal. All those sadhus who had accompanied Ma proceeded to pack up their bed rolls immediately after the completion of meal. All were very busy making preparation for the ensuing journey. After the meal Ma sat at Panchabati. The women devotees were combed by her to one side making enough room for us the male devotees to sit.

One of the lady devotees requested Shree Shree Ma to select a name for her child. Ma asked Nitishbabu to suggest a name. Nitishbabu left the place with a grin without uttering a single word. Ma requested a few others present their to suggest a name. They suggested some names for the baby. Ma said, "Are these names acceptable in the present days? There should be a fashionable name!"

One devotee suggested a name—"Gouranga".

Ma asked the lady devotee, "Is this name acceptable to you?"

The lady devotee did not like the name suggested for the child.

Ma laughed and said, "Even this name is not acceptable as one has to utter Gouranga all the time." All the devotees present started laughing. Some other devotee suggested the name - "Narayan". The lady devotee still did not like the name. Ma commented laughing, "All this would not suffice; there must be something incomplete. (*apurna*). Something complete (*purna*) is not acceptable". Later I heard Ma saying, "Do you prefer the name - Joydeb?" Perhaps the lady devotee liked the name of Joydeb for his son because after that I could not hear any further discussion on this issue.

Discussion Regarding Self Sacrifice and Supreme Salvation :

At this point of time Mahitoshbabu said, "Ma, please say that we shall all be good souls as we cannot practice chanting of Holy Name (*Nama*)."
Ma started laughing at

this. Afterwards she said, "if you cannot chant the Holy Name i.e. *Nama* then do one thing. After waking from sleep in the morning pray to God," O God, bless me so that I can perform all work destined by you and further I can realize that I am working under your strict dictum. Practically whatever work we do we act according to the command of God. However, we fail to appreciate this fact and mistake His work for our work. That is why we have to pray to God : Please transform us as your tools to fulfill your wish. Also let us realize that we are mere tools of the Almighty God. You have to make this prayer irrespective of the fact whether you are still in bed or you have left your bed. If you fail to make this prayer while sitting you can still pray while lying down in your bed. Although, if you pray lying down in bed then the mind is more concerned towards your bodily comfort rather than your prayer. Still then it is better doing something instead of doing nothing. That is the reason why I have suggested praying while lying down. Again when you are about to retire to bed during night you should again pray, "O God, let me construe also my sleep as your command". In this way you shall remember God in all your daily activities and construe all your work as the work of the Almighty God. By this practice you will be able to realize one day there is nothing in this world except the Almighty God."

Mahitoshbabu commented, "My wife once had a vision of yours as Ma Jagaddhatri; May she continue your *seva puja* in that fashion? My wife is twelve years younger than me but it matters little. She acts as my guardian. She asks me to visit you and chant your holy Name." (All the devotees present started laughing)

Ma laughed and said, "Your perception that your wife is junior to you in age is entirely your assessment. But your assessment is not uniform all the time. What you do according to your assessment to day you do something reverse tomorrow. What was 9 A.M. earlier now you are reading the same time as 10 A.M.* Hence what was less yesterday has become more today. Again what is excess to day may be less tomorrow. Worldly assessment is like this. (laughing) I say your wife is not junior to you but senior. (All started laughing). As regards performance of my puja in the form of Jagaddhatri, this body has constantly been telling you that whatever you see in this mortal world are all forms of the Almighty God. Only the Almighty God reigns and is omnipresent. How can I say that this body is not one of his forms? Even if you worship wood and stones as Almighty God he manifests through these elements.

(to be contd.)

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*. This change had been introduced during the Second World War.

MOTHER AND HER PLAYFUL ROLE

Bhaiji

From Her early days everybody noticed Her skill in neat home-craft, in the art of cooking and Her gracious manner of entertaining guests. Whatever She did was done to perfection. She could spin very beautifully and weave cloth on a handloom; Her needle-work, hosiery and cane-work were superb, they showed an extraordinary degree of intelligence and skill. When She found others unable to do a piece of work, She would come to their aid and, to their surprise, accomplish it with ease. Dishes of food prepared by Her were delicious and, therefore, wherever a feast took place, She was always requested to direct the cooking.

Mother felt great delight in distributing food to all persons, -adults as well as children. She would forego food and all personal comforts to satisfy others. On one occasion a *sadhu* came from Gujarat to Shah-bag, Dhaka; with the hem of Her *sari* she rubbed his seat clean and entertained him with Her usual humility and sweetness. The dish of food was so neatly served that it appeared to be sanctified, as it were, by Her great love and selfless spirit of service. On leaving, the *sadhu* said, - "Today I have taken food from the hands of the Mother of the world; I have never in my life been served with so much care and purity."

As long as She could, She cooked for all Her devotee-children and with motherly affection served the food to them. *Prasad* received from Her hands roused unprecedented joy in the hearts of devotees. Many mysterious incidents happened at the distribution of *prasad*. One day the wife of late Niranjan Roy brought some oranges for Mother. Mother Herself distributed them, for everybody present exclaimed, "I want *prasad* from Mother's hands". The number of oranges was every small and the claimants were too many. There was every chance of oranges falling short. But Mother's ways are inscrutable; everyone got an orange and there was not a single one left over. Another day there was a *kirtan* party in Niranjan's house at Dhaka. Food for about fifty to sixty people was prepared, but the number of guests swelled to about hundred and twenty. Mother noticed it and till the end of serving stood in a corner of the room where the food was kept. When all had eaten, it was found that some food was left over even then.

By way of offerings to Mother food and clothes came in abundance to the *ashram*. After partaking of a small particle of the food offered or wearing a piece of cloth for a short while, She would distribute everything amongst the people assembled. Thereafter She laughed cheerfully. People offered Mother precious gold and silver ornaments, shell

bangles, glass churis and many other things. At times these ornaments were massed on Her forearms. All things, great and small, precious or trivial, were received by Her with equal grace. But She never cared to enquire who had presented them or what became of them afterwards. Many ornaments were given away and what remained was melted into a lump and spent over the ornaments for the images in the ashram.

She had never more than two changes of *saris* to wear. She would often give away one out of the two, but it so happened that as soon as the one was given away, another *sari* would be offered to Her.

When I went to Calcutta from Dhaka, I used to put up at the house of Sri Jnanendra Nath Sen. He was more than an elder brother to me. His wife, the late Mrs. Hiranmayi Devi, looked upon me as her own younger brother. Such a loving soul with so much extraordinary simplicity, purity, devotion to her husband and an uncommon tactfulness to please the guest and the members of her household, was very rare. Attracted by her goodness Mother also used to go and see her occasionally.

Once when Mother stayed at Calcutta I went to see Her. A devotee made Her put on a *sari* of a fine Dhaka fabric. It had been arranged that Mother would go to Jnan Babu's house. I went ahead as I was informed that Mother was going somewhere else on Her way. I purchased a *sari* of medium quality hoping that when Mother would arrive at Jnan Babu's place, this new *sari* would be presented to Her and Mother would naturally leave the finer and costlier one for Jnan Babu's wife. I did not disclose my motive to anybody.

Mother arrived at Jnan Babu's place. But to my dismay I found that She was wearing a very ordinary *sari*, as the fine Dhaka fabric which She wore before had been left at the place She visited on Her way. I was surprised : but Mother laughed each time She looked at me. Nobody present could understand the meaning of Her laugh. I later confessed to Mother with what a foolish motive I had purchased the *sari*.

(An excerpt from *Mother as Revealed to Me.*)

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“YOU, A SCION OF THE IMMORTAL”

Br. Guneeta

Spirituality is inherent to common man. The words of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee reflect this theme very clearly.

Ma says that a manush is one whose “man” or mind is in self awareness- मन का होश है, so manush denotes the mind’s awareness and vigilance. This shows that man’s natural calling is to attain to self-knowledge. When children learn to read and write, they have to accept rebuke and censure. God, too, now and again administers to man a mild beating. This is but a token of his Mercy. From the worldly standpoint such blows are considered extremely painful, but actually they bring about a change of heart and lead to Peace; by disturbing worldly happiness they inspire man to seek the path to “Supreme Bliss”. If a man can understand this real nature of happiness and try to accept this then all the crisis in any part will be solved and one can fulfill his worldly duties in an ideal manner.

The second crisis of man’s life is the ego feeling. We find a simple and complete solution, how to destroy our “ego” feeling, in Shree Ma’s divine guidance- “Man thinks he is doer of his actions, while actually everything is managed from “There”, the-connection is “There”, as well as the power-house; yet people think “I do”, how wonderful it is ! When inspite of all efforts one fails to catch a train, does this not make it clear from where one’s movements are being directed ?

“Whatever is to happen with anyone anywhere at any time is all fixed by Him, His arrangements are perfect.” A devotee quires:-

“It is all in God’s hands?” Mataji’s reply “Exactly ! Always bear this in mind: Everything is in God’s hands, and you are his tool to be used by Him as He pleases. Try to grasp the significance of this and you will immediately feel free from all burdens. What will be the result of your surrender to Him ? None will seem alien, all will be your very ownself.

“Either melt by devotion the sense of separateness, or burn it by knowledge, for what is it that melts or burns? Only that which by its nature can be melted or burnt; namely the idea that something other than your self exists. What will happen then? You come to know your self.” What a supreme idea of how to melt our wild ego!

The third key to man’s success is self dependence; in spirituality it is self realization. Shree Shree Ma says, “A man’s belief is greatly influenced by his environment. therefore he should choose the company of the Holy and wise. Belief means to believe in one’s self.

“The light of the world comes and goes, it is unstable. The Light that is eternal can never be extinguished. By this Light you behold the outer light and everything also in the universe, it is only because It ever shines within you, that you can perceive the outer light. Whatever appears to you in the universe is due solely to that great Light within you, and only because the supreme knowledge of the essence of things lies hidden in the depth of your being, it is possible for you to acquire knowledge of any kind.” This is the supreme teaching of the real self dependency; following this path man can achieve full success in any aspect of worldly service.

The fourth thing to discuss is how a man can stay undistracted in miserable situations.

The Divine Mother Anandamayee lightens the light for dispelling the darkness of sorrow in these words, “When prayer does not spontaneously flow from your heart, ask yourself, Why do I find pleasure in fleeting things of this world? ‘If you crave for some outer things or feel specially attracted to a person, you should pause and say to yourself, ‘Look out, you are being fascinated by the glamour of this!’ Is there a place where God is not? Family life, which is the ashram of the householder, can also take you to His direction, provided it is accepted as an ashram. Lived in this spirit, it helps man to progress towards Self-realization. Nevertheless, if you hanker after anything such as name, fame or position, God will bestow it on you, but you will not feel satisfied. The kingdom of God is a whole, and unless you are admitted to it you can not remain content. He grants you just a little, only to keep your discontent alive, for without discontent there can be no progress. *You, a scion of the Immortal*, can never become reconciled to the realm of death, neither does God allow you to remain in it. He Himself kindles the sense of want in you by granting you a small thing, only to whet your appetite for a greater one; this is His method by which He urges you on.

“Be ever convinced that at all times and without exception he will do and is doing what is best for you. Reflect thus : In order to aid me, he has revealed himself to me in this particular guise. He is with form as well as without, the entire universe is within him and pervaded by him. This is why it is said, ‘The sad guru is the world teacher and the world teacher is the sad guru.’”

The fifth key to reach extreme success is feeling of oneness. Shree Shree Ma’s advice to universal humanity : “An external relationship exists between God and man. But in His play it is sometimes there and sometimes severed, or rether appears to be severed; it is not really so, for the relationship is eternal. Again, seen from another side, there is no such thing as relationship. Someone, who came to meet this body, said, ‘I am a newcomer to you. He got the reply, ‘Ever new and ever old indeed!’”

“Essentially there is only He and He alone. One must behold the Great Mother, and nothing save her. In truth, all the various ways of thought spring from one common source. Who then is to be blamed, who to be reviled or suppressed ? All are equal in essence.”

“Thou art Mother, Thou art Father,
Thou art Friend and Thou art Master,
Truely, Thou art all in all.
Every name is Thy Name,
Every quality, Thy Quality,
Every form Thy Form indeed. “Shree Shree Ma.”

If all mankind realize this truth uttered by Shree Shree Ma and try to follow it then not only the crises of global management but all crises of every worldly part will find a great solution.

*

MA'S TECHNIQUE OF BESTOWING DIVINE LOVE AND GRACE ON ONE AND ALL

[Taken from *Svakriya Svarasamrita*, Vol ; 2]

No Sleep, No Dream : Ma's Illuminating Reply - One day Swami Purnanandaji sent some of his disciples to Ma with the instruction to ask Her as to what She was in Her dreams. Early in the morning, the disciples came to Ma and put that question to Her. In reply, Ma said, "Undoubtedly, *Baba* has sent you with this question. Do tell *Baba* that when one is in sleep, there is dreaming. How can there be the question of dreams where the question of even sleep has no place? In fact, the world is a waking dream whereas in sleep, there is sleeping dream." On receiving this reply through his disciple he expressed great pleasure. A question in a limited form had been put to Ma and so, indeed, had been Her reply. Surely, Ma says : "There are many side issues in all such things."

One day Ma told that disciple, "Look, I just saw Purnananda *Baba* seated on his bed in his own mood with a calm, cool and grave disposition, and a lady, in a red-bordered sari, standing outside the door and leaning in, while holding the door-leaf and looking at *Baba*." Hearing this the disciple said, "Yes Ma, due to renouncing the worldly life by Maharajji, his wife of former order of life courted unnatural death wilfully : very likely, it was she only." Of course, Ma had not heard from anybody anything about the former order of Maharajji's life.

We feel that only a jeweller can recognize a precious stone. And if the jeweller is a right one, he alone can estimate the worth of a jewel. Those who really know, for them where is the distinction between man and woman ? This, indeed, is what one realizes while having continued association of Ma. Addressing Ma with respect by mahatmas is pleasing to us. And, where the offering of respect is in its true form, there it is all that one can desire. Where is that great experience in us to understand it (the significance of that respect)? And, is it possible to comprehend all this in this way through mere learning ? It is only by associating with mahatmas that we have experienced the little which we have. Where that realization really is, how can there remain any question of (distinction between) man and woman, and different communities? In reply to a question, Ma has said that whatever little development of *Shakti* takes place in anyone, it is in accordance with that much only and in the light of that *Shakti* that one sees, understands and speaks in regard to a particular subject.

Play of Vibhuti : All Spontaneous in Ma : Five Examples - Reverting to the subject in the context of Ma's childhood, many a deed of Ma sometimes did appear to be unusual compared to Her age. At Vidyakut, one day, Ma's aunt (wife of the elder brother of Ma's father) asked Ma to plaster (with cowdung) the oven and floor of one room. Ma was, then, of very small age. Removing Her clothes, She plastered the floor of the room.

Afterwards, Her aunt called everybody and told them : "Look, how big are the marks of the palm in the plastering. It is as if some elderly person has done it. How could it happen with such a small hand !" They were surprised and went on discussing it among themselves.

At Kheora, a relation of Ma, of the status of a grandmother, received spiritual initiation and after that the Guru went back to his home. Although the age of that grandmother was approximately about thirty years at that time, yet she treated Ma as a friend. She was illiterate and could not retain anything in her mind. On account of this she started learning *sandhya-kriya* (religious services observed thrice daily : early in the morning, at noon and in the evening) and other mantras from Shriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi. One day that grandmother told Ma, "Look, I have forgotten again the *kriyas* of hand (*anganyas*, i.e. religious rites which involve touching certain parts of the body). It is not right that I should trouble your mother so very often. Now, you tell me what I should do. "Ma smilingly showed her something in quite an easy manner and said, "Why not do like this ?" Of course a question may arise as to why did the elderly grandmother approach such a little girl, (Ma's age was then about nine or ten years) for this instruction ? It is possible that in dealing with Ma, many, sometimes, could not keep on mind the difference in age; they forgot it. About Ma, of course, the *elomelo* (unaccountably topsy turvy), surely, was there. But they could not realize this also at that time, and this happened in the same way on both sides, indeed, in a strange manner. When this grandmother told Mokshada Sundari Devi all this afterwards, she remarked, "From where has She learnt all this ; She has explained very correctly indeed !" She called Ma and enquired about it. Ma said, "I learning the words of the grandmother all that just occurred spontaneously in the body." Mokshada Sundari Devi kept on looking at Ma for a while, and then, as if with something like snubbing a little said, "How could this possibly take place in you spontaneously ? One must not joke with mantras and the like ; it may turn one mad. As if this is a matter to trifle with. This is not good for little ones."

On another day, the same grandmother who had enquired of Ma about *anganyas*, etc., brought a pair of bangles made of shell (which she wanted to wear). However, no one was able to help her to do so. The pair of bangles was very much to her liking, and on failing to put it on her hands, she was sitting sorrowfully. Noticing this, Ma told her with a smile, "Come grandmother, I shall help you to wear it." She replied, "None, indeed, has been able to do so, you alone have remained to do it. Very well, try," and pointing out a particular spot in her hand, she said, " This is where it gets stuck." Ma took the pair of bangles and slipped them on the hands of the grandmother quite easily, whereupon she exclaimed, "How could you manage to slip on such big hands as mine with such small hands of yours and also did all that without my even knowing it !" All those present there kept on looking at Ma and speaking to one another, among themselves.

CONTEMPORARY SAINTS AND SAGES : SWAMI RAMDAS

—Vijayanouda

In his book "in Quest of God" Ramdas gives a humorous and zestful account of his adventures during that period of his life. In the course of his peregrination he paid a visit to the great sage of Arunachala, Ramana Maharshi. He recounts that he entreated the sage to bless him and that the Maharshi did so with his eyes. Then Ramdas went away to meditate on the hill of Arunachala and it was there that for the first time he experienced samadhi. After this illumination he continued to live the life of a wanderer but it was another man, now, who tramped the roads of India. This second part of life he described in a voluminous work in English, entitled "In the Vision of God". The number of Swami Ramdas' disciples in India is very large, the greater majority of them come from the Hindus in the south and west.

One can not but be struck by the strange contrast between the personality of Swami Ramdas and his teaching. As I have already remarked, he was well-versed in western culture and spoke excellent English. In addition he sympathised openly with modern trends in India—the abolition of caste privileges, the rehabilitation of the untouchables, education for women and so on. Yet, despite this, his method may be summed up in a single word: "*Japam*", a word which for the modern Hindu evokes the old traditionalism of pious grandmothers, the native faith of the simple people, the credulity of the ignorant masses. *Japam* is quite simply the repetition of a divine name or a mantra as often as possible and in all circumstances of daily life, even, as Ramdas himself did, without interruption. Ramdas asserted categorically that the fervent repetition of the *Nama* (Name) was in itself sufficient to lift a man up to the height of spiritual realisation. His own life and the discipline he underwent provide living proof of this. This is what Ramdas said on the subject in "God Experience" p. 20.

"When Ramdas told certain people that he had attained the end by following this path (*Japam*) that God had ordained, they did not believe him. They said : We too repeat the Name but we do not obtain the result you have obtained'. The effect of the repetition of the "Divine Name", without doubt differs from person to person.

"The mind will not agree to accept the 'Name' as the sole means of realising God, if this practice is not supported by an adequate *vairagya* (desirelessness). A distracted mind cannot savour the joy of the 'Name'.. *Vairagya* is the

*. Ramdas always referred to himself in the third person.

result of intense and concentrated aspiration towards one end alone-the realisation of God. Then the 'Name' will act marvellously."

Among the methods of *sadhana*, the *Japam* is considered by many people as the "poor relation". There is a tendency to believe that this path, seemingly so childish, does not produce results. But in the form in which it is suggested for beginners the *Japam* is only a first step, a first step so simple and so easy that anyone with the least grain of goodwill can take it. It is in this that the enormous advantage of the method lies. It opens before all a gate into the roadway leading to the Divine. The repetition of the mantra, even if performed mechanically to begin with, sooner or later succeeds in inducing a mental attitude which is in keeping with its meaning. Thus there soon forms in the mind a concentration which slows down the stream of consciousness and makes the observation of it easier. Gradually, if the *sadhaka* repeats his mantra constantly, he will arrive at a state of almost constant mental concentration favourable to the arousing of the inner power. Once aroused, this Power will infallibly lead the disciple to the desired goal.

"The mind becomes concentrated. Thus you liberate the secret divine power which controls thought and directs action". ("God Experience" p, 239)

Many Hindu sages attach enormous importance to the "*Nama*", the name of the Divine. The Puranas and popular legends often speak of the miraculous effectiveness of *HariNama* (the name of Vishnu). Some even go as far as to claim that even a single repetition is sufficient to enable a man to break out of the cycle of rebirth. These hyperbolic eulogies of the "Name" are obviously aimed at strengthening the faith of the *sadhaka* in his mantra, for the effectiveness of *Japam* will be in direct proportion to the disciple's faith in it. There are, indeed, some who believe that faith can imbue any common formula with power. All that is needed is that the man pronouncing it should believe it to be a mantra.

The mantra transmitted by Swami Ramdas was that which had been given to him by his father. Breaking with the ancient Indian tradition, he granted his initiation in public to all who asked for it. No longer was the mantra jealously guarded as a secret to be communicated only in the strictest confidence to those who had proved themselves capable of undergoing spiritual discipline.

In reality, however, like all true Gurus, Ramdas employed more complicated methods as well and adapted them to the requirements of each particular case. For it is in the details of our daily living that our real problems lie and the knot which binds us are there. Spiritual techniques are only aids to help us to break free of those.

I had brought two coconuts from the village; the first had been offered to Swami Ramdas, the second was intended for Krishnabai. Krishnabai is a disciple of Ramdas, but, in fact, she is much more. She is the "Mother" of the ashram. Ramdas often said that she had attained the same plane of spiritual realisation as he had. One day he told me the story of this extraordinary woman and how he had been "compelled" to give her *samvadhi*.

Nobody could be more discreet or self-effacing than this saint of a woman who had concerned herself with even the minutest details in the running of the ashram. Everything about her expression, her gestures-bespeaks a gentleness, a tenderness and a devotion to all living things, I don't know why, but whenever I think of her I identify her almost automatically with the Sita of the Ramayan, the ideal woman. She speaks no English and her Hindi is not very fluent. As for me I was just beginning at the time to feel my way in the official language of India.

I was provided with a very comfortable room and became, temporarily, a member of the ashram. The name "Anandashram" means the Ashram of Happiness. It is a name that it certainly deserved, for though I have visited many ashrams in India and stayed in some, I have found none that approached so closely as this to the definition of an ashram, as "a haven of peace and joy".

Partly this is the influence of the natural setting, which, though it does not have the splendour of the Himalayan landscapes, is cheerful and restful to the eye. What counts more than anything else is the way the Master and Krishnabai put themselves out to make a visitor's stay as pleasant as possible. There are rarely many visitors and they never come in noisy hordes; nor is there any of that buzz and hum so common in the atmosphere of sacred places in India. In theory the maximum stay permitted to visitors is one month. It is mainly a matter of helping them to renew their spiritual energies or of putting the crippled again upon their feet.

"We recharge your batteries", Ramdas would say. After that they have to continue their efforts on their own in a solitary retreat.

But what can I say about the food ! The meals were taken in common in a little dining-hall that was kept scrupulously clean. Everybody sat together. Brahmin or Sudra, European or Hindu. There were no distinctions whatever. The caste complex, so difficult for the average Hindu to overcome, seemed entirely absent here. "I am militant against castes rules", said Ramdas one day, and in fact, he employed Harijans (untouchables) to work in the kitchen and to wait at table. One has only to imagine the horror which this would rouse in an orthodox Hindu in order to understand the love and veneration with which the disciples regarded "Papa" for they accepted this state of affairs without a murmur.

In any case the kitchen was supervised by Krishnabai, and her radiant purity would be more than sufficient to eliminate any possible traces of impurity in the food.- in most ashrams there is generally an afternoon meal and a light snack in the evening, but here visitors were served four meals a day : breakfast in the morning, the afternoon meal, a snack at tea-time, and another meal in the evening. The food corresponded in all points to the definition of food as sattvika¹, clean, appetising, varied, attractively served, of strictly vegetarian : rice, vegetables and dairy products. Coconut oil was generously used.

The workers in the dining-room put themselves to see that you lacked nothing, and needed only the slightest hint to refill your empty plate. In the morning they asked if you wanted coffee, milk or tea and in addition there were unlimited helpings of idli and dosa²

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1. Sattvika : see Bhagavad Gita (Xvii-8)

2. Idli and dosa : South Indian dishes made on a base of rice flour.

DESTINY MAKER MA ANANDMAYI

—Mr. Shuddha Satta Chakravorty

Here are some summarised gems of advice from Sri Sri Ma :

Throughout the twenty-four hours abide in the awareness of the Presence of God . Then only can there be hope of Realization. Who can foresee at what moment. He may choose to reveal Himself? This is why one must ever keep wide awake.

Let your thought dwell constantly on the Supreme Reality- endeavour to let your mind be absorbed in THAT.

At all times be truthful in speech, uncompromising in self-discipline and devote yourself to the study of books of wisdom and to 'Satsang'. Cherish the company of those who are helpful to your quest, avoid those who distract you-in other words, hold fast to the Good and shun the merely pleasurable. If you live in this way and spirit, the help you need will come to you naturally-unasked for.

Day and night should be spent in the quest for God (sadhana-bhajana). The desire to find him has to be specially fostered. To be a human being means to have first and foremost the desire to know one's Self. Except for the little time necessary for the service of the family, all the rest must be devoted to "Japa", meditation, the reading of scriptures, worship, prayer, self-dedication. Yearn and cry for Him for His own sake. If opportunity arises, seek Satsang. Whenever this is not possible strive to keep the constant awareness of God's presence enshrined in your heart.

To frequent the company of saints, sages and seekers after Truth is incumbent on man . Association of this kind will help to awaken his interest in that which is Real. The more consistently one seeks the fellowship of the spiritually minded the greater will be the benefit.

To associate with pilgrims on the path to Self- realization means to open oneself to good sense, to right discrimination. But taking a wrong path leads to distraction and restlessness.

When no opportunity is found for coming into the physical presence of the holy and the wise, one should contemplate on Vasudeva, the Divine Dweller in every human heart. By cultivating the awareness of His Presence one prepares oneself. One should select activities and surroundings that are apt to induce divine thought and aspirations (sad-bhava).

Just as without the help of teachers and experts one cannot become proficient in the worldly knowledge that is imparted in the universities, similarly the knowledge of the

Absolute does not come without the guidance of a competent "Guru". To find Him is the question, whether it be for spiritual progress, liberation, or any other matter, however insignificant it may seem.

At this point I would like to quote a few valuable words of advice of Ma to the readers all over the world :

"Do not keep concealed within yourself what weighs on your mind. If you write to me every detail comprehensively, freely and frankly, your heart will be unburdened ever more. Father, why have you kept it suppressed within yourself for such a long time? To confide it to this body (Mataji) brings relief, does it not? Truly, this body belongs to all, for this reason it behaves and speaks, as far as possible, so as to fulfill the needs of the people with whom it deals at any particular time.

"When the worship of an image or any other pooja is performed according to the rites laid down in the Sastras as accepted by all "brahman" priests, and when Kumari Pooja forms part of the ceremony as prescribed by the Sastras, then the brahman priests and others concerned must be allowed to have their say according to what they feel."

JAI MA

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SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE

Vol. VI

(Translated by a devotee)

—Gurupriya Devi

13 June, 1938, Monday

No special incident to note.

18 June, Saturday

From Birendada's letter we learnt today that Ma has gone back to Dehradun Ashram after 10-12 days' stay at Jaipur. Manmatha Babu has left home to live in Dehradun Ashram as an ashramite on Ma's behest. Ma had swelling in Her gland on the right side and is also having pain in leg on the same side for two days.

21 June, 1938, Tuesday

We have not received any news about Ma for the last few days. we are waiting in Calcutta itself for the work of publication of books.

Shree Surendra Nath Mukherjee's wife has come from Dhaka in order to go to Ma from here.

Today I am specially reminded of Baby Didi; all that has happened in her life recently is worth mentioning. We have already mentioned that she tries to comply with Ma's instructions to the best of her ability. While staying in Dhaka she went regularly to the Ashram and performed *japa* etc. with much devotion in accordance with Ma's instructions for her. It will not be an exaggeration to say that she has been the main person to take initiative for arranging the Sunday *kirtan*. She has brought many girls in her own car to the Ashram for singing *kirtan*. I have witnessed her great involvement in religious activities. Just a few days after the passing away of Jyotish Dada Baby Didi was about to leave for Dehradun to be with Ma and was preparing herself for the trip. In the midst of all this she received a telegram from Dhaka that Nalini Babu (Baby Didi's husband) had suddenly passed away. Baby Didi had to cancel her trip to Dehradun. She remained in Calcutta. A few days after this tragic incident. Sukumar Babu, the eldest son of Baby Didi (after passing I.C.S. he had been appointed judge in H.P.) duly performed '*shraddha*' of his father and took his mother to his work place with him. He was a very dutiful and loving son with a great deal of concern for his mother. But strange are the ways of God; after the holy bath of *Kumbha*, as we reached Musssoice with Ma the next day of our arrival

from Dehradun, we heard that the newspaper had published the news of Sukumar Babu's death by car accident on the 1st of Vaishakh. The news of this mishap made us deeply concerned about Baby Didi. What would be her condition after having lost both her husband and her son within a span of about six months! But after some days a letter came to Ma from her. At the very beginning she had written, "Ma, you have taken Khoka, too. Well, now do write to me where shall I stay, what shall I do" so on and so forth. After reading her letter we thought perhaps she had lost her sanity due to the terrible shock. But then another letter came from her. There was no sign of any restlessness in that. She had prayed for Ma's instructions in a quiet manner. Ma also made me write out Her reply as to what She had to say. There we heard that after the demise of her son, Baby Didi has become so tranquil and stable that people are amazed to see her. Some people believe that the tremendous shock of loss has damaged her brain's sensitivity. Again, some others believe that she has attained to a high level of spiritual progress. This time on reaching Calcutta I went to see Baby Didi.

On seeing me, she laughed and held me in her arms. I was absolutely speechless. After that she took me to a room and talked to me about a lot of things. She described all the circumstances about her son's death, but the surprising thing was that there was not a single tear in her eyes. She said, "On the day the body was brought home, I cried a lot. After that, I did not cry at all. Some people say that I have made a lot of adhyatmik progress. I know that it is only due to Ma's infinite grace that I am in this state. Didi, as soon as the pain of grief arises in my heart, I remember Ma and the grief disappears. I know very well that Ma is guiding me through this great grief. She is the one who is holding on to me. Grief does not have any effect on me. In reality, I am absolutely at peace." Seeing her in such a state of mind after the death of such a worthy son, I had no doubt that she had received Ma's grace. I was very happy seeing Babydidi so calm and beautiful. On the day after this meeting Babydidi came to the *kirtan* in Yatish Guba's house. We went too. Due to Ma's grace, she was looking even better. There is a pure *bhava* on her face. A lot of people were drawn to look at her when she sat in a calm and peaceful *bhava* in the *kirtan*. The prayer at Ma's feet is just this : May Ma's grace always fall on everyone in a similar manner. There is no doubt that Babydidi has been blessed by Ma's grace. She has left for Puri right now. She wanted to come to Ma, but Ma stopped her at that time. Ma has told Babydidi to go to Bhupatidada

25 June, 1938, Saturday,

Swami Shankaranandaji is very ill. He has been told to go to Kashi with Yogeshdada, since he expressed a desire to go to Kashi. From Kashi Yogeshdada has met us. He came via Calcutta. We talked with him about Ma for three hours. He went to his home in

Khulna to meet his mother. It was said that he was to go to Dehradun, after staying at his home for two to three days. He would go via Calcutta again. He said that Ma, on going to Dehradun from Raipur, told Kamalakanta and Rumadevi to stay on in Raipur. Ma said, "All right, all of you come along with me." After saying this Ma came to Dehradun, bringing everyone with Her. After this incident Ma had said to Yogeshdada, "Kamakanta did not listen to Me; as a result he will suffer a blow. He will not be able to bear that blow, that is why it will be taken on by this body". (pointing to Herself). It is not only Kamalakanta, we all of us commit such offences and compassionate Ma directs all these offences towards Herself. How can we hope to keep this body healthy? Ma has always been saying, "It is only with your *bhavas* that this body becomes like this. Only if you can desire it will you be able to maintain this body. Otherwise it will go. Where I am concerned, there is nothing like my desiring it or not desiring (something)."

27 June, 1938 Monday,

Narendra met us today. He has come to Calcutta for some work. He said that, four to five days ago, he had a letter from Sadhana. She wrote that Ma is going to Raipur. Narendra mentioned an incident worth writing about. He said, "On the way to Kailas in this particular Mandir. Dilip Kumar Roy sang to Ma. He said, 'Ma, when will I sing to you again?' Ma said, 'Whenever you remember this girl, and sing. I will hear you singing' I took Ma's saying this to heart. I thought that only on my learning music will Ma come to me. I made an effort for so many days, but is it possible to gain this sort of knowledge when one is old? So, I stopped. After seeing Ma off to Kailas, on the return journey with Harivara, I was sitting in the car and started singing the kirtan 'Ma, Ma'. All of a sudden I felt that Ma would come and listen to my singing just as She had told Dilip Kumar Roy that She would listen to his singing, if he thought of her, and then sang. I really felt that Ma Herself had come and was sitting on my lap. Then I really saw that just like a *murti* of Shri Krishna, a small child was sitting on my lap and listening to me sing. My eyes were open. I saw this quite clearly. At this time, I do not know what sort of *bhava* I went into; for a few moments, that *murti* was present and then, when I stopped singing the *murti* disappeared." After saying this he said, "Untill now, I have not described this to anyone. Now, I have told you." I have already mentioned earlier that after receiving Ma's darshan, the husband and wife came here intermittently, leaving all household affairs, to be with Ma. When Ma had gone to Kailas they had gone up to Almora with Her. They started talking about their time with Her. "Look, Didi, at that time we were in such a state, that I would not be able to exist without Ma, but how could we leave the children? In the end looking up at the picture which was hanging up in our room we said, 'Ma, please look after the children. We are doing everything with You in mind.' After saying this we started off and gained Ma." Narendada said all this with great intensity. It touched me greatly.

That is why I am writing all this.

28 June 1938, Tuesday

On receiving a letter from Dhaka from Hirandidi today, we came to know that on going to the ashram she had also heard that Ma has returned to Raipur again. Our letter has still not reached them. Shri Surendranath Mukhopadhyaya's wife has come here from Dhaka. She is going to meet Ma. After staying here for a few days she has left to go to Ma.

8 July, 1938, Friday

We received news that Ma is in Raipur. Birendada and Narshdada after having been with Ma for some time have left. Narshdada has come the day before yesterday. We heard from him that Ma's body is becoming weak. There is a lot of pain in the hand and palpitation of the heart. On reflection it can be seen that, it is due to some devotee's desires that Ma has this disease.

The Reaction on Ma's Body due to Different Emotions of Devotees

Ma says, "Whoever has a very strong *bhava* of hatred towards this body, his emotion at times may be much stronger than your feelings towards this body. This is because his *bhava* is much stronger than yours. It is also possible, that due to experiencing this hatred constantly, he is always thinking about this body. That is why, even though you keep on saying, "That person is a great devotee, it is only he whose *bhava* is intense, and who thinks continuously in one direction only, is really a great devotee. This is why this feeling of hatred is bound to have an effect on this body. Everything is bliss (*ananda*). All forms are this alone. In your language I say, 'a feeling of hatred, but for Me there is only one *bhava*. It is form within Him, that all *bhavas* appear and it is He Himself who accepts them all. You should also know that, no *bhava*, of whomsoever it is, can do anything to this body." We become afraid hearing about this *bhava* of Ma's. Since She accepts all *bhavas*, how will Her body last? One does not know what Ma wills. All the devotees are worried about Ma.

Sachindada and Yatishdada had come last night. We were discussing Ma. Sachindada said, "See Didi, Ma's will is irresistible. There are so many examples of this in my life. There are times when Ma talks in a normal manner (the way we do), otherwise, we would not be able to understand Ma. In reality, when Ma is talking about Her own *bhava*, it is bound to result in same action. It cannot be otherwise, where She is concerned."

Sachindada also said, "There is yet another side to Ma and on directing one's attention to that, it can be seen that there is no *sankalpa* (will or volition of any sort) or *vikalpa* (doubt or ambiguity) within Her. Whoever has an effect on any particular *bhava* within

Her, in any way, that very *bhava* is played upon. That is why somebody's emotion of hatred reaches Her (and acts upon Her). Ma accepts that too with joy and it gets revealed in Her body. Sachindada was sitting on the verandah of the Shiv Mandir and saying all this with intense emotion. He further said, "Sometimes on going to a Sadhu, I can see that he is attuned to a certain state (as in tune with a note), if somebody can tune himself to that note, he is very happy. But, where our Ma is concerned, she is attuned to all the notes, or again there is nothing at all. Whichever note you play on, it is within her. It gives Her joy (*ananda*). Is there anything in the world which can be compared to this? Ma is comparable only to Herself." A moonlit night, a deserted Shiv Mandir and an outpouring from a devotee touched my heart. The more one has been in proximity to Ma, the more one can realise the truth of this matter.

Kirandidi, Kamalakanta, Rumadevi and Abhay are with Ma just now. Nareshdada was saying that he has been very happy being with Ma. The longer the time spent with Ma, the greater the joy experienced.

(to be contd.)

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BHAGWAT SAPTAH BLESSING BY MA

—Ajay Sopory

In 1993, at Pune Ashram, my family friend Kailash Nanda, elder son of respected Shri Son Prakash T. Nanda, who had hosted Mataji in 1960 at Pune for over a month in a hut made at his bungalow with a Shamiana in his garden for function for devotees to gather and have Mataji's darshan, organized a Bhagwat Sapat in memory of his mother Late Pramilaji Nanda. The Bhagwat Saptah was scheduled on the auspicious date right after the Anandanayee Sangh's All India Saraswati Puja held that year at Pune Ashram on 13th February.

Being a family friend to the Nanda since 1960 I took the opportunity to perform a Mool path Bhagwat in memory of my respected beloved late mother Padma behn Sopory together with Kailash's main Bhagwat Saptah for his mother.

My elder brother Ashok, who had been posted to Chandigarh, gave me the go ahead to perform the Mool path Bhagwat though he could not get away to attend it. I was a bachelor living in Mumbai so could visit Pune for the Bhagwat.

Fortunately, my elder sister Maya (Razdan) was posted in Pune then. I could go from Mumbai and stay with her family. I took my motor scooter to Pune by train as Maya lived about 10 kilometers away from the Ashram where the Bhagwat was programmed. Arrangement for Maya and my day time rest was made at Romaji's (sister of Shri. Ashok Mohan, recently President of Brindavan Ashram) and Shri. Narain's (later Ashram Secretary) flat just behind the Ashram.

Kailash invited Swami Nirmalanandaji from Kolkata to be Katha Vyas. Shri. S. T. Nanda Sahib and Kailash's younger brother (Babloo) attended Tattvananda came from England to attend. Kailash's wife Gauri joined him throughout. Maitreyidi came as organiser of the Bhagwat Saptah. Two local Acharyas were arranged for the Sanskrit readings of the Bhagwat as Akhand Pathaks And Japaks. Baba Ashok Kulkarni worked in the Phalahari kitchen throughout, producing wonderful items as Swami Paramanandaji used to, when the cook was absent. His sister Shanta Tai was singing the Kirtan in the intervals of the Bhagwat

Since the Saraswati Puja was just before, there were Swami Nirvananandaji and Swami Shaileshda staying at a bungalow near the Ashram. Swami Virajanandaji was staying in the Ashram. Some other Sadhus were also there. In between Bhupenda (youngest brother of Nirvanda and Shaileshda) visited, Br. Pushpadi with attendant Br. Kirti visited; the presence of so many special devotees and Sannyasis made it feel like being in Mataji's presence.

I would daily wear the dhoti and kurta from home and drive with Maya behind me on the scooter early morning, niral to the Ashram.

I would change my kurta for Angwastra and perform the puja, listen to the Sanskrit Bhagwat for a while and then go to have milk and Phalahari snacks before the Bhagwat katha in the hall. I would go and sit on my Asan next to Kailash in front of Swami Nirmalanandaji on his Katha chowkie. He spoke so well and gave quotations from incidents in Mataji's presence at Satsang.

However, I had some unfortunate physical weakness in that I was overweight and my crossed legs would get numb at the knees very quickly. I would keep uncrossing my legs, stretching them to one side or the other. It was cool weather in February in Pune and at every break for Kirtan I would dash to the bathroom. Worse was to come. My body circulation was bad and my eyes would shut and my head nod off in sleep in front of the Katha Vyas who was kind enough (knowing our family since he became a devotee of Mataji over 40 years ago) not to remark on it. I would awake with a start.

I felt so guilty and saddened at my weakness. Here I was attempting this sacred task for my beloved respected mother and sadly not performing it as it should be. Maitreyidi, sitting next to the Acharyas in the room reading in Sanskrit was ensuring things in the puja and Sanskrit reading, Akhand reading and Jap would be as per scriptures. All arrangements under her care are good. Swami Nirmalanandaji is so learned and has our own Mataji's blessings. Only I was not able to give the devotion to the Bhagwat Saptah for my mother though I tried. Was my attempt going to be a failure? By the third day doubt and grief mounted with no relief.

On the fourth day Bal Gopal Janam was celebrated joyously. Kailash's three sons were dressed with Kurtas, headbands, waist-bands and some devotees brought a couple of young gopikas in ghagras to play the *raas*. The venerable elders, Sharmaji of the Ashram Committee, Nandaji and others with *matkas* on their heads, danced round. Mrs (Col) Uma Kapoor brought a huge mountain of home made white butter and misri for all.

Then, Mr. Cama, the Ashram treasurer, came to Kailash and me and took us aside and informed us he had a vision of Mataji the night before, wherein she had told him to give the Bhagwat he and his late wife had received from the hands of Ma twenty years before in the Pune Ashram to these two boys performing Bhagwat Saptah.

Therefore he was going to have them handed to us two by Swami Nirmalanandaji at completion of the Bhagwat Saptah.

We were amazed and overjoyed — who gets Bhagwata from the Hands of Mataji nowadays. (1993) at doing Bhagwat Saptah ?

The amazing news gave me such a joy that Mataji had blessed this ill person with success of the holy performance of the Bhagwat Saptah for his mother by granting him and his friend the Prasad of Bhagwat from Her own Hands.

I seem to remember a saying of Mataji that even a resolution of some good deed, prayer, puja etc. brings its reward even before completing it.

JAIMA

LET ME GROW

—Mohua

Let me grow, I want to reach you.
Not in my appearance, not in weight,
Not in the length of my arms, not in height,
But in my thought and soul.

Let me grow, break the shackles of mind.
So that I can think, not only for now, but far and beyond.
Let me grow, not only in materialistic joy or in power,
It is only for a lifetime, It'll fade and die with time,
To be forgotten, after me.
Let me grow beyond the sheets of glass and slabs of concrete,
Out in the open and above the unseen.
Let me grow, in my heart, so immensely as to be able to hold nothing.
Let me touch the lapping waters of the ocean and swim deep within
To another world, another beauty so unknown.
Show me the way above the noises and chatters — a trifle and only for this life.
Let me grow, to feel my way among the stars and other beings outside the sky.
Make my soul free to soar to the heights never known to it.
With no fear of being bound again, by the shallowness around.

Let me grow, I want to reach you.
Not in darkness, not in the bright,
Not in silence, not in merriment,
Not in distance, not in the senses,
Not in sadness, not in joy,
Not in life and not in death,
But beyond the absence and existence, for ever and ever.

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ANANDAMAYI

—Richard Lamoy

As author of this book, I made the decision to follow Bhaiji, her first disciple, in simply calling her Anandamayi. No Ma, no Ma Anandamayi or Anandamayi Ma, no politically correct Sri, no Sri Sri and, above all, no quaint retro-anglo-phonetic spelling, as in Shree Shree Anandamayee. Anandamayi is a beautiful titular name in its own right and it says everything that can possibly be said about her in a single word, including honour and reverence. Those close to her called her Ma with deep love and devotion, just as those close to Gandhi called him Bapu. Implicit in the meaning of her name is her greatest, most effulgent quality: Love.

No other person in the India of her day incarnated love so purely, so magnificently, as Anandamayi. However much love she kindled in the hearts of others, her own exceeded even the totality of that prodigious sum. It is next to impossible to write about this, but there is one aspect of the phenomenon which does call for comment, although I have never heard or read any instance when the matter was referred to openly. It cannot have escaped the reader's notice that here was a woman of radiant beauty and physical allure for whom any kind of sexual expression was quite out of the question. She also retained her youthful look for a great many years. Moreover, this person became the focus of intense interest as a spiritual being at the very age when her physical charm was at its greatest intensity, who was the object of prolonged observation in conditions of physical proximity, in a domestic setting, from numerous male devotees and curious visitors at all hours of the day and night throughout the three decades when her beauty was at its peak. In an age when sex has been separated out from other feelings, rather in the manner of a chemical process which separates a single element from a conglomerate mass, the more integral Indian view of human instincts, feelings, emotions and desires as an interwoven whole comprising many merged strands has survived more or less intact. That sexuality plays a very significant role in Indian spirituality is now a commonplace of contemporary cultural life worldwide. Tantra and erotic temple sculpture are well-known manifestations, not only of remarkable tolerance and liberalism but of a holistic attitude which blends together sexuality, love and spirituality. The very role of the Ma, the (particularly Bengali) archetypal woman of spirituality, brings together the erotic perfection of the goddess, maternal sexuality, spirituality, courage, loving kindness and motherliness.

As it happens, Bengal fostered a form of mystical love known as *sahaja*, a *unio mystica*, or conjunction of spiritual love and the natural physical love it transmutes. The word *sahaja* may be translated here as 'togetherness', 'spontaneity', or 'effortless

being'. It implies everything that is relaxed and natural, straightforward or direct. Nevertheless, the attainment of *sahaja* presupposes the strength and special vitality of the body that is achieved through stringent, rigorous and lengthy yogic training. There is no question of any connection at all between the cult of *sahaja* and Anandamayi other than that *sahaja* is an example of an integral sensibility that exists within Indian culture, where the emotional current of spirituality is so strong, so *totalizing*, that under certain condition sexuality is subsumed in all-encompassing mystical love. There is no doubt that yoga and other disciplines of *sadhana* have the capacity to render sexual feelings completely irrelevant, particularly among *sadhikas* with deep faith in the powers of their Guru. This has no moralistic connections in the Western sense, not any trace of puritanical repression. For this reason, Western ideas on female spirituality including Christian attitudes towards maternity and the Virgin Mary, do not correspond to the ascription of mother-figure qualities by Anandamayi's followers, who address her as 'Mataji' to characterize the sacred womanhood they honour in their beloved Ma.

It may be noticed that the biographical narrative in this centenary celebration stopped at a date some 40 years before Anandamayi's ministry ended with her *Mahusamadhi*. There are several reasons for this, and they tell us much about the character of that ministry. At the point where the *narrative* ends in the present book, *description* necessarily replaces the conventions of biography; and the most vivid description of Mataji's later life that I can offer is the collection of photographs assembled here. Her life was her ministry—there was absolutely nothing else whatsoever that she did. It is important to emphasize this, however obvious it might seem, for most of us lead somewhat compartmentalized lives, divided at the minimum, into 'work' and 'leisure'. Mataji never, at any point in her life, did that not even for a day. Her life was so completely taken up with her attention to others that there is no tale to tell. Not at least, a tellable tale. Her incomparable gifts were absorbed into the lives of all who came to her. It is their life stories which became hers. In fact, nothing so perfectly proves the correctness of her own assertion 'I am always the same', as the fact that there is no story, for a story, as we all know, has a beginning, a middle and an end. That I, and others, have found the thread of a story is the consequence of the nature of certain events, all of which points towards the central pivot of everything we can relate about Anandamayi's life; her perennial union with the source, that mystical zero-point of maximum potential. Indeed, on a number of occasions, where children approached Mataji with open autograph books, she would inscribe just one dot in the middle of the page, saying: 'Look carefully, for in this dot everything is contained.'

With narrative here shifting to the molecular level of the spiritual quest undertaken by each individual seeker, the story, such as it is, becomes primarily a matter of burgeoning ashrams and an annual calendar of festivals, retreats and occasional visits to these institutions by Mataji herself. Underlying what were experienced as kaleidoscopically

varied convergences of inner spiritual movement with yet further manifestations of Anandamayi *lila* were deep levels of commitment. It should not be forgotten that the life of the dedicated *sadhika* inevitably entailed the disciplined surmounting of severe hardship and the endurance of profound difficulties as well as exhilarating moments of sheer joy. Atmanada, who dedicated a great many years to elucidating Mataji's teachings for others, also knew from firsthand experience how one felt to take up the challenge of that teaching and act upon it :

Mataji does not often give orders, and probably only to those who by intuition, discrimination and experience have established in themselves an implicit faith in her unfailing wisdom. But when she does command, obedience without asking for reasons is the only way. Together with the task she sets, Mataji transmits the power to carry it out. But often it is not easy. It is a common experience that to obey Mataji's orders quickens intelligence and develops initiative. It requires great vigilance and concentration- in fact it is as if ingeniously calculated to draw out to the utmost one's capacity, courage, forbearance and power of endurance, as well as to bring to the surface one's weaknesses and shortcomings, so that they may be eradicated.

To place one's life in Mataji's hands is to become free bit by bit from dependence on people, things and ideas, to be released from all kinds of fear, such as the fear of insecurity, of what people might say, the fear of failure, pain and death. Anything may be lost, Mataji remains.

With a manifestation as rich, diverse and visually arresting as Anandamayi's, the important thing is not to lose the whole in the detail. As this text has sought to make clear, the focus of her life has been as consistent as it has been persistent. When she no longer had the strength to answer people's enquiries, she had but one injunction : 'Bhagwan ke niye thako! '(Live in God's presence). If that is the irreducible minimum of her teaching, she herself provides us with a summary of her own life :

At Puri a lady once asked her: 'Ma, you have a feeling of duty towards your husband? You regard him as your Guru. Are your husband and all others alike to you? 'Bholanath was seated nearby. Mataji smiled and replied, 'If I give a truthful answer to this question, Bholanath will be angry with me.' Saying this she began to laugh loudly. Then she said, 'Everyone is alike, yet, wherever it is necessary for a particular mode of behaviour to be enacted, it happens. In childhood my parents were my Gurus. Then they introduced my husband as the Guru. At that time there was a strong feeling of *Gurubhava* towards my husband. Today I see the entire universe as my Guru. You also are my Guru. Everything is but His form. There is nothing other than the One.'

COME, MY BELOVED, COME

(An invocation)

—J.N.Dhameja

The thoughts and ideas expressed in this poem have their sources in the Upanishad, Gita, Durgasaptashati, the sayings of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ram Tirtha, and so on with which I was familiar since the days of my youth and which I relearnt and imbibed from Her living presence and the atmosphere around Her during the past 23 years of my association with Her.

The merits of this poem are due to Her. The blemishes are all mine

Goddess of Love and of Unending Bliss,
Of flowing tresses black—glossy, thick and long,
Thou stirrest sweet desires and longings strange,
Eternal beats of an Immortal Song.

Queen of all the Gods, of world beyond world,
Presiding Deity of all that moves and stands,
because of Thee the universe is sustained,
A fragment of Thy power and Thy splendour.

Thou art the Void and Thou art the Word,
Primordial, the source of streaming energy,
First Great Cause, All-pervading Consciousness,
Satyam Jñānam Anantam Brahma.

O Lady of Light, the Light of all lights
Effulgence - blazing like countless suns,
Thy glory filleth earth, space and heaven,
Diffusing, enlightening and sublimating.

With Thy spark the sun shines, the earth revolves,
The moon waxes and wanes, the oceans heave,
The stars are bright and reveal in Silence
The wondrous worlds of Heavens and Beyond.

Thou Splendour of the splendid things,
 The hills and dales, the sea and sky,
 The air and fire, earth and ether,
 The surging waters, might and main.

Thou art thunder, Thou art lightning,
 Downpour of rain and the storm,
 Thou art sunshine soft and mellow,
 The changing hues of night and morn.

Thou art flower and its perfume,
 The breath of air in sylvan grove,
 The dewdrops on the morning grass,
 Blush of beauty, the glow of love.

The mystic sunset and sunrise,
 The blue morn and the even-tide,
 The wandering moon, the morning star,
 All cosmic stretches - near and far.

Thou art plunged in the bliss of play
 Dancing in Joy and Ecstasy,
 Thou art Bondage and Liberation,
 Space and Time and the Wheel of Life.

O Mother ! madness is in Thine eyes,
 The world trembles beneath Thy feet,
 Terrible is Thy tongue of flame
 And frightening Thy dance of Death.

On the wings of Time, on earth, in Heaven
 Dance, O Mother, dance,
 In the folds of Beauty, in rhythms of Joy,
 Dance, O Mother, dance.

On hills, in forests, in the shine and shade,
 On the shimmering skies, in the glowing stars,
 In the dawns and sunsets, in darkness, dusk,
 Dance, my Mother, dance—the dance of Death and Life.

In sin and sorrow and hopes of morrow,
 In elation and commotion, in emotions tense,

In peace and tumult, lightning, thunder,
 On the roaring seas, in the whirling wind,
 In death, destruction, devastation, with
 Looks of terror wild, dance, my Mother, dance
 The dance of Death and Life.

Thy Dance Divine hath no ending, nor hath
 A beginning; I view the passing show
 Lost in thought, in a dream, a daze; upon
 The edge of Time and Space eternity gapes.

Thou art Reality and its Negation,
 The One and the Many, Being and Non-being,
 The Creator, Preserver and Destroyer,
 The Beginning, the Middle and the End.

O *Muhāmāyā*, the Great Illusion
 A dim reflection on the Lake of Life,
 A strange world of dreams, of light and shadows,
 A song, a sigh, a veil of Nothingness.

Thou art Want, Desire, Hunger, Thirst,
 Pomp and Power, Grandeur, Glory,
 Pride and Passion, Pleasure, Pain,
 Hate and Rancour, Fear and Faith,

Beauty, Goodness, Wealth and Wisdom,
 Conscience, Justice, Prudence, Peace,
 Compassion, Charity and Forgiveness,
 Light of Knowledge, Truth and Freedom.

Thou art Sleep and the Awakening,
 Mind, Memory and Intelligence,
 Despair, Determination, Fearlessness,
 Courage, Hope, Success and Satisfaction.

Thou art Liberty and License,
 Tyranny, Revolt and Redress,
 Anarchy, Destruction and Discipline,
 The worlds of demons, gods and men.

Thou art the Good and the Evil
 The Soul and the world of senses,
 Foundation, Shelter and Abode,
 The Seed, Origin and Annihilation.

Thou art the Heaven and the Hell,
 The Cause and Effect, Grief and Mirth,
 Vocation and the wandering waif,
 The Path, Renunciation and Redemption.

Thou art Rule, Reason, Right and Wrong,
 Witness, Doubt, Distrust, Defeat,
 Fickleness, Firmness and Constancy,
 The Refuge of sinners and of saints.

Thou art Movement and Cessation,
 Speech, Silence, Solitude, Serenity,
 Duty, Devotion, Dispassion, Discrimination,
 Pure Consciousness, Awareness and Bliss.

Thou art Matter and the Spirit,
 Mistress and the seat of senses,
 Anger, Attachment, Lust, Greed and Pride;
 Harmony, Discord and Disruption.

Service, Sacrifice, Surrender and Strength,
 Ignorance, Sin and its atonement,
 Purity, Blessing and Benediction,
 Ocean of Mercy, Infinite Love.

Father, Mother, Friend, Relation, Lover and Loved,
 Thou art the Self seated in all
 Knower and Known, Timeless, Eternal,
 Immense, Infinite, Immortal.

Truth Eternal, Beauty beyond compare,
 Immanent, Unperishing, Absolute,
 Immeasurable, All-knowing Intelligence,
 Cosmos and the Light of Logos
 Omnipresent, Omnipotent Providence,
 Controller of our lives and destinies,
 Thy Will is Law, it reigns supreme
 Thou art One in All, all in all.

Hail to Thee O Mother Divine, all hail
With numerous names and various hymns and chants

The Gods and men invoke Thee and adore Thee
Hail, hail to Thee, O boundless One, all hail,

Bestow Thy Boons on seeking, suffering souls
Tyāg to those in distress, service to those
In wealth and power; and thus released from
Bonds of weal and woe they know Thy Essence.

Friendless I walk along the endless paths
To search and seek the secret of this life;
I know not the world's winding ways, its tangles,
Its guiles, its snares, its weaves of nothingess.

I have neither wealth nor will nor vigour
Nor service nor sacrifice to outlast time,
But just a dream, a song and a prayer,
An Urge Divine to know and to understand.

Cleanse my mind of ignoble thoughts
Of desire, envy, hate and pride,
Let me in sweet serenity dwell
In Heaven's Light of Love and Bliss.

I seek not wealth nor name nor fame,
Nor prestige, power, sway over realms,
Thy Grace Divine is all I need
To serve and comfort all mankind.

O Love and Light, my friend, my guide,
Harbinger of the dawn of life
Reign supreme in my heart's recess
I am thine, be with me and bless.

Thou art perfect, make me whole as Thou art
O spinner and weaver of my dreams,
Fulfil my destiny, complete my life,
Compassion, Love, O overpowering Grace!

Come, teach me my Love how to serve and pray,
O guide, control, sustain and sublimate,
Come be with me, make me Thine own and merge,
Pulsate my being with Thy Cosmic rhythm.

Make me Thy instrument, O Will Supreme,
Thy lyre, Thy lute, infuse celestial strains
Vibrate my heart and soul with stirring songs
To help awaken Thy Love in one and all.

Intoxicated with the wine of Love I roam
From door to door; from age to age I have
Wandered so. Thou art here, there and everywhere
And yet elusive; why this hide and seek?

Come my Beloved come, Beloved of my dreams,
The night is dark; I seek, I strive, I pray,
With queenly graces come my Beloved come
On waves of liquid Love and Ecstasy.

Bestir my being, reveal Thyself to me
And lead me on to the Shores Eternal
Of Wisdom and of Bliss; From Darkness to Light,
From the Unreal to Real, from Death to Immortality.

*

THE KEY

:-Sitarani

My mortal sight, not able to see
 The Grace of Thine, could grant me to be
 An obedient one beneath Thy knee,
 to see I am nothing else but a shadow of Thee,
 How can it be, unless -
 Thy kindness obliges the key.
 To open the window and get it to see :
 The Reality is this -
 I am part of Thy Self,
 nothing except a bubble in the sea.

*

FLOWER-LOVING BEE

All creation is yours.
 Forgive me, Mother, for my treat
 Even the good or bad I did
 may be major, or a little bit.
 Because -
 Good takes place like 'milk and cat',
 Bad performs as 'cat and rat',
 Both of them have no use to the soul
 They keep us rather far from the goal.
 So :
 Neither good wish to bear;
 Nor bad things to see.
 One hangs in heaven
 The other dips into sea.
 Kindly make me a child
 beneath Thy knee
 with the sole joy of resting
 like a flower-loving bee.

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MEMORIES OF PANUDA

—Indira Malla

When our son Mahesh Kumar Malla told me that Brahmachari Panuda was no more on this earth, I was shocked. One after another, the stalwarts of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma's devotees such as Swami Vijyananda, Swami Shivananda, Swami Bhaskrananda and now Panuda were going to thier heavenly abode.

I came to know respected Panuda when I had my first darshan of Shree Ma at Vrindaban in the Samyam Saptah of 1973 arranged by my nice Maharani Lakshmi Devi of Gondal. Panuda was excellant in arranging the various funtions of Shree Ma's ashrams.

Though he had a serious mein, he was a very kind person. During the Samyam Saptah of 2007 our son Mahesh, daughter Shree and I had gone to Kankhal. I have arthitic knee and had difficulty in getting up after eating. Panuda noticed this and told Mahesh, "From tomorrow tell your mother to eat on the table inside the hall". I was deeply touched by his brotherly concern.

In 2008 along with Mahesh, I had the good luck to visit Kheoradham, our beloved Shree Ma's birth place. It was possible only due to Matri kripa. I specially remember our visit to Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Pathsala. I prayed mentally to Shree Ma "Ma ! Let me be of some service to you."

Then Panuda asked me if I would distribute the sweets to the children. Happily I did so remembering Shree Ma's words "Bal Gopal Kumari seva."

The last time I met Panuda was during the 60th Samyam Saptah at Kankhal Ashram in 2009. Despite the fact that he had crossed eighty years, he was full of energy and enthusiasm for Shree Ma's seva. Mainly due to his guidance and untiring zeal and dedication, the 60th Samyam Saptah was celebrated in an inspiring manner in a holy atomsphere.

Sometimes he used to ask me, "Indiraji aap thik hai?" "Matri kripase thik hu" was my answer. I know him as a great Karmayogi wholly dedicated to Shree Ma's service. He passed away just before the start of Samyam Saptah-an auspicious time for the departure of the soul. We prayed for the peace of his soul and we are assured that he has got a place at the lotus feet of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma.

But we will miss him clad in spotless white and sitting in the enclosed passage outside the Ashram's office in Kankhal and working so dedicatedly and tirelessly and giving attention to Shree Ma's devotees' various problems like a big brother, His life - a life of samyam and tapasya- is an inspiration for all sadhakas and devotees of Shree Ma.

*

ASHRAM NEWS

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Anandaswarup brothers and sisters,

You must be awaiting news from Shree Shree Ma's ashrams since Kali Puja...

Shyama Puja on 13th November, Annakut on 14th and Samyam Saptah on 21st November were performed as per schedule. As you are aware Kali Puja in Ranchi Ashram is special. The devotees organised this occasion with elaborate Sattvik Tantrik Puja of the beautiful blue black statue of the smiling Mahakali, installed and charged by Dhaka's 'Human Kali (Manush Kali) as Shree Ma was known to Her devotees there. It was accompanied by *kirtan*, evoking the spirit of Adi Shakti, inspired by Her famous devotees like Ramprasad, for their beloved Mother. Varanasi Ashram was not far behind as Shree Ma's vision of Kali in the *Surya* has been concretised in the form of the Kali at Annapurna temple in Kashi. A Kanyapeeth Brahmacharini regaled us with the sweet and loving Kali *kirtan* inspired by such great devotees as Ramprasad and Kamalakant of Bengal. The endearing and close relationship between Mahakali as their very own mother and her sons and daughters was a spiritual revelation and inspiring indeed ! Kali puja was also performed in Uttarkashi, Kokata and Delhi Ashram of Shree Ma.

Subsequently Annakut took place the next day. Undoubtedly the lead was taken by Varanasi Ashram, where Ma Annapurna's statue is installed. The Shuddhacharini Brahmacharinis (trained to serve the Goddess in the purest way) from Kanyapeeth, worked tirelessly for several days. They joyfully prepared 108 delicious dishes appropriate for the Universal Mother. Every ashram inmate from the oldest to the youngest had their role to play for the special day of their very own Mother Annapurna. During the puja Adi Shankaracharya's well known *stuti* of Annapurna was chanted, reviving ancient memories of this holy city and praying for blessings : "Bhiksham dehi Kripavalanbanakari Mata Annapurneshwari."

Other ashrams mentioned above too performed Annakut enthusiastically.

Close on the heels followed a different kind of spiritual function for the upliftment of the departed Soul of Sri Ma's dedicated worker Sri Panu Brhamachari. It was his first annual *kriya* on the 16th November accompanied by *kirtan* of Om Ma Shree Ma Jai Jai Ma and Satyam Gnyanam Anantam Brahma during 108 Sadhu bhadava and in front of Shree Ma's beautiful white statue in the Mata Anandamayee Hospital premises. Ma's presence was felt by some devotees. On the 17th November special *puja* was offered in all the Ashram temples and beautifully decorated Kumaris were offered special *puja* on

behalf of Panuda.

Then of course the most eagerly awaited Samyam Mahavrata week took place in Kankhal. Every little or great activity from taking the *vratī's* seat to the chanting of Ma's very own Satyam Gnyanam Anantam Brahma..., Hey hitah, Hey pitah..., Hey Bhagwan..., the partaking of Anandamayee Brahma Khichadi and the spiritual talks by saints-Sarveshanada to be mentioned specially for his pertinent advise to devotees on facing adverse situations as special Grace of Lord brought the devotees close to Sri Ma. It helped to keep our vessels upright to receive Her blessings:

Dear Anandaswarup, Geeta Jayanti was another occasion for seekers to come close to the Lord and Shree Ma. The Yajnya of knowledge stimulated the latent powers through abhyas (practise) and vairagya-(disenchantment/disentanglement from this world). Shree Ma was known as 'the Walking Talking Geeta by esteemed personalities like Gopal Thakur. In Her public as well as private question answer sessions Shree Ma threw light into every being's inner nooks and corners and surprised them with Her Divine Insight. In this way all participants were rewarded amply and enthused to return again next year.

However, our news will not be complete without news from the Bhopal chapter which has been functioning efficiently. In the first week of October between 5-11 Srimad Bhagwat Saptah was organised. The local devotees participated whole heartedly. The speaker was Vraj Rajeshwar Bhagwatacharya from Bhopal. The evening session between 3 P.M and 6 P.M was accompanied with music. A large number of people exceeding 1000 partook of prasad on the 12th.

Besides, Navaratri too was celebrated. On Sharad Purnima special Kheer Bhog was offered, Annakut also took place. Goverdhan puja was done specially with Laddoos. The cows in the Goshala were offered kheer puri during the puja; later khichdi prasad was distributed. Dhyana was organised for Samyam Saptah.

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Shree Ma's first Gujrat visit newly built Memorial Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Naam Smaran Sthali was inaugurated by the well known saint Sri Morari Bapu on the 15th of December 2012. Its location is very central in the busy area of Anandanagar Char Rasta as if a reminder of the central spiritual nature of the self. In his inaugural speech Morari Bapu emphasized on the importance of Naam, place the divine aspect of Shree Ma and the benefit of the Naamsthalī to the devotees. Very aptly and precisely he said in Hindi, 'The place is busy but the organisation is not disorganised'.

On the occasion Nirgundasji Bharat Maharaj of Sri Sant Ram Mandir Nadiad, Baroda was present with a number of Sadhus, besides Sri Kedar Babu of Anandamayee Peeth Indore who was present with his students. Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangh President

Swami Nirvanananda Giriji sent his blessings. His message was read by the acting General Secretary Shri Swapan Ganguli in his absence. Many Sadhus from Shree Shree Ma's Ashram were present too. Swami Adhyatmanandaji of the Divine Life society Ahmedabad too attended the function. Sri Jay Mehta the grandson of the fourth President of the Sangha Sri B.K. Shah also graced the occasion.

All this was possible due to the efforts of the president of Bhimpura Ashram, Sri Padmakanta Suvedi and Prakash Bhai Shah. Sri Morari Babu blessed them in the traditional way with shawl and coconut. Christopher Pegler made it a point to attend this function from abroad.

We end the news of this quarter with promise of more news next year from Ma's ashrams and our hearty new year wishes.

JAIMA.

The Editorial Board.

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LIST OF FUNCTIONS

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1) Maghi Purnima | - 25 th February 2013 |
| 2) Shree Shree Vasanti Durga Puja | - April 16 th -20 th 2013 |
| 3) Shree Ram Navami | - 19 th April 2013 |
| 4) Shree Shankaracharya Jayanti | - 15 th May 2013 |
| 5) Shree Shree Ma's Janmotsav | - 28 th May 2013 |

OBITUARY

With deep sorrow and grief, we inform the readers about the sad demise of Shri D.K. Dutta, President of Delhi Local Ashram Committee and a leading light among Ma's devotees of Delhi. He passed away on December 26, 2012. We pray to Shree Ma for the peace of this departed soul.

His contribution to the Delhi Ashram was in multifarious dimensions and difficult to enumerate. He presided over the Delhi Local Managing Committee for about a decade.

We pray to Shree Ma for a place of this noble soul at Her lotus feet.

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BOOK REVIEW

Neo-Vedant and Modernity by Dr. Bithika Mukerji, Published by Ashutosh Prakashan Sansthan, Varanasi, 2008. Pages 112, Price Rs. 250/-

Neo-Vedant and Modernity by late Dr. Bithika Mukherji Ex. Reader in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi is a comprehensive critique of modernism and technology, and by implication of Post-Modernism, vis-s-vis the question of the perpetuation of the ancient religious and philosophical tradition of India, the foundation of which are threatened to be undermined by the technological ethos of contemporary times. The fact is corroborated by an exegesis of the neo-vedant theories of A.C. Mukherji and Kokilleshwar Shastri as representing the modern attempts at bringing the vedantic tradition and the post-Kantian western doctrines together by a facile compromise. The writer successfully restores the Vedantic philosophy to its original purity by her ontological analysis of Bliss (Ananda) as Being, on a par with Existence (Sat) and consciousness (Chit).

The worth of the volume had been enhanced by Vidyaranya's Taittiriya-Vaidya-Prakashan with its first English translation appended as the concluding chapter.

In the words of the eminent philosopher and Professor of Philosophy, Dr. George Grant (Canada), "Both western and eastern should read the book with close attention."

Dr. Bithika Mukerji was educated at Allahabad University where she obtained her first Ph.D. degree. In the early 1970's she went to McMash University, Canada and studied intensively for writing her thesis on the Ontology of Bliss. Her knowledge and group of Indian as well as Western Philosophy outstandingly qualified her to write on the subject.

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