

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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Hari-kathā hi kathā aur sab vrithā vyathā
- Ma Anandamayee
(‘To talk of God alone is worthwhile;
all else is in vain and leads to pain’)

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Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee
Ashram, Almora

God often gives a trivial suffering and thereby prevents a much graver misery. Sufferings too are one of His forms, by which He attracts jiva towards Himself. Those who can convert a suffering into His remembrance and offer prayers to Him, for them suffering is a true friend.
- Ma Anandamayee

Path to Self Realisation

On asking Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee as to how we can achieve the path to Self-Realisation, Ma advises:

"If you wish then you can do like this. At all instances, it is essential to follow all these. If there is a shortage of time, then also try to achieve these as much as possible, and during free time or during holidays give your total effort."

1. *Satkriya, Satsang.* (Virtuous actions, Spiritual discourse).
2. *Satyavuchan kahnā.* (Truthful dialogues).
3. *Tat gyān mein sevā – jan janārdhan.* (Serving with a noble thought to all).
4. *Sadgranth pāth.* (Reading scriptures).
5. *Kirtan.* (Singing the praise of God).
6. *Kriya Yog.* (Ma says, for Self-realisation, that is to know oneself; with the advice of the Guru, whatever actions are observed, that only is called as *Kriya Yog*).
7. *Puja.* (Worship).
8. *Japa.* (Repeating the 'name').
9. *Bhagwat Kripa Prārthanā.* (To pray for Divine Grace).
10. *Smaran.* (Divine contemplation).
11. *Sharanāgati.* (Self-Surrender).
12. *Tat Dhyān.* (Divine meditation).

It is our sincere request to all readers who have not sent their subscriptions for the year 2021 and ahead, to send the same at the earliest. Curious readers are also requested to subscribe for the magazine.

— Managing Editor, 'Ma Anandamayee Amrit Varta'



*Vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodha, Man-mayā mām upāsritāḥ;
Bahavo jñāna-tapasā, Putā mad-bhāvam āgataḥ, (Gīta 10.4)*

(Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me—and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me.) (Gīta 10.4)



Compassionate words of Shree Shree Ma

Jagat (world) means ceaseless movement, and obviously there can be no rest in movement. How could there be peace in perpetual coming and going? Peace reigns where no coming exists and no going, no melting and no burning. Reverse your course, advance towards Him—then there will be hope of peace.

By your *japa* and meditation those who are close to you will also benefit through the helpful influence of your presence. In order to develop a taste for meditation you have to make a deliberate and sustained effort, just as children have to be made to sit and study, be it by persuasion or coercion. By taking medicine or having injection a patient may get well; even if you do not feel inclined to meditate, conquer your reluctance and make an attempt. The habit of countless rebirths is pulling you in the opposite direction and making it difficult for you — persevere in spite of it! By your tenacity you will gain strength and be molded; that is to say, you will develop the capability to do *sādana*. Make up your mind that however arduous the task, it will have to be accomplished. Recognition and fame last for a short time only, they do not accompany you when you leave this world. If your thought does not naturally turn towards the Eternal, fix it there by an effort of will. Some severe blow of fate will drive you towards God. This will be but an expression of His mercy; however painful, it is by such blows that one learns one's lesson.



Matri – Vani

1. Q: Ma, my wife is twelve years younger to me, but she orders me around and repeatedly tells me to take Ma's 'name' and to get Ma's *darshan*.
Ma: That you mention about 'being younger' (laughingly), all this is your perspective. Again your rules are not the same all the time. After a lot of pondering whatever you do today, few days later you do something else with the same logic in mind. Whatever was young earlier can be older today and vice-versa. This gross world is like this only. (Smilingly) So I say that your wife is not younger but older to you.

* * *

2. Q: While repeating God's 'name' if the mind does not want to do any *karma*, then what?

Ma: Even if the mind does not want to do any *karma*, do not leave *karma*. Because the mind will not sit idle. It will force you to run after some other *karmas*. Hence keep doing *karma*, do it as a service of God. In the evening pray to God and assess your actions (*karma*) of that day. And if you understand that some evil deed has been done by you, then pray that such deeds should not occur again. Offer all the fruits of your *karma* at the holy feet of the Lord. While sleeping also think that you are lying with your head on the holy feet. Remain with Him in this manner day and night.

* * *

3. Once when devotees sitting around Ma were silent for some time, Ma advised, "Instead of sitting empty headed in this manner it is better to take God's 'name'. Here 'empty' does not imply nothingness. It means useless thoughts. It is better to take the 'name' instead of having useless thoughts; because the mind does not remain idle. Like a baby the mind always wants to remain in someone or the other's lap. To attain peace, it is restlessly changing laps all the time; in order to pacify the mind, nurture it with holy food. *Kirtan*, *japa*, etc, are the holy foods; and on serving these only the mind will become calm. Pacifying the mind means to sink down, to become non-existent.

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4. There is one more reason why people come near This Body. You all know that a drunkard always goes to another drunkard. Similarly, those who have nothing, come to This Body which has nothing; totally wiped clean.

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5. Is there anything like birth and death? All these are the play of the mind. You accept the act of birth and death and hence for you it is the Truth. The work of the mind is to accept everything. But all that which can be accepted is not the Truth. For instance you consider the same action as joy in one instance, and sorrow in another instance. The same thing makes you feel good at one instance and bad at another instance. A piece of cloth is new today and two days later it becomes old. The mind only makes you observe all these changes. That which is True does not change. The mind cannot accept this Truth. In which ever worldly matter the mind is attached, it will create this type of conflict. Hence the mind should always be directed towards God. He will then eliminate this mind, He will make you mindless. Only then the Truth will be realized. This is only God's Nature.

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6. The aim of *diksha* is to unite the pupil with God. Once there is union with God, its fruits will of course be realized. However many a time the fruits of *diksha* are not externally observed. But that does not mean its effects are not occurring. Maybe suddenly at some point the effects will be realized.

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7. Q: In the path of *sādhana*, which is important, *karmā* (action) or *bhāgya* (destiny)?

Ma: *Bhāgya*? Where *karmā* is, there itself *bhāgya* is. Only because of action there is destiny, again because of destiny there is action.

Q: Many a time it is seen that there is no fruits of the actions. What is the reason for this?

Ma: No, that is not possible. There has to be at least some result. Again it has been observed that the fruits of somebody's action are borne by someone else. When this occurs then understand that there was such a relation between those two, because of which this has occurred.

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Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasanga
(Vol-V)

Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

(continued from before)

Divine experiences (*vibhuti*'s) of *sādhana* and its accomplishment

Myself: Ma, It has been observed that these divine experiences of *sādhana* only creates all the (*yantranā*) affliction.

Ma (laughingly): What is *yantranā*? As long as one does not consider himself the instrument (*yantra*) of His Hands till then *yantranā* persists. The Guru gives *mantra-diksha* to the pupil so that he can do *japa* and also informs to dedicate the fruits of the *japa* back to the Guru. If there are no instructions from the Guru regarding the offering of the fruits of the *japa* then it has to be understood that the Guru himself will decide the manner in which the dedicated fruits of the *japa* are to be stored. However instead of pondering over the fruits of the *japa*, as instructed by the Guru if continuous *japa* can be observed, its fruits will surely get accumulated near the Guru. If a small boy picks up a valuable item and hands it over to his mother without knowing its value, the mother being aware of its value, stores it properly and later on, when the boy grows up and understands its value, then only mother returns it back to him. Similarly on dedicating the fruits of your (*sat-karma*) pious actions and *japa* to your Guru, He stores it. Later when the pupils work is over, i.e., when his *japa* is completed, the Guru returns back all the fruits in the form of divine experiences. But if the pupil keeps the fruits to himself then there are chances of it getting destroyed. As such, the fruits of (*karma*) pious actions do not get destroyed, but it surely subsides. There is nothing to be surprised about it, because the body has numerous thoughts and a variety of actions, due to which the fruits of the pious deeds get depleted. But the fruits dedicated and stored with the Guru will never ever get destroyed and the Guru will return it back at the right time. Hence it is the duty of the pupil to concentrate on doing the *japa* instead of pondering about the fruits. Of course the saints can foretell how much *japa* can produce how much results (fruits). But when it is not

possible for an ordinary person to know when the *japa* will be completed then it is better to follow the Guru's advice, because at any instance the *japa* can be completed and enlightenment can be attained. Again many a time it has been seen that the results of the *japa* have been destroyed, there too it can be considered that the attainment of enlightenment even after the depletion of the results is also Guru's wishes.

"Again there are a few who after practising *sādhana* for some years and after attaining some divine experiences completely abandon their *sādhana*. And they discard it in such a manner that besides that they cannot think of anything else. It is also observed in this state that, the moment *sādhana* has been abandoned, the divine experiences start blossoming. The termination of *sādhana* that has been mentioned now is also a particular state of *sādhana*. If *sādhana* is abandoned for the sake of testing its result or for any evil purpose, then no effects are observed. Through the type of abandonment that is being mentioned the intensity of the aim of *sādhana* increases. 'I will not invoke Him anymore, not any more' - continuously reminiscing in this manner he is actually becoming more and more focussed towards his God. Hence what is so very surprising that he will obtain divine experiences in this state?"

"Isn't it mentioned several times that *sādhana* is infinite? Actually that is true. Ponder normally, observe a leaf of a tree, you will see that every leaf is different and also there is no end of leaves. Similar is the case for flowers or for seeds. Even though the tree is one say it's branches, leaves, seeds are all infinite, similarly there is end to the divine experiences of *sādhana*. Again just as within one seed there are infinite trees; infinite leaves, flowers, similarly within one gigantic divine experience there are infinite varieties of experiences. The very aim of *sādhana* is to experience the one within many and to experience many within the one. Only when this occurs the Absolute experience has been attained."

"While doing *karma* (*sādhana*) if some divine experiences are attained then one should make efforts to retain the same. Just as we eat delicious foods and hide it in our stomach and in that invisible manner it nourishes the body, similarly when divine experiences are obtained it should be preserved within too. It should be seen that in no manner it emerges out, one should always make efforts for that only. Only on preserving in this manner there is an increase in the inner strength and finally the Ultimate Divine Experience is attained. If there is an overflow of the divine experience

after the vessel is full then there is no problem, that itself is the essence of *JagatGuru*.”

“After attaining divine experience, people make a show of it, this too is quite natural. As long as the sense organs are directed outwards, i.e., towards appearance, savor, words, touch etc, till then there will be a chance of whatever divine experience that has been attained, of flowing out from these sense organs. Not only that, owing to the connection with the external world, unknowingly the external entities will get attached with the inner divine experiences. As a result it will be observed that whatever divine experience is occurring is not the actual truth. For example, suppose you have a inner feeling that one of your enemies is un-well, but later you learn that he is well. You never came to know how the feeling of being ‘well’ got attached with ‘un’ and became ‘un-well’ here. Hence if the sense organs are directed outwards then according to your *sanskārs*, various external matters will flow in through them and distort your divine experiences. When the outward attitude of the sense organs will dissipate, then you will observe that your divine experiences are giving the right message. At this stage you will observe a dilution of your ego and you have become quite fearless too. People in general fear to observe and experience a misfortune among themselves and their relatives; but when nothing remains to be one’s own, when in the absence of the knowledge of ‘mine’, mine and theirs become unified, then nothing remains to fear and hence people then become fearless. When this stage arrives then he gradually attains the Ultimate experience. If for once the pot becoming full to the brim starts overflowing all around, then the world is truly benefitted. The *JagatGuru* blesses everyone in this manner only. And if the pot starts getting consumed before it gets filled to the brim, then where is the chance of it ever getting filled? Acquiring this wealth is called *sādhana*. While acquiring this wealth even if 10% of it is distributed off then where is the hope of acquiring it in totality?”

It being 12 noon, Ma was escorted away for food and rest. We too returned home.

Death of a Kanyapeeth girl

14th Chaitra 1355, Monday (28-03-1949). Today Ma departed for Jhusi; hence I went to the Ashram very early in the morning. There were no outsiders within the Ashram, and the luggages of the inmates leaving for Jhusi were being collected in the courtyard. Just then I heard that a

Kanyapeeth girl by the name Manju has passed away. During her death Shree Shree Ma with Her blessed palm had caressed her body. Just two days earlier she had a mild fever, but yesterday night the fever had increased and she vomited several times, uneasy she tossed throughout the night and breathed her last this morning. Yesterday evening the Ashram's cow gave birth to a calf but that too had died a few minutes later. Ma said, "See the coincidence, *kirtan* was going on in the Ashram when the calf died yesterday, today too this girl has died during the *kirtan*. While performing *yagna* yesterday Nepal (Narayan Swami) had seen two monstrous dogs and both of them were going towards the Kanyapeeth. Saw (them) in the morning and the calf died in the evening and the girl died this morning."

Ma told KhukuniDidi to make arrangements for the last rites of the girl. It was finally decided that the body of the girl would be taken in a boat from the Ashram Ghat to Manikarnika Ghat where the last rites would be performed. Both KhukuniDidi and NepalDada carried the girl from the second floor room to the boat in the Ghat. When Didi was repeating the name of *Hari* while carrying the body, she felt her voice becoming stifled; in spite of renouncing everything, the gurgling sound of affection for one and all in similar situations is always heard flowing out of Didi's heart. I do not think happiness and sorrow do not perturb Ma at all. Today Ma smilingly informed us about the death of the girl and the calf in quite a calm manner.

Now the question arose whether Ma would depart for Jhusi or not. Both NepalDada and KhukuniDidi tried to oppose but on observing Ma's interest they stopped arguing and Ma and others departed in time. We too returned back to our homes, while Manmohan and several others went to the burning ghat.

16th Chaitra 1355, Wednesday (30-03-1949). Today at eleven in the night Ma returned from Jhusi. The Kanyapeeth girls were overcome with grief and fear with the sudden loss of one of their inmates. Ma was informed about this in Jhusi. Most probably for this reason Ma has arrived here today night. Ma had already made arrangements of daily prayers and *kirtan* in Jhusi for the benefit of the departed soul of the girl. However several devotees thought, what more could be due for the welfare of the soul of the body that had died in Kashi, beside the river Ganga, in Ma's Ashram and in the presence of Ma. When Ma arrived and sat down in the courtyard, NepalDada questioned Ma regarding this matter. Ma explained, "This Body had a *kheyāl* that in general everyone does something or the other for the

wellfare of the departed souls. *Bhandara* is also given in the name of the departed *sadhus* and *mahatmas*. A wife for the husband, a husband for the wife, a son for his parents, one brother for the other, everyone does something or the other. Even though there is no such relationship, but a spiritual link exists and that is not to be discarded. The spiritual link is much stronger than the gross relation. If there had been no relation at all then why would tears flow for the death of someone? Hence there was a *kheyāl* to do something. If you presume that the girl has attained salvation then all these prayers etc, will support her journey upwards. Since the girl was a *kumari* (virgin), arrangement has been made for *Kumari Seva* too.

The sad demise of UriyaBaba

Heard from Ma and KhukuniDidi, how Shree UriyaBaba died pathetically in Vrindaban. In the evening when UriyaBaba sat down to hear the evening *paath* (scriptural oration) and *naam-kirtan*, one of his mentally deranged disciple Thakurdas suddenly rushed forward and injured Baba by striking an axe three times on him. The aged *Sadhu* collapsed and died immediately. Observing this cruel behaviour, the other devotees surprised and stupefied, killed Thakurdas. When the news of this horrific demise of UriyaBaba reached Jhusi, HariBaba just could not believe it. He was totally overcome with grief at the sad demise of his dear friend in this aghast manner. Ma said, "UriyaBaba had taken the utmost care of This Body this time in Vrindaban; he used to call This Body as 'Maiya', 'Maiya' and hugged This Body and always made This Body sit next to him. Observing this extreme behaviour This Body had commented, 'Are you hugging This Body in this manner, because this is the last one? (This Body) had observed a similar behaviour in the case of Mahatma Gandhi and Lalita Sakhi (a man, who worshipped Lord Krishna as a *Sakhi*, girlfriend). When This Body met Gandhiji in Delhi just before his death, he too had behaved in this manner with This Body. Lalita Sakhi too had caressed This Body in various manner and had said, 'Ma, I will make You sit in the chariot and then I will observe as to how You look'."

17th Chaitra 1355, Thursday (31-03-1949). Today Ma came down at about eleven in the morning. Ma spoke on the topic of UriyaBaba today too. *Kumari-seva* was also held on the occasion of the demise of the Kanyapeeth girl inmate. The speciality of this *kumari seva* was that unlike other times, non-brahmin *kumaris* were also invited along with brahmin

kumaris. Ma was of course present during the whole program. At the end of the program two Annas each were donated to each *kumari*.

The importance of dying in Kashidhām

Today in the evening after the end of the *paath*, a discussion was held on Manju, the recently demised Kanyapeeth girl. A Kanyapeeth girl recited a story on Manju and it was quite neatly written. NepalDada also gave a lecture on the importance of dying in Kashi and on *kumari-tatwa*. After that KhukuniDidi requested me a lot to say something on this matter. Hearing that Ma too asked me, "Will you not say something?"

Myself: Ma, what can I say? But since You have asked me to say something then I am requesting You to say something on *kumari-tatwa*.

Ma: (to KhukuniDidi) Saw, heard what *Baba* has said? (Then pointing at NepalDada) *Baba* has of course said something about the *kumaris*. *Kumari* is the Ultimate symbol of purity and *Shakti*. From whom creation occurs and within whom occurs dissolution, That is *Kumari*. One who has created Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwar, She Herself is *Kumari*. Hence, someone refers Her as *Adyashakti* and some as *Mahashakti*. She is pure and holy. All because of Her, the play of Creation, Existence and Dissolution is possible.

Shastri Mahasay: Ma, at what age is one called a *Kumari*? There cannot be any specific age for a *Kumari*.

Ma: *Baba* (i.e. NepalDada) himself said that from the age of one to sixteen everyone is a *kumari* and each one of them has a different name. A name at the age of one, another name at the age of two, and so on. Again if you consider *Kumari* as the ultimate growth of power then this ultimate growth or enlightenment can occur at any age; that is to say that there is no specific age for a *Kumari*.

KhukuniDidi: (to me) You had mentioned to Buni that one who has died in Kashi, beside the Ganga ghat and right in front of Shree Shree Ma, then what else is left for her salvation? And why is there any arrangement for the welfare of her departing soul? These words of yours have opened up a new topic among the girls of Kanyapeeth. They are now praying fervently that they too be blessed with the opportunity of dying in Shree Shree Ma's presence.

Ma: This Body had said that just as something is done for the welfare of a dying man's soul, if you want to do something for this departing soul then you may do as mentioned in the scriptures.

Ma: (after some time) See, when someone dies then his family members are called impure and according to the scriptures some follow this rule for one month or some for eleven days. And after that period they become pure. In this case there is no question of such an impurity. But of course, due to the absence of an inmate there is bereavement. Hence This Body has mentioned that for Manju, the other girls should pray, conduct *kirtan* and read the scriptures (*paath*) for three days. If you consider that Manju has attained salvation, then remembering the one who is liberated, and conducting *kirtan*, *paath*, etc. for his sake, you will open the path for your own deliverance too. Of course there is a positive effect (fruits) of *kirtan* etc.; besides contemplating on a liberated soul is also a path to salvation.

On behalf of the Ashram girls, Potolda then enquired whether Manju is pleased or not and whether she is present here or not, with whatever that has been done for her?

Ma: (pointing at everyone and smiling) All of these are Manju, hence it has to be said that Manju is here and watching all this. Again if you mention that Manju has attained salvation then all these questions cannot arise, because one who is liberated, for him joy and sorrow does not mean anything. And if you consider that Manju has attained some upper world, you can then state that she is watching all this and is enjoying too.

After this there was a bit of *kirtan* and then *prasād* was distributed. After that Ma Herself again continued the conversation.

Ma: See the coincidence, among the few who have died in the Ashram, it was observed that, before their death, their right ear was on the top, the same was observed in the case of Turiyanand and Kalachand's mother. In Manju's case also it was the same. The same was observed in the case of the calf too. I had gone to see the calf the day before he expired. Seeing him, had a feeling that his time has not arrived. Next day evening again went to see him. His head too got caressed by This Body's hands. The calf was lying down stiff like a log, but just before his last breath suddenly his head turned around and his right ear was on the top. The importance of a place has to be accepted after observing all these incidents. Hence on that day This Body was mentioning to everybody that, everyone should clearly understand the sites where all these *jivas* have expired, because in all these places only, during death the right ear remains on the top.

So saying Ma started laughing.

Myself: Ma. You had mentioned earlier that, it cannot be said that the same will occur for all who die in Kashi.

Ma: This Body had heard that this has not happened for a few. But for those who have died in the Ashram it was clearly observed that the right ear was not below. Have heard from you all too that, *Kashi-dhām* is like a strainer, there are gaps in between. Hence all places in Kashi are not the same. (Laughingly) For this very reason only, have informed everyone to remember these places of the Ashram.

By the time, it was eleven in the night and hence Ma was taken to Her room and we departed to our homes.

About UriyaBaba

18th Chaitra 1355, Friday (01-04-1949). Today when Ma arrived in the Hall, Ma again spoke of UriyaBaba. Ma narrated all that Ma had heard about UriyaBaba.

Ma: Once UriyaBaba tried to produce gold, of course the reason being to benefit mankind. Again for the same reason he had gone to Kamakhya for attaining divine powers; but he could not follow any path for long. After making efforts to follow these various paths for some time he used to discard them. Not being able to attain anything from any of these paths he had once tried to kill himself by drowning in the Ganga. But then suddenly his mind gets diverted and arising from the river he falls asleep in a Shiva temple. During that period he had a strong feeling of disbelief in God. He was actually lying with his feet touching the Shiva-linga. During this period a saint arriving there gave his introduction and asked him to remember the following two slokas:

1. *Neti netiti netiti shishtang jat paramang padam /
Nirākaritumshakya twādtoyhasmiti sukhi bhav //*
2. *Jadātāṅg bariyitweītāṅg shilāyā hridayang ch yat /
Amnaskang mahābāho tannayo bhav sarvadā //*

From thence onwards UriyaBaba came to feel that all his spiritual knots (*granthi*) have disintegrated. Earlier he did not have any special connection with This Body, but this time Baba mentioned, 'Earlier I just could not understand the conversations and movements of This Girl, but now I understand, This Girl is the Ultimate of all renunciations, me and This Girl are One'.

Ma (continued): What was the intention of the person, who killed Baba, is difficult to deduce. He used to stay in UriyaBaba's Ashram and was a

devout of both *UriyaBaba* and *HariBaba*. But it seems that he was more devoted towards *HariBaba*, because one day in Khanna, he was heard singing, '*Nadiyā Nāgar Tumhi Ho*'. There was a similar story among all the dramas that *HariBaba*'s troupe used to perform. The story is like this – There was an idol of ShivaParvati in a temple and a priest regularly worshipped there. One day while leaving the temple he met a cowherd. The cowherd asked him as to what he did in this temple. And the priest replied that he regularly worshipped the idols in this temple. After the priest departed the cowherd, imagining the Shiva idol as a living God, and hoping to get some rewards from Him, struck the Shiva idol with a stick. After beating the idol for three consecutive days, he achieved his goal. One will be surprised to see how hard the actor acting as the cowherd struck with his stick on the head of the actor acting as Shiva. Maybe after observing this drama, this devotee must have thought of a similar action imagining *UriyaBaba* as Lord Shiva Himself. Since there were several people who considered him in that form, he must have thought 'I too will beat him on his head and attain my goal'. However now there is no chance of knowing with what intention he had committed this action. Along with *UriyaBaba*'s death he too has died.

This time Shree Shree Ma's *Jannotsav* and installation of the Shiva-linga was supposed to be held in Kashi during the month of May. *UriyaBaba* wanted to install the Shiva-linga. Hence his death has created a commotion here. *HariBaba* suggested that he would take Ma to Dehradun during the summers. Everyone here suspected that if *HariBaba*'s wishes were fulfilled then Ma will not stay in Kashi for a longer period. Hence like everyday *NepalDada* today while prostrating before Ma, said, "Ma, the manner in which new people are arriving and occupying Your lap, it seems that there won't be any place for us anymore."

Ma: Vishwanath's and Annapurna's Lap is not that small. There is no reason to fear like this.

NepalDada: We do not want Vishwanath and Annapurna's lap, we want Your Lap.

Ma: Is there any difference between these two? If in the huge Laps of Vishwanath and Annapurna there is no space for anyone, then it is better to abandon the hope of attaining His Lap.

* * * *

(to be continued)

In Ma's own Words

Ma narrates to Bhaiji

Bhaiji

(continued from before)

Purnima-Bhog at the Ashram

One day on returning to the Ashram after the *bhog* at Nishibabu's house it had become quite late in the evening. It was a full moon (*Purnima*) night. Over here in the Ashram, Motori had a wish that she would offer *bhog* on this very day with her son's first salary. On reaching the Ashram we found that Motori had prepared all the *bhog* and was sitting with few others and singing *kirtan*. At the right time the *bhog* was offered and later everyone present accepted the *prasād* joyfully. That offering of *bhog* on the *Purnima* night is still continuing in the Ashrams. It has been observed, that in all such matters whatever has to occur, occurred on its own.

Bāsanti-Puja at the Ashram: Lavanya's ecstasy

While staying in Bajitpur, Bholanath had once said, 'I have a wish to celebrate the *Bāsanti Puja*. Twice during the preparations of the *Shārādiya Durga Puja*, due to deaths in the house, *Puja* was cancelled and the items purchased were utilized for the funeral rites of the deceased. After that there was no mention of celebrating *Durga Puja* for quite some time. Hence I have a wish to perform the *Bāsanti Puja*. Please say, will this wish be ever fulfilled?' I had replied, 'It will'.

After arriving at Shahbag, Bholanath had reminded me of that incident. During that period Shashankbabu had constructed a thatched hut around the Siddheshwari altar. It was decided to perform the *Puja* there. The *Durga* idol was of the height of This Bōdy and the idol was fabricated from a mixture of various muds including the soil obtained from the termite mounds nearby the altar. Several relatives of Bholanath had arrived for the function. All those who visited Shahbagh, arranged for a variety of things. Shashankbabu and Purna Sarkar arranged for the gold ornaments for the deity. Bholanath's sister Bengi (Mokshda) had come to Dhaka quite a long time ago. Hence if nobody went to fetch her, she would not be able to attend the *Puja*. With this apprehension in mind Bholanath commented, 'Let's go and bring her here.' So, on his request we visited Chattagram and returned back to Dhaka along with her.

One day we visited Shashankbabu's house. His younger son Nandu had arrived. This was the first time we met. Later he came frequently to meet This Body.

A few days after meeting Khukuni, This Body informed her, 'Since you have decided not to keep any relation with your husband then stop communicating and writing letters to all your relations'. And she did that too. Later one day Nandu said, 'I was wondering who did Didi meet, on whose words she has stopped all correspondence with her brothers and sisters. When I learnt later that it is your instruction, I felt sad and did not have any wish to meet you again'.

Not many days were left for the *Basanti Puja*. One day Jyotishbabu's wife arrived with a red bordered white sari and requested This Body to wear it. This Body had worn it during the *Basanti Puja*.

During this period, a exhibition was held in the building which is now an Intermediate college. Jyotish's wife had taken This Body to the exhibition. This was the first time that This Body had gone to any such place. She took me around and showed me several things in the exhibition and said, 'I will purchase whatever you like here'. For This Body everything was the same, there never was a *kheyāl* that anything was new.

On the eve of *Basanti Puja* i.e. on the day of *adivyaas*, we went to Siddheshwari from Shahbag. There accommodation was arranged for all of us in an empty house. The *Durga* idol etc., were all ready and installed properly in the thatched hut of the Siddheshwari altar. Proper arrangements were made for everyone too.

At dawn of the *Saptami* day, This Body bathed in the nearby pond and while going to the *Puja* room, on the way informed in the kitchen how much rice, *dal*, etc., would be required.

The floor of the hut was one hand higher than earlier old altar. This altar was square with the sides one hand four fingers in length. Hence this old altar looked like a square pit. During the whole period of the worship, This Body sat or slept in this pit. During the process of life giving ceremony of the Idol, the *purohit* was advised not to utter the *Durga beej-mantras* loudly. This Body stared at the Idol for a long time. The *beej-mantras* were emanating within This Body too. Later few people mentioned that during that period, the eyes, facial expression etc., of the Idols were alive. After the worship, *bhog*, etc., were offered. After that all the people present were extremely pleased to have *prasād*.

On the *Ashtami* day after almost everyone had a delicious *prasād*, someone came and informed that a group of people have just arrived. Whatever *prasād* was remaining was not enough for everyone. Arrangement had been made that all those who have arrived to watch the function should get *prasād* and that nobody departed without it. The newly arrived group comprised of 40 to 50 members, and all of them were medical students of a private medical college. They had been requested to attend the *Puja* for at least one day. This Body replied, 'Let them all be seated and serve them all the *prasād* that is still remaining. Everyone thought it would be shameful if all these students did not get their share and hence two pots of *khichdi* were prepared first and then the students were seated and served *prasād*. Later it was observed that even after serving *prasād* from the old vessel to all the students, it was still not empty. Even the new pot of curd was untouched. It was mentioned earlier, that the *bhog* should be cooked once only, it should not be cooked again. But these people instead of heeding that and with the expectation that *prasād* will fall short had cooked few more pots of *prasād*.

By evening it seemed that there would be a rainfall. Sometime later it started raining and wind also started blowing. As everyone feared the storm intensified and everywhere there was turmoil. The thatched hut of alter was made of light materials and was lightly bound. Hence it started shaking because of the intense wind and rain. This Body remained seated in the old alter pit. A twelve year old girl due to fright became epileptic. Everyone caught hold of the poles of the thatched hut and started shouting frantically 'Ma - Ma'. This Body observed - outside, the raging nature dancing wildly and inside - the humans devotedly vocalizing. This Body hence started swaying in tune to the two sounds and an odd smile appeared on the lips. Bholanath was puzzled to see This Body smiling in this odd manner, and said sobbingly, 'What is all this happening! Save us quickly'.

Suddenly a lower caste person with his whole body covered with mud entered through the door and looking at This Body helplessly joined the group of people and started singing God's name. Simultaneously the rage of the storm diminished and subsided. Looking outside found muddy water all around, the thatched roofs all blown away, several branches and leaves of the nearby trees scattered all around. However Mathurababu cleared away all the mess within the dark night itself. A *kirtaniya* party also arrived from somewhere and started singing *kirtan*, and hence some changes

occurred on This Body. Ashu's sister Labonya (16/17 years old) had not seen such unnatural conditions of This Body. Amazed she rushed forward and caught This Body. Because of this reason an unnatural change occurred in her body too and murmuring '*Hari-bol, Hari-bol*' she started rolling in the ground. In the meantime This Body in the tranced state moved along with the *Kirtaniya* party and several others to the Siddheshwari Temple. When the *kirtan* stopped there, This Body came out of the trance and all the people escorted This Body back to the Ashram. In the Ashram saw Labonya's mother and few others trying to catch hold of Labonya and remove the wet mud from her body while she kept rolling in the muddy water.

Ashu's mother came and requested This Body, 'Please cure her fast. What has happened to her?' This Body saw that her husband was also worried and tense. This Body then said, 'This is a very good condition. However, others are commenting as to how can one run a family in such a condition?' After some more conversations, instructed the husband to escort her into the room. Then told Bholanath to inform the husband, what he should say in her wife's ears. He did exactly as instructed. And after that although she slept like a log, she occasionally murmured '*Haribol*' and rolled on the ground too. Next morning she came along with This Body for bathing in the pond. There too she was in an ecstatic condition, smilingly saying '*Haribol-Haribol*'. This Body told her, 'Your mother and relatives do not like this behaviour of yours'. She replied, 'KhudiMa, these people do not understand the joy of '*Haribol*'. Labonya's mother kept requesting This Body to cure her. Gradually her normal state returned back and all of them departed to their houses.

On *Dashami* day after the *Puja*, just before the immersion, people enquired what was to be done with the bangles of the Goddesses. This Body replied, 'Let it be immersed'. Bholanath and others objected saying that this was against the rules. This Body then advised to donate it to the *purohitis*. The devotees who had donated the ornaments pleaded that they had made it for Ma's use only. After a lot of arguments the ornaments were kept safely in the room for This Body's use.

This Body never allowed anyone to touch This Body's feet for paying obeisance. However after the *Visarjan*, everyone requested that they would pay obeisance to Ma by touching Ma's feet. Along with everyone the old Silanath Kushari mahasay also touched This Body's feet and did *pranaam*.

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Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee
Vol-18 (Bengali)

Gurupriya Devi

(continued from before)

Rudrabhishek in Dehradun RamMandir

28th November 1965. Today Ma reached Dehradun. From 29th November to 4th December, daily in the morning, Rudrabhishek was organised in the courtyard in front of the Ram Mandir and Shiv Mandir. Ma daily went there in the morning. Also in Ma's presence on 29th November the foundation of the house of Smt Rajadevi Khaitan was laid in the land adjoining to Kalyanvan. Initially two rooms would be constructed. Later in Ma's presence the foundation was also laid for two more rooms.

30th November 1965. Today on Bunidi's memory Akhand Ramayan was held in the Ashram hall and it concluded on the afternoon of 1st December. Ma was very busy here, having satsang and moving around in both Kalyanvan and Kishenpur, with ongoing functions and the crowd of devotees mingling around. Ma spoke on various topics. The concluding function of the Rudrabhishek was held in Kalyanvan on 4th December.

At the same time Gita-Jayanti was held for three days in Kishenpur Ashram. In the morning the girls read 6 chapters of the Srimad Bhagwat Gita and in the evening mind absorbing oration of the Gita was held in Ma's presence. On the fourth day the whole Gita was read and was concluded with the worship of *Pārthasārthi* (Lord Krishna).

6th December 1965. Today on Ma's invitation Swami Chiddanandaji and few other Sannyasis of Shivanand Ashram, Rishikesh had been served *bhog* in the afternoon. In the evening few sadhus of that Ashram came to our Ashram and tape recorded the evening *kirtan*. Ma too was present during this function for almost three and a half hours. This tape recording was later taken to South Africa by one of their members.

Ma's visit to Delhi

7th December 1965. Today Ma departed for Delhi, but on the way to the station stopped at three places. In Delhi instead of staying in the Ashram, Ma stayed in the new residence of Ma's old devotee Shri Jitendra Nath

Dutta. Jiten'da had made arrangements for twelve hours of *kirtan*, and oration of the full *Gītā* and *Chandi*.

11th December 1965. Today Ma was fully prepared to leave for Vrindavan, but on the ardent request of the devotees of Delhi Ma had to postpone the departure for one day. The devotees of Delhi requested Ma to celebrate the twenty-four hours long *Akhand Nāmyagna* for a day. All arrangements were immediately made and as usual the gents continued the *kirtan* during the daytime and the ladies during the night. Ma kept a sharp vigil of the arrangements for the whole period. Ma stayed for the *kirtan* in the night and again arrived at dawn. In this manner a joyous and beautiful *kirtan* was celebrated. Before departing for Vrindavan in a car, Ma came for some time in the Delhi Ashram and informed me to stay there.

Ma's unusual request in Vrindavan

12th December 1965. Ma then departed for Vrindavan and stayed there for three days. Ma's visit to Vrindavan was mainly to inspect the undergoing construction of the Radha Krishna Temple. Daily *satsang* was held in the evening. One evening Pundit Sundarlalji commented, "Ma, we are all beggars. Ma we are all begging for Your compassionate *kripā*." Ma replied, "I am the biggest beggar. Because, I am begging for your greed, anger, jealousy, pride, and ego, for offering it at the feet of the various Gods in your temples."

In the night Ma slept in the Ram-bhavan, even though it was not completely constructed. Smt Satya Prem Kumari, the Maharani of Mysore was then residing along with her friends in the adjacent Modi-bhavan. It was her earnest desire that Ma sanctifies this newly constructed Bhawan by residing in it for at least a day.

15th December 1965. Today Ma reached Allahabad and halted in the Satya Gopal Ashram. Every year after the Durga Puja Ma visits this place for three days. Because of Ma's busy schedule, this was not possible this time and hence Ma arrived here at this juncture. One day a girl research scholar arrived to meet Ma and asked numerous questions and conversed quite hurriedly with Ma for quite some time. Finally Ma said, "Now, you listen and don't interrupt in-between. After that you deeply dwell in this matter. After that if you have any queries then we will discuss again." The next day the girl researcher came and announced that all her queries have been have been solved. She does not have any more questions to ask. Ma then offered her three flowers.

18th December 1965. Today Ma reached Vindhyachal by car. Here Ma rested Herself for a few days. There was a suggestion of visiting Kashi but that was cancelled and Ma finally extended Her stay here till 11th January 1966. This Ashram being quite far from the city, the Ashram was less crowded and both Indian and foreign devotees had enough chance of having *satsang* with Ma.

10th January 1966. Ma is having quite a rest now in Vindhyachal. Few of us are in Ma's room. During the conversation, some very old topics arose. Ma was saying, "Injections (vaccination) for small pox and cholera was being given to everyone. The age of This Body was then 19 or 20 and various yogic *kriyās* were going over This Body. Bholanath was requested quite a lot of time not to give the injection. He refused as he would have to listen to others sermon. If the yogic *kriyās* had concluded before this incident then there wouldn't have been any problem. However after taking the injection the injected arm swelled up a lot, and after that only, the same side of the Body became awkward. Now also whatever sickness is observed on This Body is all because of that injection. There has to be a cause – isn't it." After that Ma becomes still. The effect of an injection inserted 50 years ago is clearly visible in Ma's Body now also! Does medical science have any answer to this?

Shree Shree Ma in Prayag for the *Poorn-Kumbh*

11th January 1966. This year is *Poorn-Kumbh* in Prayag. Our Ashram's Camp made of tents has also been erected on the bank of the river Ganga in Jhusi very near to camps of other sadhus and mahatmas. From Vindhyachal Ma reached Allahabad by car in the afternoon. Swami Paramanandji was waiting for us near the Naini Bridge. From there he then showed the path to our Ashram Camp. The Camp was quite large and properly designed. Swami Paramanandji's single handed efforts for the past one month had made this possible. But 2-3 days ago, due to a sudden fire around nine tents and all its furniture was reduced to ashes. I learnt that the electric linesmen were working in the tents, but how the tents caught fire was not clear. And this scene of ashes all around was really disheartening. A new hut has been recently fabricated for Ma and Ma has somehow managed to stay there. Hence Ma sent us to Bindu's (an old devotee and brother of Bithika Mukherjee) house in the city, as we might feel uncomfortable in the cold.

Holy Bath on *Makar Sankranti*

14th January 1966. Today is *Paush* or *Makar Sankranti*. A very important date of taking a holy dip / bath in the *Kumbh*. Shree Shree Ma and DidiMa were taken to the *Triveni Sangam* (the confluence of three rivers) point in a palanquin beautifully decorated with flowers etc. Several devotees walked along with Ma. Previous arrangements were already made for a big boat to take Ma and others from the Ganga bank to the *Triveni* point. All around was a sea of people crowding around to have the holy dip.

Learnt from Ma that, yesterday night while Ma was lying down, an enchanting lady was showing Ma a piece of cloth. I understood that that must be Goddess Ganga. Ma had a *kheyal* that Bhawani had given Ma a *sari* for offering to Goddess Ganga. Hence Ma asked Ganga Devi, which one? And She pointed out the colored one. Hence while going to *Sangam*, Ma had brought along that *sari*. Reaching the *Triveni* spot, Ma smilingly offered the *sari* to Ganga Devi. Later, learnt from Ma that, Ma had seen two more ladies standing there, though at a distance, without any clothes on them. I understood that one was Yamuna Devi and the other Saraswati Devi. Hence arrangements were made to offer two more sarees in the next holy bathe day, i.e. on the *Amāvsya* (new moon) day.

The most sacred Bath on *Amāvsya* day

21st January 1966. Today is *Amāvsya* – the most sacred bathing day of the *Kumbh*. Today also Ma and DidiMa were taken to the edge of the bank in the decorated Palanquin in a procession. There were around few lakhs of people all around. Ma did not take a dip in the confluence, but touched the water and taking some Ganga water in Her palm, sprinkled it over everyone around Her. The whole arrangement of the *Kumbh Mela* was very meticulously done. Several volunteers and incharges of the *Mela* arrived in the Ashram Camp to offer their obeisance to Ma. And Ma too praised them for their sincere efforts. They however repeatedly mentioned, 'It's all because of Your *kripā*'. One day the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Shri Vishwanath Dasji and the Governor of Bihar had arrived for Ma's *darshan*.

Smt Indira Gandhi visits Shree Shree Ma in Prayag.

25th January 1966. Today morning Smt Indira Gandhi, several ministers and officials arrived in the *Kumbh Mela* to pour the ashes of the Late

Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri in the *Triveni* confluence. From our Camp we saw helicopters pouring out flowers over the *Kumbh Mela*. At around twelve noon a senior military officer arrived in the Camp and informed that Smt Indira Gandhi will arrive to have Ma's *darshan*. Within minutes the paths all around especially the path in front of our Camp was lined up with police and military personal. First to arrive to have Ma's *darshan* was the Union Minister of Law Shri Gopal Swarup Pathak. Then arrived the Union Health Minister Smt Sushila Nayar and her elder brother Shri Pyarelal'ji.

The moment they departed from the Camp, a convoy of cars stopped in front of the Camp and Smt Indira Gandhi's car entered the Camp, she got down and immediately entered Ma's hut. She stayed there for almost twenty minutes. Yesterday itself she was elected as the Prime Minister of India. And she and everyone else were excited and happy to Ma's *darshan* the very next day. A lot of old memories were arising in her mind while conversing with Ma. Her first *darshan* of Ma was around thirty-five to thirty-six years ago. With fruits and sweets from Ma's hands, she paid her obeisance to Ma and with a happy countenance she took leave of Ma. We were all delighted to see that in spite of her busy schedule in the *Kumbh Mela*, she took some time off and visited Ma. She would be returning back to Delhi today itself. At around five in the evening, the Minister of Home Affairs Shri Gulzarilal Nanda arrived for Ma's *darshan*. He spent a long time with Ma and conversed on various matters. After he departed the crowd inside the Camp gradually reduced. In spite of presence of the military and police officials the gate and walls of our Camp was almost falling down due to the vast crowd waiting outside to see Indiraji's *Mataji*. Quite often Ma had to come outside the hut to give them *darshan*. And all these people had just one thing to say, 'we want to have *darshan* of Indiraji's *Mataji*'. The crowd was still present in the evening.

26th January 1966. Today is *Saraswati Puja*. On the devotees earnest request *Saraswati Puja* was arranged in the Camp and was held piously in Ma's presence with a lot of enthusiasm and gaiety.

Shree Shree Ma visits Shri Prabhudat Brahmachariji in Jhusi

29th January 1966. For the last three days Ma has been staying in Shri Prabhudat Brahmachariji's Ashram. However Ma arrived in the Camp for a few hours in the morning. Today morning after having *bhog* in

Bindu's residence in Allahabad city Ma departed for Kashi in a car. Tomorrow Ma is supposed to depart for Hoshiarpur from Kashi. Frequent news was coming from there that Shri HariBabaji is seriously ill. Hence it is essential for Ma to visit him at least once. Regular letters and telegrams are arriving from Hoshiarpur. Hence Ma decided to stop all other programs and leave for Hoshiarpur. Ma visited quite a few patients in Kashi before reaching the Ashram and also met a few patients in the Ashram.

Shree Shree Ma visits Shri HariBabaji in Hoshiarpur

30th January 1966. This time Ma did not stop at Jalandhar, but straight away went to Hoshiarpur, but promised the devotees of Jalandhar that on the return trip Ma would halt there for some time. In Ma's presence, HariBabaji recovered very drastically both physically and mentally. Whatever HariBabaji ate or drank, Ma personally got these cooked in Her kitchen. During the return trip Ma of course halted at Jalandhar. When Ma departed for Vrindaban HariBabaji was quite well.

Shree Shree Ma goes to Vrindaban

9th February 1966. On the way to Vrindaban, when the train halted at the Delhi station, the devotees of Delhi prayed to Ma to stay in Delhi for sometime. Ma then informed them that there was a program of Ma visiting Delhi on 6th April and staying there till 14th April for Didima's *Sanyās Utsav*.

10th February 1966. Today Ma reached Vrindaban. Very few devotees had accompanied Ma to Hoshiarpur. Didima, myself and several devotees had stayed back in Kashi itself. All of us finally reached Vrindaban on 12th February and joined Ma's troupe.

18th February 1966. Today *MahaShivrātri* was organized in the hall of the Vrindaban Ashram. Like every year several devotees remained fast and came forward for taking part in the *MahaShivrātri Puja*. In Ma's presence *Puja* and *kirtan* etc continued for the whole night in a fascinating manner.

From 21st February to 28th February *Bhagwat Saptāh* was organized by Smt Taraben Bua of Bombay in the memory of her deceased husband. Pundit Shrinath Shastri read the original *Bhāgwat* in the morning and gave a captivating explanation in Hindi in the evening. Swami Akhandanandji had agreed to give an hour's discourse on *Bhāgwat* during this period. He is an exponent in the *Bhāgwat* and gave the discourse in a melodious voice, with simple explanations, which kept the spectators spell bound.

1st March 1966. Today Ma again returned back to Hoshiarpur to spend the festival of Holi with Haribabaji, as he had not regained enough strength to come to Vrindaban for Holi. Just before Ma's departure from Vrindaban, Ma received news that Swami Bhumanand Giri, a disciple of Didima had passed away in the Kashi Ashram due to a heart attack. Before taking *sanyās*, Bhumanand Giri was a senior government officer in east Bengal. He knew Ma and Bholanath from Shahbag. After he took *sanyās*, he served in various Ashrams of Ma and in spite of his old age very competently and zealously carried out his duties. Surprisingly few weeks before his death Ma had asked him to leave Delhi Ashram and stay in Kashi Ashram. Hence in this manner with Ma's grace he was fortunate to die in peace in the Kashi Ashram on the holy banks of the river Ganga. Ma departed for Hoshiarpur and stayed there till 12th March.

Shree Shree Ma in Dehradun

13th March 1966. Today morning Ma reached Kishenpur Ashram in Dehradun. Ma was supposed to stay here till 3rd April but Ma remained here for five days only and gave *darshan* once a day from six in the evening.

Shree Shree Ma's delightful leela.

One morning Ma sat down on the platform constructed under the jackfruit tree in the Kalyanvan Ashram. Few devotees present there sat down surrounding Ma and placed their curious spiritual enquiries in front of Ma. One devotee said that he wanted to get some spiritual instruction from the Guru within himself. Then Ma explained that in order to receive some instruction from the Inner Guru, one has to prepare oneself worthy of that order. There are a few signs, from which it can be understood whether these are the instructions of the Inner *Guru* or not. Someone asked Ma, "What are these signs?" Ma then explained, "One who is totally free from passions like, anger, greed, delusion (ignorance), arrogance, egoism; one who is impartial towards everyone; one who is amiable towards everyone; one who is constantly making efforts for the welfare of others *sādhana*; one who can remain steady and calm in whatever pleasure or sorrow arises, considering it as the Will of God, as long as this state is not attained, till then one cannot understand whether these are his own mental reproduction or the true instructions of the Inner *Guru*." Hence it was clear that the devotee, who had mentioned this fact, had actually imagined

that his Inner *Guru* had given him instructions, when it was just his own mental reproduction and nothing else. Ma further says, "As long as that state is not achieved, it is the sole duty of the *sādhak* to strictly follow the instructions of the external *Guru*. Finally Ma hugged and caressed the jackfruit tree and named it '*Satyabruata*' (one who is beholding the Truth). Ma said, "Whom so ever sits below this tree while remembering this 'name', the seed of Truth will sprout within him while untruth will fade away."

Anandkashi

On 18th March 1966, Ma visited Anandkashi by car. Twenty-five kms. from Rishikesh, Anandkashi is a secluded and beautiful place owned by the Rajmata of Tehri. Several years ago a small cottage was built for Ma adjacent to the Shiva Temple near the Guest house in Anandkashi. Ma visited this place occasionally during periods of solitude. Only one or two ashramites were allowed to accompany Ma here. On the way, Ma also met Swami Chidanandji, the President of Divya Jeevan Sangha. He was also travelling in a car. The ashramites and sannyasis of neighbouring Ashrams had gathered along with the inmates of the Shivananda Ashram to welcome Ma. Hence Ma's car had stopped for a few minutes in front of the Shivananda Ashram too. Later they had arrived in Anandkashi for Ma's *darshan*. Quite a few foreigners too had the privilege of having Ma's *darshan* in this secluded and picturesque spot on the banks of the River Ganga, surrounded by hills and forests. Being secluded there wasn't any crowd and hence Ma had a good rest and was in a amiable mood too.

While staying here Ma received the sad news from Varanasi; of the sudden demise of Shri Saroj Kumar Ghosh, the eldest son of Shri Manmohan Ghosh of Dhaka. On 21st March, Shri Ghosh breathed his last in the Wellington Nursing Home in New Delhi. He was just 48 years old and was quite fit and healthy too. On Ma's instructions Shri Manmohan Ghosh and family have now settled down in Varanasi. All the family members were highly devoted and attracted towards Ma and almost everyone liked Shri Saroj, a truthful and straight forward person.

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(to be continued)

"As long as you have the energy make efforts to attain Him only. Undertake the company of those who are trying to attain God. Always remain occupied with satsang and with pious conversations, then the path to attain Him will be realized."

---- Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee



Shree Shree Ma in the 4th floor worship room of Kanyapeeth, Varanasi Ashram



Honorable Governor of Uttar Pradesh Smt. Anandi Ben presenting the Gold Medal to Brahmacharini Jyoti Mehta of Kanyapeeth, Varanasi Ashram.



All night Shiv Puja by the Kanyapeeth Brahmacharinis on Maha Shivratri (1st March 2022)



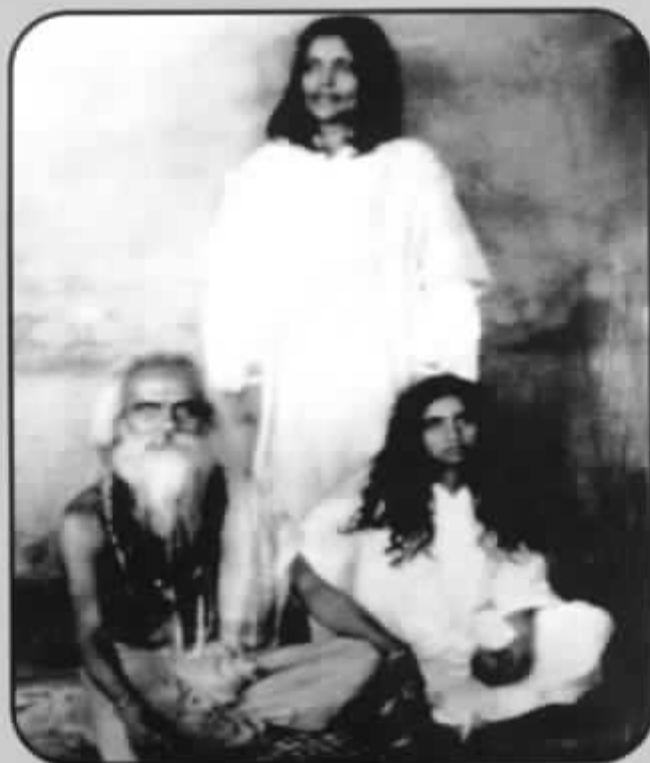
Devotees playing Holi with Gopalji in Varanasi Ashram (18th March 2022)



Worship of Shree Gopalji during Holi.



Shree Shree Basanti Puja in Varanasi Ashram during 7th to 11th March 2022



Shree Shree Ma with Baba Bholanath and his sister Motori *Pishima*.

Pādpeetham Smarāmi Almora Ashram

Brahmacharini Geeta

Set in the background of snow-capped Himalayan ranges of Uttarakhand, the sprawling town of Almora, a beautiful hill station is still immortalized in Shree Shree Ma's eternal Iccha. Two major rivers - Koshi (Kaushaki) and Suyal (Salmali) flow near the town of Almora. This is also the place of the pious and ancient PatalDevi Mandir, where Shree Shree Ma's supreme devotee and *sadhak* Shri Jyotish Chandra Rai (known to all devotees as Bhaiji), was cremated several years ago. This *samādhi* area of Bhaiji and Ma's Ashram are both an important pilgrim spot for tourists and for Ma's devotees it is an ideal place for spiritual advancement.

Shree Shree Ma first visited Almora around the middle of the year 1935 along with Bhaiji and his loyal friend Shri Hariram Joshi. While arriving from Ranikhet, Ma also gave *darshan* to the ailing Smt Kamla Nehru in Bhowali. Ma had then stayed in the *dharma-shala* of the NandaDevi Temple in Almora and in the night slept in the verandah of the temple. From there Ma had been to Nainital too. While returning from Nainital, Ma again visited Bhowali to give *darshan* to Smt Kamla Nehru. This was the last time that Smt Nehru had *darshan* of Ma.

Importance of Pataldevi

Ma first arrived in Pataldevi along with Bhaiji in 1937 during the Mount Kailash trip. Pataldevi is famous for the ancient PatalDevi Temple which is one of nine temples in Almora dedicated to the nine forms of Ma-Durga. It is about 200 years old and is at a very beautiful location in the village Shail. There are 4 natural water sources around the temple. The area around the temple is quite serene and calm and most of the times completely deserted. This area comprises of several ancient tombs of *Mahatmas*, some of which are present within the Ashram too. Shree Shree Ma has said, "After arriving here saw several subtle bodies of *Sadhus* emerging from all over the grounds, some of them were *Avdhuts* and some wore only *langots*. Later heard that this whole area was a cremation ground for the *sadhus*." And Ma's Ashram is situated right over this very holy cremation ground.

Toon tree and Bhaiji

Within this cremation ground there was a *Toon* tree (Red cedar), whose wood is red. Bhaiji was so much impressed after arriving here that he sat down below the Toon tree, and informed Ma, "I will remain here only. There is no desire to go anywhere else." Ma explained to him, "You have arrived here on the way to Kailash. You have to go to Kailash." Bhaiji agreed but his only desire then was to remain here permanently. While returning from Kailash, Bhaiji became seriously ill. A new house was hired near the NandaDevi Temple in Almora, where Ma and the accompanying devotees took shelter. Bhaiji breathed his last in this very house. Later his body was cremated in PatalDevi (as he had desired).

Ma's residence in PatalDevi

After giving *samādhi* to Bhaiji, Ma visited PatalDevi several times. Sometimes Ma stayed in the *dharmshala* adjacent to the PatalDevi temple and sometimes in other nearby places. Later one of Ma's old devotee Shri Harshnath Mukhopadhyay constructed a separate house for Ma in the land a little higher up and opposite to the temple. Later restoration work of the Temple was done by the Indian Govt. and this house was totally demolished. Ma had also resided in the two rooms which now exist in the *dharmshala*.

Few years later due to the intense efforts of Shri Hariram Joshi and by the funds donated by Yogibhai (the Maharaja of Solan, Shri Durga Singhji) a beautiful white colored temple was constructed over Bhaiji's *samādhi*. At the same time on the northern side of the temple a separate house was constructed for Ma. Behind Ma's room, there was a smaller room in which GurupriyaDi resided. Ma first resided in this house in 1939.

Establishment of the Ashram

Shri Govind Vallabh Pant was then the State Chief Minister. Shri Hariram Joshi was well known in the political field. Being quite a hard working and committed person he requested Shri Pant'ji, "A plot of land is required in Almora for Shree Shree Ma's Ashram." Shri Pant'ji was a bit reluctant to give land in and around the pious cremation ground of the *sadhus*. However due to the firm and repeated request of Shri Hariram'ji, the respected Chief Minister donated almost 1.5 acres (65340 sq.ft.) of land in Pataldevi, slightly far away from the *Sadhus* crematory. On Ma's instruction now too, a small *samādhi* temple still exists in front of the Ashram Hall.

Shree Shree Durga Puja in Almora Ashram

With Shree Shree Ma's benevolent *kheyal*, in 1943, *Shree Shree Durga Puja* was celebrated for the first time in a huge manner in the Almora Ashram. This was the first time that such a huge and meticulous *Durga Puja* was being celebrated in and around the Kumaon region. And hence people arrived in crowds to attend the function. On the last day of the function, i.e. on the *Vijaya-Dashami* day, people present were overwhelmed with joy participating in Ma's '*Ann Brahma leela*'.

Ma's '*Ann Brahma leela*' (as mentioned in Vol-8 of GurupriyaDi's book)

"Today both *Navami* and *Dashami Pujas* are being celebrated. *Navami Puja* was to be concluded by 8am and *Dashami Puja* was also supposed to be finished quickly so that the immersion could be done today itself.

In the afternoon after the *Dashami Puja*, people sat down in the courtyard to have *prasād*. Ma moved around the courtyard blessing everyone with joy. On requesting Ma for partaking some meals, Ma denied saying, "I will have it later." While Ma was standing in the courtyard, a sudden storm arose, a cloud of dust and wind enveloped all around and it became dark. Ma remained standing there calmly. The storm also subsided after some time. Only then we understood why Ma had remained in the courtyard and had not gone inside for Her meals. While I was waiting for Ma inside the room, Ma suddenly entered and said, "Khukuni, I have a *kheyal* to eat in a leaf-plate. Bring little of everything in a plate, I will have meals with them outside in the courtyard. Come fast." Ma was requesting me to hurry in such a childish manner that I did not have the time to even argue with Her. I too understood that it is futile to argue at the moment. However I took everything as Ma mentioned in a plate and came outside with Ma. Ma sat down at one corner of the courtyard. Observing this few of the devotees tried to clean the place around Ma, but Ma objected to it. Ma said, "All are having food sitting in the sand, I too will do the same, all are having food in a leaf-plate, I too will have it in a leaf-plate, remove all the bowls and tumblers." So I did just that.

While Ma was having food, Shcfali's mother while serving water, took the water pot in his hip and said in a tired voice, 'Ma, see how I have held this in the hip, just cannot hold anymore'. Ma immediately said compassionately, "You cannot? Put it in my lap", so saying Ma spread Her lap and begged, "Give, give." Shcfali's mother did just that. Putting the pot

on Ma's lap, she sat down beside Ma. Ma gently patted her body and said, "For the last two days you have cooked the *bhog*, you must be truly tired." Hearing these loving words she was totally relaxed.

On the other hand, after Ma finished Her meals, Ma said to me, "Put all the rice, dal, curry, etc., remaining in the plate into this pot." I did that. Ma again said, "Bring a spoon." That too was brought. Ma started mixing all the food items in the pot with the spoon. Then Ma said, "Put a bit of this mixture into My mouth, let's see how it tastes." So I put a bit of it into Ma's mouth. Ma said, "Paramanand, see how it tastes." Paramanandji (Swamiji) extended his hand towards Ma and Ma gave him two spoonfuls. He gulped it and exclaimed, 'Splendid'. After that Ma gave some to me and to Abhay. And then immediately a crowd gathered around Ma, and Ma started distributing it to everyone. One and all irrespective of caste and creed came near Ma and partook of some *prasād*. Now all those intellectuals who have not seen Ma in this *kheyāl*, who have only heard the strict rules of worship and other instructions on purity, were amazed to see this weird *leela* of Ma. I explained to them that with Ma there is nothing like 'this has to be done and this not'. Ma is totally free from all bondage. Whatever Ma advises, about following certain rules and regulations, is only for educating the masses. Ma Herself has no need of any of these. I narrated to them few other such incidents enacted by Ma. Over here Ma's distribution of *prasād* was going on. While distributing, Ma occasionally dropped a few on Her head, as if overwhelmed with childish joy. And was occasionally commenting, "*Ann Brahma, Ann Brahma*." After sometime Ma went inside to have a bath. Today is *Vijaya-Dashami*. I have seen earlier too that due to some reason or the other, Ma always took a bath on the day of *Vijaya-Dashami*.

Shree Shree Ma had once informed Gurupriya Didi and Swamiji, "If a *Ashta-dhatu* (mixture of eight metals) *Durga* Idol is installed in the Almora Ashram, then *Durga Puja* can be held every year on that Idol."

The Ashram campus was constructed during the 1943 *Durga Puja* period. Ma stayed in a small room built earlier. After this function, within a few months, with the combined efforts of Swamiji and Shri Hariram'ji and the donation received from Pundit Parshuram'ji, an old devotee of Ma staying in Dehradun, rooms for Vidyapeeth, Ashram Hall, a three storeyed building for Ma, etc., were constructed in a beautiful manner. In 1944, the

new Ashram was inaugurated for the upcoming *Matri Jannotsav*, which was held here in a big way.

Kanyapeeth and Vidyapeeth in Almora Ashram

After the function in and around 1944-45, 'Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth' was shifted to this Ashram and it remained here for almost one and half years. It was here in Almora Ashram that the Kanyapeeth girls for the first time received *diksha* from Didima. It was in this very Ashram that Shri Muktibaba, an old *sannyasi* of the Ramkrishna Mission, took shelter under Ma's holy feet.

In 1945, after Kanyapeeth was shifted over to the Varanasi Ashram, 'Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth' settled here for over twenty-five years.

Arrival of prominent personality in Almora Ashram

After Ma's arrival in Pataldevi, the famous dancer Shri Uday Shankar arrived to have Ma's *darshan*. Shri Uday Shankar and Shri Ravi Shankar's families too had Ma's *darshan*. The famous 'Nritya Kala Kendra' of Shri Uday Shankar is situated quite near the Ashram. On his request Ma and a few ashramites visited his Kendra.

Almost all the prominent people in and around Almora kept visiting Ma, whenever Ma was here in Almora. Among them were Shri Govind Vallabh Pant, Shri Krishna Prem, Shri Anirbaan, Shri Sorenson (Danish), Shri Shoban Singhji Jeena, Shri Bipin Chandra Joshi, and few others too. Eight ladies of prominent families of the city gained Ma's proximity as the 'eight *sakhis* of Ma'.

In this context a disciple of Shree Sarada Ma, Smt Ruma Devi's name was especially notable. This old *sannyasini*'s spirit of serving others is incomparable. She had her first *darshan* of Ma, while Ma was on the way to Kailash and later she breathed her last in Shree Shree Ma's Dehradun Ashram.

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(to be continued)

It is He, verily, who manifests Himself in all temperaments and forms; whomsoever you may hate, you hate but your own Ishta (Lord). Anger, greed and the like must be altogether abandoned, Nor should you be swayed by praise and prestige.

- Ma Anandamayee.

Shree Shree Ma's Vindhyachal Ashram Commencement of the *Shuddhāchāri* system

Brahmacharini Bishuddha

During the thirties decade, Ma used to regularly visit Vindhyachal, stay somewhere near the Vindhyavasini Temple and then moved elsewhere. Dadabhai (GurupriyaDi) thought that this place must be favorable to Ma and hence there should be a place for Ma to stay.

When Dadabhai started staying with Ma permanently, her father (retired civil surgeon Dr. Shashank Mohan Mukhopadhyay) kept some funds for her in the Post Office or in a Bank. With that fund, Dadabhai purchased a piece of land in Shashti-tala in Vindhyachal. This incident Ma Herself had narrated to me in some context. This place is on the top of the Ashtabhuja hill. Now someone had to stay there during the construction of the Ashram. I had heard from Bishu'da, a *Naishtik brahmachari* in Raipur Ashram - that during that period the jungles of Vindhyachal hill range comprised of quite a lot of wild animals, tigers, bears, snakes, scorpions, reptiles, etc. Besides it was also a favorite hideout for the bandits of Chambal. Also there wasn't any arrangement for water anywhere nearby. There was a narrow stream of water in Kalikho, quite a distance from this site. So no one was ready to stay there for the construction. Finally this huge responsibility was handed over to Virajmohini Devi (my maternal grandmother). The major portion of the Vindhyachal Ashram was constructed during her stay there. I had heard from grandmother that she stayed in the underground room while the upper floors were being constructed. Daily she used to walk from there to Mirzapur city, to either the post office or the bank and withdraw the required fund for that day and paid the same to the labourers. After that only, at the day's end, she used to partake the only meal of that day. Throughout the day she continued her *japa* and meditation. There were regular visits by wild animals and bandits. She was incredibly courageous and truly Shree Shree Ma's special *kheyāl* was always on her.

The Ashram was finally constructed and Ma again went there. Shri Nepal Chakravarti (later known as respected Narayan Swamiji) went there for Ma's *darshan*. Ma informed him, "Invite the brahmin pundits and

sadhus from Kashi. Nepal'da went to Kashi and contacted the sadhus and pundits there. In general, the Bengalis are non-vegetarians and hence these pundits of Uttaranchal objected to having meals in the Ashram. However, Virajmohini Devi was a child widow and a strict follower of purity. Ma told Nepal'da to inform the Uttaranchal pundits and sadhus about Virajmohini Devi. Only then they accepted the invitation and said, "Mataji also should not enter that kitchen."

For the first time in this manner, sadhus and pundits were offered meals or given *bhandara* in Shree Shree Ma's Ashram. From then onwards with Shree Shree Ma's *kheyāl*, the rules for *shuddhāchāri* (living with purity) was introduced in the Ashrams. Respected Narayan Swamiji himself had informed me of this incident. Several even mention that Narayan Swamiji is the one who is at the core of implementing the strict rules of the Ashrams. But after hearing all these incidents from him I think that this blame is not proper.

According to Bengali tradition, Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraj used to eat food cooked by his wife only. Shree Shree Ma in order to offer meals to Gopinathji had invited his wife twice in the Kashi Ashram and had made her cook food for him. Ma had asked me to help his wife with the initial arrangements of the cooking. Food was cooked on a coal *chullah* in the small room adjacent to Ma's first floor room in the Kashi Ashram. The surprising fact was that Gopinathji's wife was blind (most probably due to a disease called as beri-beri). Before the cooking started, I made all the arrangements as Ma instructed, from Her adjacent room. Ma's menu was quite varied and even though being blind how Gopinathji's wife managed to cook so many dishes so perfectly was beyond imagination.

Another person who ate food cooked by himself only was respected Gourinath Shastri. Later on being informed of our *shuddhāchāri* system both Gopinathji and Gourinathji had accepted food cooked by us.

Ma had told us, "You are *kumaris*, living like a *brahmacharini* in the Ashram on the bank of the river Ganga from a very young age. Since you are living with such purity, so many mahatmas, pundits, etc., - who knows in which form He arrives - have accepted food from your hands - All this is the pious results of your past several births."

When Virajmohini Devi was staying in Vindhyachal, my mother took us there. I was then only five months old. My mother used to massage oil

on my body and used to lay me down in the sun outside. My elder brother and sister were supposed to keep a watch on me while playing here and there. Suddenly one fine day seeing me missing from my daily spot, they started screaming for my mother and grandmother. When they arrived they found me in the arms of a langur monkey perched high on the branch of a tree. Immediately my grandmother rushing inside, came out carrying bananas and other fruits and placed them below that tree. Seeing that the langur was not taking any action, grandmother went inside and started praying to Ma fervently. After sometime the langur came down with me and placing me on the ground went away with some bananas.

In connection with this incident, I remember, once during Jhulan Purnima, Ma enacted a drama with all the Kanyapeeth girls. Among the elder participants were Dadabhai (GurupriyaDi), Kshamadi, Gangadi, Mounima (senior), Billoji, Pushpadi, Satidi, Bithudi, Bubadi, Taradi, etc. And among the young girls were Gangadi (junior), Chandandi, Jyotidi, Tara, Sorva, Basanti, Tulsi, myself and few others. In this play Ma gave me the role of Shree Hanuman and enacted and taught me how to become fully absorbed in the name of Ram. Ma Herself sat down with knees bent and told me to do the same. Then Ma became still with folded hands, half-closed eyes, mild trembling of the lips, and the 'Name' of Rama continuing within and no voice being heard outside. Ma's continence was amazing with an unimaginable feeling! What to learn when I was just staring dumbfounded at Ma's divine *leela*.

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(to be continued)

List of Festivals

Shree Shree Ma Anandanayee Janmotsav	May 3 – 19, 2022.
Baba Bholanath Nirvaan Tithi	May 9, 2022
Ganga Dusshera	June 9, 2022.
Guru Purnima Mahotsav	July 13, 2022.
Shree 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji Nirvaan Tithi	August 4, 2022
Jhulan Mahotsav begins	August 8, 2022.
Bhaiji Nirvaan Tithi	August 9, 2022.
Jhulan Purnima, Raksha Bandhan	August 11, 2022

Svakriya Svarasāmr̥it – Vol-VI
Param Mahabhāgwat

Brahmacharini Km. Chandan Puranacharya

Chapter-1: The only fundamental principle –

The principle of Oneness in the infinite absolute Entity

This sixth volume commences in continuation with the principle explained at the end of Chapter eight of the fifth volume of this series of books.

A sense of the Oneness of the Entity

Q: In various ways, in emotions and forms, in rejection and acceptance, in natural discrimination, in myself and yourself, in yes or no –
Fundamental Principle – how to attain It?

Ma: Of this gross world, a pilgrim of this living world, while continuing the journey, there is a beautiful manifestation of this Oneness, the Oneness of the Entity. The form of the injury was also revealed. The other day you had heard that, if someone special injures you, and if there is a saint on whom you have faith, the result of that injury manifests on the body of that saint. The oneness of the soul is also this Oneness. In whatever way and language you mention – you, him, I; you are actually your own creation, your own manifestation. All around, you only are with yourself, manifesting in various forms and formless. The body is meant for experiencing the fruits of the past *karma*. Hence the *karma* of the living being is in the form of a body. Your body is based on the way you will experience the fruits of the *karma* – hence it is your own creation. And the 'I' or ego of this body is your gross form. The experiences or sufferings are the form of this *karma* only.

In reality the One Soul exists in everyone. With this single entity the living world is the retreat of the infinite emotions, forms and formless. In reality, this one eternity, which is your nature, the soulless body and occupational identity is also you, again in those those forms, that is, within the immutable, the infinite variations of forms, in all these forms it is you only. It is you only, your own creation and your own gross form. Where there is no question of the living world, the eternal form is self realized, is

also you only. So just as it is you in creation, again in the absence of creation, it is you only.

Hence everywhere it you only with yourself as and when whichever form or formless is manifested. Within the Self-entity, this is the only fundamental principle.

To receive or reject – is predominantly relative

Receive Him – without Whom there is no Aim – ‘That-is’.

You and Him – I am not present, me and you – He not present, He and I – you not present – where-ever whatever you say, you say one of these with dominance. Again when you say ‘I-I’, if ‘I’ is present, then ‘you’ is not present; if ‘you’ is present then ‘I’ is not. Here too you conduct all the gross actions with dominance. But to reject or to receive is relative; reject or receive.

Again in whichever practices and methods Who-so-ever has been rejected by saying “*neti-neti*” (Not That, Not That), again He-Himself has to be accepted again by saying “*iti-iti*” (That-is, That-is). Remember ‘That-is’ has to be attained. Internally and externally ‘That-is’ has to be understood and assimilated.



(to be continued)

Do you think that, if you have affection for This Body then you will fall into a worldly trap? Worldly children meet their worldly parents with worldly thoughts and their parents too love them in a worldly manner. Whatever relation develops between them is all purely materialistic (*vishay*). Their love or affection creates a passion (*Moh*) between themselves. But This Girl of yours, does not demand anything materialistic. What is *vishay* (materialistic)? That which is *vish* (poison). Hence if you love This Girl a little bit where is the question of passion? But that which had been said yesterday, that ‘ask your mind the easy path to self-realization’, that is true in this sense that, *mon* (mind) itself means *mene newa* (to accept). If by this *mon* (mentality) you accept God, then He Himself will show the easiest path to attain Him.

– Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee.

The Glory and Grace of Shree Shree Ma

Sw. Narayananand Tirth

(continued from before)

In 1957 after the *Guru Purnima* Shree Shree Ma arrived from Dchradun to the Varanasi Ashram. One afternoon a foreign couple came to have Ma's *darshan*. After Her *bhog*, Ma was resting in Her second floor room. During that period the *darshan* time was fixed at 5pm. The foreigners were informed about this schedule. They said that they would wait till 5pm or more, but would not leave without having Ma's *darshan*. They were supposed to leave the city after Ma's *darshan*. They also mentioned that they have arrived in Kashi only to have Ma's *darshan*. They do not have any other objective in the town.

An Ashramite lady took this message to Ma. Hearing this, Ma sits up on Her bed and instructs her to escort the couple immediately to Her room. Hearing this unexpectedly reply from Ma, the couple excitedly rushed to Ma's room and found Ma sitting on Her bed waiting for them. Through an interpreter their words were informed to Ma. During the conversation Ma suddenly pointing at Herself said, 'Your baby' (in English). Ma has often spoken such two-three words in English. Hearing these two English words from Ma the couple were extremely pleased and the lady moved towards Ma and cuddled Ma as if She was her own child. Receiving Ma's affection the lady completely at loss becomes drowned in joy, just as a mother becomes drowned in affection and joy after receiving her own child after a long long time. She was just not able to understand how to express her jubilation. The husband remained calm and steadily gazed at her wife's joyful behaviour. He too was just not able to control himself any further and he too got up and putting Ma's head on his shoulder hugged Ma as if he too had received back his lost child after so many years. There was not even a bit of a feeling of artificialness or over-acting. They then sat down and silently gazed at Ma 'their baby' for a long long time. They just were not able to remove their eyes from Ma. While gazing so intensely they had become lost in their own worlds. After quite sometime they returned back

to our world and there was a heavenly countenance on them. While they were departing the tears of parting from their child was clearly observed in their eyes. From their action it seemed as if they were departing forever to some unknown land from some everlasting relation never ever to meet again. After they had left Ma had said, "The manner in which this gentleman has hugged, the father of This Body had never ever hugged This Body in that manner."

It was not that only humans with gross bodies attracted to Shree Shree Ma arrived in flocks to have Her *darshan*. Several subtle bodies also arrived frequently near Ma. In the summer of 1957, Ma while staying in the Kishenpur Ashram in Dehradun became seriously ill. Hearing this news several adherent devotees worried and restless with Ma's condition, arrived to see Ma. Among them were Maha-Mahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraj from Kashi, Shri Durga Singhji (Yogibhai) from Solan, Vaishnav saint Shri HariBabaji from Vrindaban, and ShriKrishnanand Avdyutji. After understanding and diagnosing Ma's health all of us were frightened and anxious. There was nothing we could do as Ma did not accept any medicines. The only option left was to pray at Ma's lotus feet for the subtle form of the disease to leave Ma. Fearing a serious peril at hand, Shri Avdyutji advised that on that night there should be continuous and non-stop *japa* in Ma's room. On that very night the famous saint of Kashi, Shree Trailanga Swami and few other higher souls arrived near Ma in their subtle forms. Shri Trailanga Swami sat down on the floor in front of Ma and the other Mahatmas started circling around Ma murmuring something that Ma only knew. We observed that, just after that incident, Ma's health gradually started improving for the better. We assumed that due to the blessings of these saints and because of their fervent prayers to Ma, that this time we have received back our compassionate Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma.

Several days after this incident we heard all these from Ma Herself, otherwise how could we know about it? Occasionally such remarks emanates from Ma's lips and only then we come to know of all such incidents. Usually Ma keeps these incidents in secret.

Few years earlier when Ma was residing in Her Vrindaban Ashram, one day Ma was wandering hither and thither in the open field. Walking aimlessly Ma reached the southern side of the Ashram near the buildings Harikunj, Ramkunj and Krishnakunj. Finding Ma alone, suddenly a saint

in human form emerged from a huge boulder and prostrating on the ground paid obeisance to Ma. However this was observed from afar by one of Ma's old devotee Shri Deenbandhu Parikh. Later he questioned Ma about this incident, "Ma, on that day who emerged from the boulder." Instead of replying, Ma just asked him, "So you saw him?" He had then replied, "I had seen a human form emerging from the huge boulder and prostrating in front of you. He had asked You something too. After that he again disappeared." This devotee had later encircled that huge boulder with white marble and then constructing an eight sided room over it, performed *sādhana* and meditation in that room. Shri Deenbandhu was highly educated and the only son of a rich father. From a very young age he had renounced family life and was residing permanently in Ma's Ashram.

Once during *Guru-Purnima* several of us were with Ma in Solan. One day during a conversation Ma said, "One day Bholanath's elder brother came and stood at the very place from where This Body was supposed to pass. The moment This Body reached near him, *mahamantra* started emanating from This Body's lips. 'Hare Ram, Hare Ram, Ram Ram Hare Hare; Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare.' Hearing this *mahamantra* he said, 'I was waiting here just to hear this *mahamantra* from You.' So saying he immediately disappeared."

The recitation of the *mahamantra* occurs in two forms. One is the famous Kali-Santaran Upanishad's *mahamantra*: *Hare Ram, Hare Ram, Ram Ram Hare Hare; Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare*. Everyone does not have the authority to repeat this *mantra*. And this very *mantra* had emanated from Ma's lips.

The other one is the famous Gaudiya Vaishnava traditional *mahamantra*: *Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare; Hare Ram, Hare Ram, Ram Ram Hare Hare*. Everyone can repeat this *mantra* in the form of *japa* or *kirtan*. This *mahamantra* was given and spread by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for the upliftment of the masses of this *Kaliyuga*.

Late Rebati Mohan Chakravorty, the elder brother of Bholanath, had deceased almost fifty years ago. He was awaiting all these years just to hear this *mahamantra* from Ma's lips. Shree Shree Ma only knows how, when and to whom She will bestow Her Grace.



(to be continued)

Chhanda Mātā Gāyatri Rhythms of the Celestial Realm

Joy Mukherjee

(continued from before)

The Mantra

(One may look at it as follows in this example: there are so many forms and varieties of colours... trees with brown barks, green leaves, flowers and fruits of different colours, the colours in our daily lives... on the walls, on your clothes, they are all colours. So what is the summation of all colours? It is white. And yet, white does not reflect any colour itself. This is somewhat like the Unmanifest. As if there is nothing, though it is all there.

(Aumkaara is called Naada Bramha, where the term Naad means sound. But the vibration of this sound is so fine, so subtle that you cannot catch it with any instrument, let alone the human ear. NASA at one time had declared that it has caught a sound that is like Aumkaara. But that is not the true Aumkaara. The Aumkaara is much, much more subtle. For one can hear the Aumkaara only when one has transcended all the extraneous attractions of all other sound waves.

(When one pronounces AUM, that is not the true Aumkaara, but only an external, physical expression of the Aumkaara. Aumkaara is anaahata shabda, the unstruck sound, the sound of the celestial realm, the sound of That One's Desire. Nothing has been struck to create that sound; it is the sound created by the kheyāl – a term frequently expressed by Maa Aanandamayee - of Eeshwara (or God). It is the sound that is the repository of all sounds, just like white is the repository of all colours.)

Gaayatri Maataa in Her Heart holds the Original Sound, Aumkaara, the Word of Bramha. From that sound originated the universe. At that point of Creation, before which there was nothing, the Immutable expressed its own self as two principles: one which is predominantly Chit, or Consciousness; the other which is Shakti, or predominantly Energy, or Force. We say *predominantly* Consciousness and *predominantly* Force, because there is no Consciousness without Force and no Force without Consciousness.

The predominantly Force principle is manifest as the sensations: *roop* (form), *rasa* (taste), *gandha* (aroma) *sparsha* (touch) and *shabda* (sound), essence of Tanmaatras.

(Tanmaatras: This is a crucial concept to grasp Vedic science. It is a conjugated term broken into Tat and Maatra. Like aroma is the Tanmaatras of the soil, as soil carries the principle of all aromas and flavours. A clearer understanding is that the fruit has an aroma. But the soil itself, inert though it seems, is the reservoir of all aromas. If you put a mango seed in the soil, that grows to produce mangoes, which has a distinct aroma, derived from the soil. But if you put the seed of a jackfruit in that SAME SOIL, it produces jackfruits, whose aroma is very different from that of mangoes. Similarly, both mango and jackfruit have completely different tastes. And all tastes are the Tanmaatras of water (rasas). Hence, mangoes, jackfruits, litchis, etc., are varied fruits with differing tastes, derived from the same water. Again, the visible form – the colour of the same fruit – is the Tanmaatras of agni, or fire, that is, light.)

All the five Tanmaatras take the gross forms of *Byom*(sky), *Marut* (air), *Tej* (energy), *Apa*(water) and *Kshiti* (Earth). These are the elements of the physical world. And the predominantly Consciousness principle becomes the carriage of the physical expression of the subtle, in terms of forms and names of objects, through words uttered from the mouth, and can be physically heard, or what is termed as *Baikhari*, passing through the phases of *Paraa*, *Pashyanti* and *Madhyamaa*.

From *Aumkaara*, in its diverse sound waves, emerge various forms and attributes. “Aung” is the Original, First sound wave, and becomes the foundation of all other sound waves. When “Khong” surfaces in the heart of that, there emerges the spatial sky. When “Rong” emerges, we find the spatial fire element. When “Baung” emerges, we find the water principle. And it is the admixture of all such elements that goes into the making of the created universe.

(Baikhari: In our limitation, we are accustomed to and take it to be real ‘sound’ that our ears can perceive, hear. But the sages explain that that sound too emerges gradually, in four phases, though we are quite oblivious to those phases. These are Paraa, Pashyanti, Madhyamaa and Baikhari.

(PARAA: It is just an awareness of a felt need. Say, when you are thirsty, you first have a sensation. It is merely an unexpressed sensation in which words like thirst or water, are not yet present.

(PASHYANTI is the VISION of the need for a specific thing. The mind “reads” or visualises that unexpressed, soundless sensation: the thirst and the need for water to quench it.

(MADHYAMAA: At this stage – having ‘visualised’ that soundless need the mind forms within itself the alphabets, the syllables to express that sensation of thirst and water as the solution to that need. This is the Madhyamaa state of things.

(BAIKHARI: Thereafter, one has to use one’s organs of speech to create the physical word ‘water’ that has been formed as a combination of vowels and consonants and transmit this to him or her. This is Baikhari, the uttered sound that can actually be heard.

(So first there is Consciousness, then awareness and thought, then we visualise that thought, later codify this thought in our mind as sounds, and finally use the physical organs of the voice to transmit that idea (of the thirst and need for water, for example). And even as we speak, this entire sequence of Paraa, Pashyanti, Madhyamaa and Baikhari is incessantly taking place within us. But one never realises this process in its entirety. One just understands as sound, or words, just that end part of it, the Baikhari, which comes out in a physical form. This is the essence of Gaayatri Chhanda.)

Now let us proceed to the other metres.

Vrihati Chhanda: VrihatiChhanda, or expansiveness, helps blossom the Will of That One into various forms just as the seed growing from *anoraniyaanto mahatomahiyaan: (anoraniyaanmeans the minutest form, more subtle than even the smallest sub-atomic entity to become mahatomahiyaan, which means to become greater than the greatest, which, finally in human consciousness, is our Universe. In Sanskrit, the expression of the Universe is Viraat.*

Ushnik Chhanda: The term derives from ‘ushna’, or heat that emerges as the collision of two opposing forces. During the process of *Pralay* or dissolution as Bramhamayee’s *kheyaal* allows prominence to the *tamah* nature to overwhelm the *Sattwah* and *Rajah* attributes and usurps Creation into Herself. Again, in the same cycle, later, as per Her *kheyaal*, She harnesses the *Rajah* that allies with *Sattwah* to again overwhelm *Tamah* for another cycle of Creation. This is Ushnik, the Chhanda (metre) that reflects *tapasyaa* or the heat generated in the process of one entity overcoming the other.

Maa Aanandamayee used to say that this process of one attribute overcoming the other, the journey from darkness to light is *tapasyaa* (*Taap* means transformational heat) and the Ushnik metre carries within itself that sense of *tapasyaa* (penance). During *tapasyaa*, there takes place a churning. Before Creation, all attributes were in equilibrium. For the purpose of Creation, this equilibrium was broken and opposite aspects emerged: the crest and the trough of waves; light and darkness; good and evil; the Divine and Demonic aspect; poison and nectar. The quest of the true seeker is the positive energy, that is, the nectar. In the course of our lives we are granted many things, positive and negative, and which of these we shall imbibe and become is determined by the levels of our consciousness.

Those who constantly take shelter in Gaayatri Maataa and immerse their Dhcc, “conjugation of Consciousness and Energy”, come to be blessed with nectar; and those who embroil themselves in the opposite praxis are awarded repeated births mired in ignorance and sufferings. This process of purifying oneself by journeying through this transformational heat is writ in Ushnik Chhanda.

Pangti Chhanda: The progression of Creation inherent in the seed of the Divine Will follows a sequence. From Prakriti (Shakti, or Force, as we have discussed earlier), emerges the Mahatattwa; then Ahankar Tattwa, which comprises Sattwik Ahankar, Rajash Ahankar and Taamas Ahankar. From Sattwik Ahankar emerges the Devata Tattwa. From Rajash Ahankar emerges the principles of our senses. From Taamas Ahankar emerges the Tanmaatra, and thereafter, the *Panchabhoot*, the five elements of sky, air, energy, water and earth – discussed above. From these basic ingredients emerges the Universe. Pangti is the utterly scientific system of ‘emerging of all layers of Creation, step-by-step’.

Trishtup Chhanda: It is the metre in which is played all mobility, all interaction between the consumer, consumable and the process of consuming; the sight, perceiver and the act of perceiving; the donor, the donation and the receptor; the guru, pupil and the process of enlightenment; God, the devotee and the act of devotion, or submission. *Tri* means three, and Trishtup signifies the three-fold nature of all matter and all processes. Trishtup Chhanda is the foundation on which stands all interactions within Creation, as given in the examples above.

Anushtup Chhanda: This metre is unique, in that it combines two opposites: attraction-repulsion; light-darkness; mobile-static; yes-no; sleep-awake; work-rest. To give an example, one of the sun's powers is spreading radiation, light and heat, without which no life is possible. At the same time, there is also the other power of the Sun, its own massive gravitational force which helps it retain its own form, its shape and size, and holds limits its dissipative force and therefore, its tendency to scatter away to smithereens. Alongside, it also keeps the planets of the Solar System moving within their own orbits. Our entire existence would have been impossible without the mutual give and take of these opposite powers of radiation (external expression) and gravitation (internalizing capability). A close (but not absolute) simile would be that of a car that has an accelerator, which is meant to drive forward, and at the same time the car has an inbuilt system of braking. Both the systems of acceleration and braking are a must for a car to function. Anushtup metre combines these opposites.

And finally, **Jagati** is the Chhanda that combines the interaction of all the metres. It is based on the summation-of all rhythms playing out in this universe (*Jagata*) This works through all its endless forms, names, forces and attributes in relative time and space. From sunrise to sunset; the blowing of the winds; the smile on the face of a child; the celebration of life and so on.

Now let us see how these seven rhythms are incessantly at work synchronously and is seen by us as this physical universe. **Gaayatri Maataa** is all-blessing, the Shabda Bramha, or Mother of all rhythms. **Vrihati**, the inherent tendency of everything to expand to its fullest potential. **Ushnik** is the heat that emerges from all opposites trying to overcome the others, or what is termed as *tapasyaa*. **Pangti**, the step-by-step progression of Creation inherent in the Divine Will. **Trishtup** signifies the three-fold nature of all interactions – you, me and our exchanges. **Anushtup**, the unique metre combines two opposites: attraction-repulsion; yes-no etc., and all these combine as **Jagati**.

We all have come from there, playing our games on That Lap and at the end of it all, shall return to That One. This is the basic molde shaping the Creation Leela of Poorna Bramha through Gaayatri Maataa.

* * * *

(To be continued)

Mahāshunya (Absolute Void) Repository Of Creation, Sustenance And Resolution

Dr Shashanka Kumar Haldar

Sacchidananda Bramha (Eternal Joy of Consciousness) had dawned in the souls and intellects of the seers in the form of deep realisations, and later these realisations formed themselves into words and their utterances, as in the various mantras. That is how they had come to realise that both these are one and the same. One outside, and the other inside. The core point in this philosophy is that Param Bramha has created a massive outer world, and at the same time, he remains within us as that Consciousness which alone allows us to really indulge in appreciating that unending bliss.

Now the question arose in my mind: what do western physicists make of this Void and the universe? We dwell on this earth, a planet which is incessantly orbiting the Sun, which is a star. But then again, there are crores of such stars in our own Milky way galaxy itself. And there are billions of such galaxies. From this standpoint, even if it is remotely possible to vaguely visualise the vastness of the universe, the question but arises: who is the creator of such a vast existence? When was it created? What force keeps such trillions of stars, planets, satellites afloat in this space at the same distance and within the same trajectory and orbit all the time?

Scientists have been for the past few centuries endeavouring to find such answers. At this time, I chanced upon a very inspiring book which seamlessly merges, intriguingly, pure physics with undiluted metaphysics, by the world renowned Bengali scientist Mani Bhowmik, "Code Name God: The Spiritual Odyssey of a Man of Science". Dr Bhowmik has scripted the remarkable statement: "It is rank unscientific to be an atheist in this age of science." This is a momentous thing to say!

There is a primary, physical form of the world around us: the one we can see, feel, smell, touch and taste. But we simply fail to grasp the almost mysterious, subtle games that nature is constantly playing inside each such physical entity.

Scientists have found that there are minute particles: atoms, which have protons, neutrons, electrons, quarks, etc., animated by a force unbeknown to us. It took enormous efforts for the scientists to arrive at such knowledge about the fundamental particles and fundamental force at work, to arrive at such evidence, and so – when they discovered the structure of an atom, they felt, ‘well, we are nearly there’.

And yet, the more they proceeded, the more they found infinitely subtler and even subtler forms. Stumbling upon the fact that energy is transposable as matter ($E=mc^2$), Albert Einstein was overwhelmed. It is sometimes said that matter is condensed energy.

At a point in time, in trying to explore the mystery of creation, scientists arrived at the concept of an indefinable field. They named it Quantum Fields. They are now saying that these fields are omnipresent across our known universe. This appeared to them as the ultimate inner essence of creation. Of late, they have found indications of the Quantum Fields in all corners of what exists. But it did not stop at that, it went even subtler, as we shall presently see.

Some scientists have already asserted their opinion that, That One, from which the entire existence emerges, is nothing but an extra-real omnipresent consciousness. However, they have not found any scientific corroboration of this ‘consciousness’.

If one goes into the history of modern science, it will be noticed that most of the landmark discoveries started from the 16th and 17th centuries. But the worrying fact is that as and when we enter deeper into the history of science, we find that though the endeavours of most scientists have been to discover the fundamental building blocks of the universe and the fundamental energy that controls the existence and movements of these building blocks, at the same time, the scientists started discovering more and more subtle forms, such as atoms, neutrons, electrons, protons, etc., but there started a race as to claim who discovered these first.

Commerce in the form of Patenting became the name of the game, and science was trafficked away from the original quest for knowledge to a marketable commodity. The business class realised the commercial benefits of such discoveries in human lives and started tying up commercially with scientists. Nikola Tesla is perhaps one of the most telling of such kind of rampant commercial conspiracy.

The greed for dominating over others led to the misuse of the tremendous forces hidden within nature, to the detriment of humanity itself.

There was nothing wrong with the discoveries by the scientists, but the interplay of the three attributes, of Satwa, Rajah and Tamah¹², meant the loss of vision of utilizing these discoveries for the betterment of humanity; rather, these discoveries became instruments in the hands of a handful of people to monopolize wealth and power for themselves.

This band of a handful of wealthy worthies then started bending the laws of science, and even manipulating scientists to prove that the 'right' was actually 'wrong' and vice-versa. We started moving down the wrong track to the loss of our health and peace of mind. A claustrophobic grip of the Rajah-Tamah combine¹³ has been choking us, leaving its impact on our food and medicines as well. The falsity-based marketing of bio-genetic crops, and the recent avaricious race for profiteering out of the global human crisis of the vaccines related to Covid-19 are the most despicable examples.

The domination of the attribute named Rajah in a few (manifest as power, anger, avarice, possessiveness), has meant that a majority of the people are not finding adequate food or shelter. At the same time, there is piling up in country after country, weaponry of mass destruction that can demolish the earth several times over.

Why is it that despite being supremely intelligent, we humans are not finding ways out of this increasing despondency? That reminded me of one message from Lord Krishna in Shree Geeta: our greatest internal enemies are desire and anger, born out of Rajah. But then, I realised at

12. Satwah, Rajah, Tamah: These are three attributes of prakriti (nature). The Satwa attribute helps illumine Truth, see things in their true essence. Rajah attribute does not allow us to see things in their true light by distracting the observer. Rajah is also associated with mental conditions such as vanity, pride and power-lust, which are distractions that distort truth. And Tamah attribute veils the truth by ignorance. It is marked by lack of any initiative to know or work, laziness, somnolence. These attributes exist in humans as well as other animals. However, in nature these are not purely distinct attributes, but in each being they exist as mix and match of each other. But humans are the only beings who can decipher their own inner attributes and decide to transcend an existing state – such as Rajah or Tamah – and the highest attribute, Satwa.

13. The sentence relating to the domination of the Rajah-Tamah combine is the state that pervades human nature and tendencies, leading to all sorts of crisis and trauma faced by both humans themselves, and all forms of life, and even nature.

once that this is Kaliyug¹⁴, when the three pillars of righteous living¹⁵ – *daya, tapasyā and shuddhi* – have been vastly eroded. And we are surviving merely because a handful of Satwik people are still battling to uphold the lone fourth pillar of true Dharmā – *Satya*.

We had begun this journey with the basic issue of scientists looking for the fundamentals of this universe. At first they found atom, then the electron, proton and neutron within the atom, and felt that ‘well, we have found it all’.

Based on how many electrons, protons and neutrons are there in each atom, scientist Dmitri Mendeleev designed the Periodic Table. This by itself was considered a huge achievement in Western science. And yet, the question remained: where did these electrons, neutrons and protons come from? Are these composed of even subtler forms of energy? This quest led to further narrowing down, and then scientists discovered Quarks, much subtler than electrons, protons, etc.

(A quark is a type of elementary sub-atomic particle and a fundamental constituent of matter. Quarks combine to form composite particles called hadrons, the most stable of which are protons and neutrons, the components of atomic nuclei.)

Subsequently, three even subtler forms were discovered within quarks, and scientists termed them – for want of any better word – Red, Blue and Green, though there is no way one can ‘see’ these colours in there, since these are so infinitesimally subtle.

Then two even subtler components were again found within Quarks, and scientists named them Up and Down. It is through the interaction between such forms of subtle matter that some become electrons, some

14. In Sanatan Dharmā, (see Note 12) the cycle of time moves through four epochs, termed Yug. These are Satya Yug, Treta Yug, Dwapar Yug and Kali Yug, and when Kali Yug is terminated, we start back from the next cycle of Satya-Treta Dwapar and Kali. While in Satya Yug, people were righteous, compassionate and lacked evil thoughts such as jealousy and anger, Kali is just the opposite, during which Yug, humanity is marked by mostly Rajah and Tamah attributes. Kali Yug is the epoch of darkness, ignorance, strife, hatred, hypocrisy, and other such negativities.

15. According to ancient India scriptures, Dharma has four pillars, termed *Chatushpada* in Sanskrit. These are *satya, daya, tapasyā and shuddhi* (purity), roughly translatable as truth, compassion, strict self-control, devotion to prayers, and purity. What author means here is that the last three have been nearly lost and only some remnants of the first, *satya* is still being practiced by a small number of people in the world, which is reflected in some positivities even in this Dark Epoch, or Kali Yug.

protons and some neutrons. But no one till now knows what force is at play in this game.

It is impossible to even imagine the minuteness of these subtle forms. Quarks got to form electron, proton and neutron, which together form atom. Then again, the electrons are moving at a fearful speed within the atom. So obviously, this movement is possible only because there is sufficient space within an atom to allow this. And how big is an atom? Say, I mark a tiny dot. Within that tiniest of dots, there is enough space for a million (10 lakh) atoms to exist. I suppose that gives a basic idea of the subtleness of things.

It will be of use here, if we seek clarity on another front. Many people have in many different ways tried to find out similarities and differences between science and philosophy. However, Truth cannot be two different things at the same time. But since the pathways of science and philosophy are different, that is why, so long as we are on the way, these seem different.

More interestingly, often the wayfarers of either path use the same words in their own different ways to uphold their own *cause celebre*, creating confusion in the mind of the common man.

Scientists have very often used the terms "Space" and "Deep Space", etc. But these words have a different connotation for practitioners of the Indian philosophical systems.

For them, there is a Void within the limits of the Created Universe. And yet, that is not the complete Void, for it is, as said earlier, teeming with subtle matter and waves of thoughts, radio waves, alpha-, beta, gamma rays, electromagnetic waves, airwaves of different bandwidths through which mobile phones and satellite televisions operate, etc.

Beyond the limits of the Created Universe, there is an Ultimate Void. This has no beginning and no end; where there is no You and no Me; where there is nothing specific that can be pointed to; there is no Quantum Fields, no electron, proton, stars, galaxies or Black Holes, for all these are merely part of the Created Universe.

* * * *

(To be continued)

Without worldly agony, the desire to be acquainted with the engineer of this Universal machine is not awakened.

— Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee.

Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

Sri Chinmoy

I read the Gita because it is the Eye of the God. I sing the Gita because it is the Life of God. I live the Gita because it is the Soul of God. The Gita is God's Vision, the Gita is God's Reality.

The Gita is the epitome of the Vedas. It is the purest milk drawn from the udders of the most illuminating Upanishads to feed and nourish the human soul. The Gita demands man's acceptance of life and reveals the way to achieve victory of the higher Self over the lower self by the spiritual art of transformation: physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual.

Is the Gita a mere word? No. A speech? No. A concept? No. A kind of concentration? No. A form of meditation? No. What is it, then? It is the *Realisation*. The Gita is God's Heart and man's breath; God's Assurance and man's promise.

People say that the Gita is the most significant scripture of the Hindu's. I say that it is the Light of Divinity in humanity. They say that the Gita needs an introduction. I say that God truly wants Himself to be introduced through the Gita. The Gita is the common property of humanity.

There are seven hundred verses in the Gita. About six hundred are the soul-stirring utterances from the divine lips of Lord Krshna, and the rest are from the crying and aspiring Arjuna, the clairvoyant and clairaudient Sanjaya, and the inquisitive Dhritarastra.

There are eighteen chapters in the Gita. Each chapter reveals a specific teaching of a particular form of Yoga. Yoga is the secret language between man and God. *Yoga* means union, the union of the finite with the Infinite, the union of the form with the Formless. Yoga is to be practised for the sake of Truth. If not, the seeker will be sadly disappointed. Similarly man's God-realisation is for the sake of God. Otherwise untold frustration will be man's inevitable reward.

Arjuna is the ascending human soul. Krishna is the descending divine Soul. Finally they meet. The human soul says to the divine Soul: "I need You." The divine Soul says to the human soul: "I need you, too. I need

you for My self-manifestation. You need Me for your self-realisation.” Arjuna says: “O Krishna. You are mine, absolutely mine.” Krishna says: “O Arjuna, no mine, no thine. We are the oneness complete, within, without.”

The Gita is an episode in the sixth chapter of the unparalleled epic Mahabharata. The epic describes the colossal rivalry between two parties of cousins which comes to an end after the great Battle of Kurushetra. The epic begins with Santanu and his two wives, Ganga and Satyawati. Ganga's son was Bhishma and Satyawati had two children Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. Vichitravirya had two wives Ambika and Ambalika. Ambika's son was Dhritrashtra and Pandu was Ambalika's son. Dhritrashtra had hundred sons called as Kauravas and Pandu had five sons, the Pandavas. Since Dhritrashtra was born blind, and was not qualified to inherit the throne, Pandu reigned as the King of their kingdom for a number of years, offering utmost satisfaction to his subjects and finally retired to the forest. Hence now the legitimate heir to the throne was Yudhishthira, the eldest son of Pandu, and he did it successfully. The eldest son of Dhritrashtra was Duryodhana and he objected to this rule and decided to go to war (along with his ninety-nine brothers, the Kauravas) against the Pandavas, i.e. Yudhishthira and his four brothers.

The Gita is the discourse given by Krishna to Arjuna just before the beginning of the war. The Gita begins with the words '*Dharmakshetre Kurushetre*', 'On the hallowed field of Kurushetra' - this is the literal translation. *Kshetra* means 'field'. *Dharma* is a spiritual word meaning the moral, religious and spiritual code of life; the living faith in God; soulful duty as enjoined by the scriptures. Our body's dharma is service, our mind's dharma is illumination, our heart's dharma is oneness and our soul's dharma is liberation.

Why is Kurushetra called '*dharmshetra*', the field of *dharma*? Because in this battle, which took place in Kurushetra, untold religious sacrifices were performed:

The first chapter has a specific significance of its own. It deals with Arjuna's sorrow, his inner conflict. Poor Arjuna was torn with grief between two equally formidable ideas: he must go to war or he must not. Arjuna exclaimed, 'Pray, place my chariot, O Krishna, between the two battle formations so that I can see those who thirst for war.' He surveyed the battle scene. Alas, he saw among the deadly opponents those very human

souls whom he had always held dear and near. Overwhelmed with tenebrous grief, Arjuna, for the first time in his life of matchless heroism, gave unthinkable expression to faint-heartedness. "My body shivers, my mouth is parched, my limbs give way, fear tortures me all over, my hair stands on end, my bow slips from my hand and my mind is reeling. Hard is it even for me to stand. Krishna, victory over them, my present foes, I seek not. They were my own. Still they are. Neither kingdom nor ease I seek. Let them attack; they want to and they shall. But I shall not hurl my weapon upon them, not even for the supreme sovereignty of the three worlds, let alone the earth."

Poor Arjun, further said, "Let the sons of Dhritrashtra, armed with weapons, end my life, while I am unarmed, with no resistance. I prefer in all sincerity my death to our victory." Arjuna, the hero supreme, discarded his bows and arrows, dolefully and soulfully sank back into the rear of the chariot, saying, "Fighting is not for Arjuna, Krishna I shall not fight."

On the battlefield the principal warriors were seen on both sides. Some were eager to fight in order to display their mighty valour, while there were matchless warriors like Bhishma, Drona, and Kripa who fought out of moral obligation. Just before the actual battle, Yudhishthira walked barefoot to the opposing army, precisely to his well wishers, for their benedictions. Bhishma, while blessing Yudhishthira from the inmost recesses of his heart, said, "Son, my body will fight, while my heart will be with you and your brothers. Yours is the victory destined." Drona, while blessing Yudhishthira, exclaimed, "I am a victim to obligation. I shall fight for the Kauravas, true. But yours will be the victory."

When Duryodhana went to Gandhari, his mother, for her benediction, she blessed saying, "Victory will be there where dharma is."

Truth's pride was Yudhishthira. Falsehood's pride was Duryodhana. Through the illumined hearts of the Pandavas, God smiled. Through the unlit minds of the Kauravas, the devil smiled. The devil often succeeded in embracing the blind father of the Kauravas, too.

The eyeless father made repeated requests, strong and weak, to Duryodhana, his morally, psychically and spiritually eyeless son, not to go for war. Vidura the pure heart, Duryodhana's uncle failed to throw light on Duryodhana's thick head. Neither Bhishma, the oldest and the wisest, succeeded. Duryodhana thought, his own understanding to be superior.

Finally Shree Krishna, the Lord of the universe, most fervently tried to avert the hurtful and heartless battle. But the ignorance-darkness in Duryodhana would by no means surrender to the knowledge-sun in Shree Krishna.

The sage Vyasa enquired of Dhritrashtra if he desired to see the events and have a first-hand knowledge of the battle, from the battle's birth to death. However the sage would not grant the blind man vision. His heart was ruthlessly tortured by the imminent peril of his kinsmen and his own sons. Hence he requested the sage to grant the boon to someone else from whom he could get faultless reports of the battle. He conferred upon Sanjaya the miraculous psychic power of vision to see the incidents of the war.

The second chapter of the Gita is entitled *Sankhya Yoga*, the Yoga of Knowledge. Arjuna's arguments against war are very plausible to our human understanding. Unfortunately his sincerity unconsciously housed ignorance. Lord Krishna wanted to illumine him, "O Arjuna, in your speech, you are a philosopher, but in your action, you are not. A true philosopher mourns neither for the living nor for the dead. Tell me, why do you mourn the prospective death of these men? You existed, I existed, they too. Never shall we cease to exist."

Real philosophy is truly difficult to study, more difficult to learn, and most difficult to live.

Arjuna for the first time came to learn from Shree Krishna that his belief concerning life and death was not founded on truth. He prayed to Shree Krishna for enlightenment, "I am your humble disciple. Teach me and tell me what is best for me."

For the first time the word 'disciple' sprang from Arjuna's lips. Until then Shree Krishna had been his friend and comrade. The disciple learned. "The body is perishable, the soul, the real man, is deathless, immortal. The soul neither kills nor is killed. Beyond birth and death, constant and eternal is the soul. The knower of this Truth neither slays nor causes slaughter."

Shree Krishna used the terms 'birth', 'life', and 'death'. Birth is the passing of the soul from a lower body to a higher body in the process of evolution, in the course of the soul's journey of reincarnation. Life is the soul's only opportunity to manifest and fulfill the Divine here on earth. Life, the problem, can be solved, but for that, one has first to be awakened from within. The soul is then the solution.



(to be continued)

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