

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

Vol.-3

April, 1999

No. 2

BOARD OF EDITORS

- Km. Chitra Ghosh
- Dr. Bithika Mukerji
- Dr. Krishna Banerjee
- Km. Guneeta



MANAGING EDITOR
Sri Panu Brahmachari



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (POSTAGE FREE)
INLAND—RS. 60/-
FOREIGN—US \$ 12/- OR RS. 400/-
SINGLE COPY—RS. 20/-

CONTENTS

1.	Matri Vani	...	1
2.	Impressions of Anandamayi Ma — <i>Richard Lannoy</i>	...	3
3.	Ma is for all	...	7
4.	Diary Leaves — <i>Atmananda</i>	...	9
5.	Offerings of my prayers — <i>'Shobha'</i>	...	15
6.	From notes taken in Sri Ma's presence — <i>'Kirpal'</i>	...	16
7.	Vedanta & Tantra — <i>Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly</i>	...	17
8.	For the love of us all	...	20
9.	Didi, the unparalleled — <i>Dr. Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyay</i>	...	22
10.	Brahmacharini Gurupriya — <i>'Guneeta'</i>	...	24
11.	Gurupriya Devi— The Indomitable Spirit — <i>K.S. Rao</i>	...	29
12.	My first encounter with Didi — <i>'Moni'</i>	...	30
13.	Birth Centenary of Didi	...	32





Sri Ma in the campus of the Ashram in Pune with the calf eagerly looking at Ma.

MATRI-VANI

No matter to what caste, class and religion anyone may belong, he should always speak the truth and engage in his particular japa, meditation, worship and remembrance of God. Each one should start along the lines taught by his own religion. Study scriptures, seek satsang, sing the names and praises of God. Every service has to be done as service of God.

*

*

*

One who serves God can never be helpless. The more ardently one seeks communion by engaging in japa, His service and contemplation, the fuller will be his revelation.

*

*

*

He who has given you what you possess in this world—wealth, distinction, youth, appeal to Him for His own sake.

*

*

*

You cannot ? Why ? you will have to do. Verily, man can do all things. Who can say what He will give to whom and through what ? Everything is His, entirely His. What did you bring with you at birth ? Were you not empty handed? And all you have acquired, is it yours, really ?

All is His and whatever happens is His will. Endeavour to maintain this. Saying : "It is mine", you grasp at everything — this is the way to count sorrow. Call out to Him, because all is His. To yearn thus for Him is real prayer.

*

*

*

As long as one is able to hold on to anything, one must hold on to the One. It is imperative to become entirely single-minded, and one's duty to remain concentrated exclusively on the One. By adhering to one name, one contemplation, one thought, one pointedness will be achieved.

*

*

*

Q. If you have no mission to fulfil or message to give, why do you tell us to worship god?"

Ma. If you do not ask, then I have nothing to say; but if you ask, and if it is my *kheyala* then certainly I shall tell you about the better way of life (*shreyas*)

*

*

*

It is by seeking to know oneself that the Great Mother of all may be found.

*

*

*

Do you want deliverance from the bonds of the world? Then, weeping profusely, you will have to cry out from the bottom of your heart : " Deliver me, Great Mother of the world, deliver me !" To obtain Her grace you will have to shed tears much more abundantly than when you desire things of the world. When by the flood of your tears the inner and the outer have fused into one, you will find Her, whom you sought with such anguish, nearer than the nearest, the very breath of life, the very core of every heart.

*

*

*

I never say — " I will do this, I will not do that," It is you who make me carry out whatever work lies in your power to induce me to perform.

*

*

*

In God is everyone and everything. Where is God not ? This is why Ma is also ever near, though the body does not go everywhere.



IMPRESSIONS OF ANANDAMAYI MA

[Three]

—Richard Lannoy

This was a place of absolutely strict asceticism, no two way about it and, interestingly, there was never any question of it being anything other than just that. It was an irreducibly chaste regime and this simplicity gave the institution freshness and lightness of tone. At that time there were only two non-Indian residents in all Anandamayi Ma's ashrams. A year before I arrived, the celebrated anthropologist of the Ituri pygmies, Collin Turnbull had spent a while imbibing Mataji's compelling ways. She had filled exactly that emptiness I had felt in the western world, and through her I learned how to lead a whole life, how to carry the spirit into the every-day world, how to lead an every-day life that is at the same time a dedicated life and intensely spiritual.

In her ashram I felt the bond of brotherhood which will eventually unite the world and to the mutual love and consideration which pervaded all those gathered around Mataji. I found a way of life which is yet but a dream among the majority of the people of the western world. There was no question of rich and poor, good or bad, high or low, there was perfect brotherhood among all. I think that perhaps the greatest things I learned were a love for Truth and a love for all my fellow beings. Truth can be a hard master, but there are none better, for that is one of the ways in which the spirit is revealed. Those around Mataji could not help but be impregnated with this wonderful ideal and at the same time feel all the petty differences and distinctions which normally surround us disappearing. Here was life as it should be held, life for the One Self, for the little individual self, a life in which all of us could join equally, no matter how feeble and weak we were.

Foliage and flowers in the Varanasi ashram were of monastic-nature. Here was barely more than hinted at in the immediate field of vision; beyond stretched a hazy waste of water and distant fields. Soon after I first met Anandamayi Ma (that sounds so social, it was more a silent encounter!) I spent a number of days in close proximity to her at her ashram in Vindhyachal. Here I was able to see her in the depths of the Indian countryside and to gauge how deep was her relation to all living things. Vindhyachal, at some distance from Varanasi, huddles at the foot of a sacred hill on the edge of a rocky wilderness clad with jungles overlooking the Gangetic plain. It is a hallowed spot sacred to Tantrics, with remains of great

antiquity. On the slopes of the hill are plunging, forested gullies, sequestered temples and primeval shrines. It was winter when I arrived and the leaf strewn ground beneath gnarled trees and rocks were littered with beautiful sculptures that had fallen from ruined temples. The little ashram, strangely reminiscent of a Tuscan farm house, commanded a magnificent view from atop the hill. The majestically wide Ganges meandered across a vast sandy bed into the far distance. The main ashram building was a rectangular two-storey tower, surrounded by verandahs on all sides.

From the upper balcony one could view clusters of dwelling at the foot of the hill and a square temple tank with a single pillar at its center rising from the water like the *axis mundi*, the still point of the turning world. Everything at Vindhyaçal was steeped in the bright winter hush. During the day the air was very clear and every spec of detail stood out sharply, as in a medieval miniature. Only the distant sound of a dog barking or a temple bell rang through the echoing air. At night it became misty and extremely cold, the temperature dropping almost to freezing point.

There were only about a dozen of us there. Anandamayi Ma often retreated from the crowds to this ashram. It was a perfect, unhurried setting in which to imbibe the nature of her being and savour the atmosphere of this enchanted stop. It was a remarkably non-culture specific scene. On the hill top one might have been almost anywhere in the world so muted was the detailing.

At the ashram, people wore plain, anonymous garments, mostly unadorned lengths of wrap-around cotton with woollen shawls. These clothes were white and indeed the whole scene was very muted in colour. In this basic environment I had the sensation of being located at the outer reaches of what had once been a single, vast hegemony which stretched from the eastern extremity of India to the farthest western fringe of ultimate Thule. Upon this domain, as one can often feel in the Gangetic plain, there remain faint traces of an ancient unifying force that of Greece, which spread across immensities of time and space to leave their gentle impress - no more than ghostly traces now, but palpable none the less upon dwellings and people. In this antique land, Anandamayi Ma had something about her of the sibyl and walked abroad like a Homeric prophetess or Hebraic psalmist. She also brought to mind archetypes from the basilicas of Byzantian and Constantine's Rome and from *Zendāvestā* and *Mahabhārata*.

The upper storey of the ashram contained Anandamayi Ma's very simple quarters, with surrounding balconies. She would sit here on the southern balcony every morning in light shade, perhaps dictating letters. While her long and fine hair

being combed by a lady attendant. One morning it became wordlessly clear that I could approach with my camera. The light was perfect, all was quite still. I stood directly and silently in front of her, paused to collect my thoughts, made some camera adjustments, refocussed my lens to its closest range and moved forward until her features came into focus on the ground glass view finder of my reflex camera. Holding the camera below my own eye-level, I slowly looked up from it, my eyes were now level with hers and she was precisely 68 centimeters (27 inches) away. For what seemed like an eternity I steadied my breathing and we very quietly gazed into each others eyes. Or, at least I did, but she cast her cleaning glance right through me into the far distance. For a moment I felt myself to be completely transparent, without substance. Then I pressed the shutter once and moved away. I never needed, nor wished to do that again—.

I could go for walks in the sacred groves and wander around the temples, quite alone. I peered into dark, sinister niches in the rock where stood terrifying images of deities. Only in close up could the truly Indian character of Vindhyachal be appreciated particularly in the juxtaposition of these deities of the local folk culture with the refined sweetness of the classical sculpture that tumbled from some great lost monument nearby. Then I would pick my way among rocks and pebbles beneath intricate networks of bare winter branches, or clear the autumn leaves from the sculptures strewn around. Everywhere there were streaks, veins, marks, striations, dapplings, livigs, bark, lichen, moss, ferns, thickets—.

I would return to the ashram and take my place with the others at the foot of Anandamayi Ma's bed. She was only a pace or two away; sometimes there was talk and laughter, animated discussion and tales recounted of her early life. There was no exaggerated emotionalism about her; her voice flowed, mellifluous and clear, like the water in a stream, tumbling without hesitation over sparkling pebbles. At other times she was silent, swaying a little from side to side, her head tilted as if listening to something far away. Her face was tender and her whole personality radiated a secure warmth. In a swift moodchange her sense of humour shone. She was at home among her people perfectly natural, charged with life.

Now and then I would disengage myself from this deep immersion and look into the room from outside, along with a few bystanders from Vindhyachal. The scene, especially by lamp light, reminded me of Haubert's famous remark on catching sight of cottagers in their lighted hovels: '*Its sont dans le vrai*' literally, 'they are in the truth'. But the analogy I will use for these scenes is that of a conductor with an orchestra, each musician playing a different instrument. Here Mataji was conducting a symphony of quietness, not by commands or even by a unifying beat, but by a kind of focussed persuasion, suggestion, inspiration. Each

person present would be pursuing his own inner tune and perhaps occasionally giving voice to a solo or joining a duet discussion when Mataji fell silent as she often did for minutes on end, she would tilt her head upwards in a variety of ways, but always accompanied by a flich of her looks and a shift in her gaze — intent, alert, heartening. It seemed to me that, with these little pauses, she was whisking, all present through the portals of an open door into a larger, more magical domain of invisible intimations. Even as I write, I can recall these little adjustments of her posture exactly : they had a creature quality, like a bird ruffling its feathers before it settles to roost. These were moments of pure enchantment when I could watch everyone respond as it to fresh inspiration. Like ears of ripening wheat in a light breeze, they would sway a little before they too would settle and glow.

I could look over her shoulder, through door and balcony, and see the branches of trees, pebbles, rocks, leaves and twigs which I had recently examined closely. My eyes would return indoors and scan this sibylline figure as she sat relaxed and bemused. I marvelled at the soft texture of her skin, at the way the shadows round her eyes seemed to have the density of velvet. She retained a youthfulness which belied her age 58. I was fascinated by her incessantly mobile features, especially the multiplicity of extremely delicate lines that wove a mobile network across shin, notably on her forehead and on her lips. I felt I was looking again at all the intricacies of line I had been tracing in the woods — as if she were a part of the vegetation and the markings of her face and the markings on the trees were all part of a long intricate inscription written in one single script. I had stored in my memory a beautiful observation of Paracelus on this theme. It went something like this : there are many kinds on chiromancy of man's hands, from which it is possible to infer and discover his inclinations and his fate; there are yet other kinds of chiromancy for example, that of tree leaves, of herbs, of wood, of shells, of rocks and mines, the chiromancy of landscapes, countries, their roads and rivers. Written horizontally across her brows were five lines like those of a music score crossing these were a myriad fine spun vertical lines in constant movement, knitting and fanning out, narrowing and widening like the action of a loom when the warp and weft open and close. At the midpoint her brow was momentous, with a suggestion about it of a membrane for receiving and transmitting signals. The brow arched high, expansive and flat, to meet the hairline abruptly. this arching forehead and an energetic jaw, like the prow of a ship sailing out of harbour, were her most distinctive features. The nose and brows were rounded, gentle and un-assertive., the mouth was very wide, with a multitude of little dips and puckerings, a trenchant line dipping at the centre; so changeable.

[To be continued]

MA IS FOR ALL

[From the diary of Didi Gurupriya]

In 1935 when Ma visited Tarapeeth she met one Muslim householder and addressed him as 'Baba'. The man was overwhelmed with joy on being addressed thus and came everyday to see Ma. The Muslim's house was close to a Masjid which was at same distance from the Siddhashram. Ma visited his house many times, taking all her devotees with her. The old man would beckon his wives (he had two wives) and say, "Daughter has arrived come out." They would both come and seat near Ma lovingly. Ma would go there and behave just like a little girl and enjoy herself greatly. Whenever she received anything at Tarapeeth, she would immediately tell me, "Send some thing to Baba". Whenever the old man came to see Ma, if he found he would have to wait to see Ma, he would send word to Ma through someone, "Tell Ma that her Baba has come and would like to meet her." On receiving this message Ma would meet the old man at once.

While Ma was at Tarapeeth another Maulavi from Calcutta came and stayed with her for some days. He belonged to a prestigious clan of Delhi. He felt extremely happy whenever he saw Ma. Ma had named him, "Prem Gopal". He wrote many poems on Ma in Urdu and recited them for Her.

After staying in Tarapeeth for some days he returned to Calcutta on Ma's behest. But we heard that on returning to Calcutta he began pining for Ma and could not even eat. He wept and his restlessness increased. Then he was sent back to Tarapeeth. This time he stayed for some more days with Ma and then calmed down considerably and returned to Calcutta in obedience to Ma's orders.

Observing the Maulavi sahibs devotion to a Hindu Mataji, the Muslims in Tarapeeth gathered in protest. The Maulavi sahib then took them all to the mosque one evening and addressed them for an hour explaining what is and how their religion would not be defiled in the least by going to Her. He took Ma to that meeting and made her sit on the dais on an *asana* and gave this lecture after bowing down to her. He revered Ma immensely.

Prem Gopal brought some foodstuff from Calcutta for Ma. He wanted to feed Ma himself, but did not have the courage to say so. Ma heard of this and called him and asked him to feed her. He put a little sweet-meat into Ma's mouth with great delight and received prasada.

Once Prem Gopal was invited to a meal at Ma's old Muslim father's place and the Muslim 'baba' looked upon Prem Gopal as his grandson and extended such affection towards him. Prem Gopal also regarded the old man as Ma's father and addressed him as grand father. Sometimes Prem Gopal sang Nama Kirtan in Ma's presence, while Hindu devotees listened to him. Again Muslims were also present for Hari Nama Kirtan. Thus Hindus and Muslims mingled with each other in Ma's vicinity.

●

DIARY LEAVES

—Atmananda

In the course of a discussion about Yoga in Kishenpur, in June 1947, Mataji related the following incident :

"Once Bhaji and this body were walking from Barlowganj to Mussoorie. In the heat of the early afternoon my mouth and throat became parched, but I did not feel like saying that I was thirsty. just at that time a certain devotee's wife at Rajshahi in Bengal prepared some melon sherbat and offered it to me. I found that my thirst was perfectly appeased, the feeling of dryness had left and my mouth seemed full of juice.

"Later when Bhaji travelled to Rajshahi, he confirmed by letter that the said lady had actually prepared some melon sherbat and offered it to me at that very time. The surprising thing was that she did not as a rule offer me any sherbat. Only on that day, at that particular time it occurred to her to prepare a refreshing drink and offer it to me. This is an example for Yoga."

*

*

*

One day Mataji said : "Under God's dispensation now and again man has to suffer violent blows. Do you know that these blows are God's Grace ? Without them it would be impossible for the person concerned to experience a change of heart at this particular stage.

"At Dhaka, a young girl of good family once related the following to this body : 'A man, of whom people said he was just like Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu,¹ visited our house. He said to me : 'When I came to earth last time, I left my home forsaking Vishnupriya. Now I have returned to fulfil her ardent desire for me. You are Vishnupriya reborn.' When people came to know of this they beat him up mercilessly. But this was very wholesome for him. Indeed it was the Supreme Mother who caused the beating to happen."

*

*

*

One night at Vrindaban in 1948, a most animated discussion was in full swing, when one of Mataji's bhaktas, a learned old *sannyāsī*, who as a rule takes a very

1. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, also called Lord Gauranga lived in Bengal in the 16th century and is regarded as an *Avatāra*. Vishnupriya was the name of his wife.

active part in all arguments, fell fast asleep and was snoring peacefully, quite oblivious of what was going on around him. Mataji called out to him once or twice without any response. Everyone was highly amused. At last someone by way of a joke dropped a *rasagulla*, (the famous juicy Bengali sweet) into the half-open mouth of the sleeping man. Even this did not have the desired effect, nor the hilarious laughter that followed. But when the sweet syrup began to trickle down his throat, he could not help waking up.

As so often happens, Mataji made this playful episode an occasion for utterances of profound wisdom. She spoke about *rasa*. However, there is a difficulty in translating what She said, for the Sanskrit word '*rasa*' means any juice from water to nectar, essence, as well as delight of every kind, gross and subtle, also Supreme Delight. There is no equivalent in English.

This is what Mataji said : "Unless *Bhagavad Rasa* is instilled into man, unless the nectar of the Divine penetrates deep into him, his slumbering soul does not awaken. *Vedānta* is also *rasa*, just as *bhakti* is *rasa*; why should *Vedānta* be described as dry ? It is a well-known fact that poison neutralizes poison. Similarly, when transcending nature's delights, which are fleeting, man tastes of the delicious flavour of his true Being (*svabhāver rasa*), of Supreme Delight (*Param rasa*), then the excruciating anguish of the poison of mere worldly enjoyment is destroyed.

Beyond bodily pleasures, such as eating, sleeping, moving about and so on, lies Joy Supreme. Don't you recite; '*Brahmānandam Paramasukhadam*,' Absolute Bliss, Supreme Happiness.' He is Happiness Itself, Happiness is His very essence. Earthly happiness has its opposite—sorrow. But where happiness is in its essential form (*Ānanda swarūpa*), unconditioned, there the opposites—joy and misery—find no place; where solely *Sva Rasa* is, there can be no question of *a-rasa*, (of the sense of dryness, of emptiness, of the anguish of God's absence). He is the Fountain of Joy—Joy and Joy alone is His being. A state exists in which there is only Bliss, Beatitude, Supreme Felicity. At your level, joy has its opposite; you speak of the joys of heaven and of the torments of hell. But where Eternal Bliss is, bliss in its own right cannot be expressed, it is entirely beyond words. THERE—what is ? What is not ? To speak means to float on the surface; what language can express that which is neither floating nor diving deep ?"

*

*

*

A gentleman who lives in a far off hill station in the Himalayas had come for Mataji's darshan and stayed for some days. During his journey back home he wrote the following letter to which Mataji replied in detail, paragraph by paragraph, as follows :

The letter : At the time of parting, when with a broken heart I did *pranāma* to you, I knew that I had found something, but I also felt as if I were losing something. In this mood I went my way.

Mataji's reply : Where nothing is, there is everything. All efforts are for the sake of this realization only. To do *pranāma* means to pour oneself out to His feet, to become closely bound to them and thereby united to Him, to become His, who alone IS. When doing *pranāma* in a temple or anywhere else, you should not hold back anything, but give yourself without reserve.

The letter : To know you are always near, although physically you may be far away, this experience can only come by your Grace. It seems impossible for me to attain it through my own efforts.

Mataji's reply : You must know Him in such a way that no place remains where He is not. According to Vaishnavite terminology there is *viraha* and *milana* (separation and union). But this *viraha rasa*, this experience of profound yearning for God after having known union, is not like the worldly sense of separateness, which means not knowing the other, being unfulfilled.

Everything comes by His Grace alone—this of course is a fact. You experience as your own the power He has vested in you. Apply it in His service to the utmost of your capability, whatever be the nature of your approach, whatever your line.

The letter : While I was near you, I forgot all about my home. I did not give a single thought to my family affairs and cares. But the nearer the train carries me to my home, the more my domestic hopes and worries crowd into my mind.

Mataji's reply : All desire must be for God only. Whatever you do whether with your hands or with your brain, do it as His service. Whatever you accept, physically or mentally, accept it as God coming to you in this shape. If anything is to be given, it is a surrender of yourself at His feet.

*

*

*

Some time ago, a lady from Switzerland wrote a letter to Mataji. Here are her questions and Mataji's replies.

Question : Since the religious conception is the highest, the only goal in life, what becomes of those who do not attain to it in their lifetime ?

Mataji : Those who do not attain to the Goal of human existence, have to continue in the realm of death, which is the ceaseless round of birth and rebirth.

Question : Since our only reason for living is to return to That from which we came, why is there this life, why were we separated from This Being ?

Mataji : Everything is His Will, He is absolutely free, He is His own law. This coming and going is His very nature, His dispensation. He Himself plays with Himself, everything is He and He alone.

Question : Will man ever destroy this world and himself ?

Mataji : Man has certainly not got the power to create, preserve or destroy. In Him, whose play all this is, all possibilities are contained.

The destruction of one's ego virtually amounts to the destruction of the universe. Where the ego is, there the world exists. Destruction is the very nature of that which is the world and therefore perishable; it is ever destroyed, it is being destroyed now and it will be destroyed. But where He is and He alone, who is to destroy whom ? There the question of destruction cannot arise. Where is He, who is that Self ? Find out ! The Self is not subject to destruction. The ceaseless endeavour to know that Self is man's bounden duty.

Question : Is there no love between mortals or must all love be first for God and then love for another being ?

Mataji : Between individuals, true unadulterated love or fondness is impossible. Where love or affection has grown perfect this question cannot arise, for in such a case, who is the beloved ? God and God alone.

*

*

*

Varanasi, Aug. 27th, 1948.

This morning a young girl student asked : "How can I find peace ?"

Mataji : "Do you really want peace ? Then make a firm resolve : 'I am going to find peace !' Just as when you want to study, you first make up your mind, then you proceed with the necessary arrangements. So also here : First you must make up your mind for it, then the road will open out. If you want to find peace, turn to Him who is the source of peace. In the world there are the twin brothers : happiness and pain. They are inseparable. As long as you are after worldly happiness there must be sorrow as well, since there is constant change. Happiness can only be temporary, never permanent. If you want lasting peace you must turn to Him. Just as a child who is hurt cries for its mother, so you must cry for Him, who is your own."

Questioner : I want peace but I don't get it.

Mataji : If you sit at home and say : I want to pass an exam, nothing will happen. You have to undertake the necessary steps. Similarly you have to take the road that leads to peace.

The girl : Then what to do ?

Mataji : Seek satsang and if you have a Guru obey his instructions.

Question : How to find a Guru ?

Mataji : If you are keen to study you find a teacher. So here also, if there is eagerness in your heart you will find a Guru. When you call God, do so only for His sake, for nothing else. Why ? When you have found Him you have found everything and then you want nothing else at all."

*

*

*

Varanasi Ashram, December 16, 1948.

The chanting of the Holy scriptures had just ended. A Kashmiri lady brought a basket full of fruits and offered it to Mataji. A little later Mataji called two bhaktas and asked them to distribute the contents of the basket to all present. "Give a whole fruit to each person," She said. Someone, who felt afraid that there might not be enough to go round, objected : "Why a whole fruit ? Would it not be safer to cut them into pieces ?"

Mataji : "No, when there is one for each person, why divide them ?"

After everyone had received his or her share, only one fruit was left over for the two distributors. Mataji said to them : "The task of dealing out is only one. There might have been even three of you to accomplish it. Now you two will have to divide the fruit between you." Someone remarked : "In a similar way the action of reciting the scriptures is one although many join in it; it would therefore have been appropriate for all those who took part to share one single fruit between them." Someone else added : "But then to listen to the chanting is equally only one task."

Mataji : Exactly, there is only ONE; all this is meant to make you grasp this fact. Whatever you do at any time, no matter for what purpose, must aim at the ONE in order to be brought to completion. Indeed, this holds good in every case — one must aim at THAT.

"To Ma everything is complete," put in a devotee.

Mataji : Whether you say 'to Ma' or 'to me' (meaning yourself)—everything is in reality complete. What does 'here' and 'there' mean ? That which is whole comprises everything—not even death can be excluded. Any particular angle of vision is like a fissure or gap in the whole. Even all the varying points of view, in fact anything you please, is contained in that which is complete; indeed in the guise of incompleteness also manifests the Perfect ONE—in every aspect is He alone.

A *bhakta* : From completeness arises the incomplete and the incomplete develops into the complete; movement evolves into stability, for the mouth has to be shut sooner or later when the manifestation of the next sound 'M' must follow as a matter of course. (Laughter)

Question : But do you not say : '*Hari kathā hi kathā aur sab vrithā vyathā* (Of Him alone must be the spoken word, all else is but futility and pain) ? If there is only the One without-a-second, how can there be words and speech ?

Mataji : Dwell only in Him, abide only in Him ! He cannot be left aside; although you may exclude Him, He is still there and if you acknowledge Him He is also there—on the plane where talk and discussion still exist.

At this point the lady who had brought the fruit, suddenly got up and said : "When the *prasāda* was distributed two shares were given to me." Now at last, we knew why there had been a shortage of one fruit ! Then the lady added : "When I was walking in the street carrying the basket, a cow followed me and tried to snatch some fruit. In spite of all my efforts to move the basket out of her way the cow was so insistent that finally I gave her one of the fruits."

"That was my share", Mataji exclaimed, "Do you see, now the number is complete !"

The Kashmiri lady confirmed : "In fact when I handed the fruit to the cow, the thought crossed my mind : "It must be Mataji who is claiming the fruit in this guise !"

AN ODE TO MA'S DEVOTEE

'Tvadeeya paada pankajam namami Devi Narmade'

*Salutation o' salutation to you the quiet flowing waters of river Narmada
in the silence of the night when slumber softly shuts the doors of your parlor
the image of your reigning celestial beauty
the flowers of worship kissing gently the Lotus-Feet
do I gather them to fold under my pillow
holding my rosary close to my heart I promise to wake with the rising Sun
lo behold! no slumber, no image, no vision, I remained ever awakened
sitting by Your parlor, waiting on YOU for eternity
quiet flows the river Narmada singing the song of YOUR praise.
'Tvadeeya Paada Pankajam namami Devi Narmade'.*

OFFERING OF MY PRAYERS

— 'Shobha'

I know not any rituals nor do I undergo tapas. Neither have I served the needy the lonely. My sadhana I gather from Matri vani. The rosary of my heart comes from the holy hands that worshipped the Deity of Divine Beauty. Thought waves that rise within are the reflection of Your manifestation. MA those thoughts I offer to Your Divine Celestial Beauty

Prayer..... intense call from within the heart, flow of the mind.

Yearning of the soul. The One I offer my prayers is not Righteousness, for it is cold and harsh No, not Truth, for so austere and rigid: No, not Love. It can be veiled with selfishness: its purity, its meaning can be held in many ways, by many minds.

Beauty then is my beloved Lord. Where it abides, there is joy, peace, harmony, love.

Neither can it be harsh nor can it be cruel. In darkness will it shine:

In light will it glow: The lotus of the pond opens its petals to the serenity of the moon in the silence of the autumn glow. All is quiet.

All is still. Radiance of beauty guides the lonely path finder of the night.

Like a flower nodding in the breeze. Neither of here nor of there. Infinite!!!

Thus my God, the Beauty of the Universe, I offer my prayers.

FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—'Kirpal'

May 7, 1959, Dehradun, Kishenpur Ashram

Sri Ma - "The mirror of the soul (*chit rupi darpan*) is cleansed by the name of god and for the purification of the mind. This body does not utter untruths. As you have cooked your meals, then eaten for many days, but have not cleaned the vessels nor washed or scrubbed them and you are unaware of their original colour. you have to scrub and scrape the vessels and have to use tamarind (*imli*), so that the dirt and dark colour is removed. The medicine for that (cleansing) has to be used. You have to apply the *imli* and also have to scrub. Just to apply the *imli* will not serve the purpose.

For ages (*jugajugantar*) the mirror of your mind has been covered with dirt. For ages and ages your *awagaman* (coming and going) has taken place and the dirt has remained. If something has to be cleaned that particular thing which is appropriate for the same, will have to be used so as to clean it.

"That thing is the name of God. That is the supreme medicine for the mirror of the soul the aim should be for the purification of the mind. Then devotion and deep faith in God will shine forth.

"How to achieve that ? With single-pointed concentration. The mind must not wander hither thither and the *kriyas* (actions) necessary for cleansing the mind have to be done. One-pointed concentration and then comes the Divine visions, the holy touch, devotion to God (*Bhagavat prem*) and supreme love (*Mahā Prem*).

Let God's name alone be imbedded in you. That is the path should be taken where in all actions, walking, eating or sleeping you should remain concentrated in His Name.

"You repeat God's name but your mind is circling around wordly matters. That is the reason why there is no achievement. If the actions (*Kriyas*) are properly performed God's Supreme Power (*Shakti*) will definitely be revealed.

"The path of being the eternal servant of God (*nitya dāsa*) by following the same the immortality that is within you will be revealed. Where there is *ananda* (bliss), where there is God, there is no question of mortality. That which is *atma* in all creations, which is self-revealed (*svayam prakāsa*) and who is within one's own self will be revealed.

"The *japa* is to be done in consonance with the natural movement of the breath, with ease and without strain. Then the Divine Bliss inherent in God's name will be experienced and the Divine that is within you, your very own, will be revealed.



VEDĀNTA AND TANTRA - A SYNTHETIC STUDY*

—Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly

Vedanta, comprising the *Upanisads*, *Brahma Sutra* and *Bhagavad Gita*, studies the subjective universe of the individual soul (*Jivātmā*), cosmic soul (*Paramātmā*) and the underlying infinite all-inclusive Reality (*Brahman*). Hence Vedanta proceeds on the lines of philosophical synthetic analysis and tries to discover the unified ultimate field of reality. *Tantra* is an analytical study of the multifarious objective world. Hence it adopts the scientific method of study. A glimpse of the *Positive Sciences of Hindus* by Brajen Seal and *A History of Hindu Chemistry* by Prafulla Chandra Roy will indicate how vast was the canvass of Hindu *Tantra sastra*, which made valuable contribution in the scientific fields of Surgery, Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology, Geography and Geology, Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Sociology, Political Economy etc.

Thus we see that Vedantic philosophy studies the eternal principles and *Tantra* studies the ever-changing world. But the world consists of two aspects, viz. the physical universe and the subtle universe. Modern sciences, both natural and social, deal with the external, physical and social universe, whereas *Tantra sastra* deals with the subtle forces behind the physical world, to forge a link between *Jagat* (World) and *Brahman* (God). Of course, even modern physics has arrived at a stage, where scientific laws have begun knocking at the door of *Sakti* or *Prāna*, which is the primeval source of all energy.

The Relativity Equation of Einstein, ($E = mc^2$) has almost established that not only all matter is ultimately reducible to energy, but also that there is nothing real like matter. It sounds almost like the dictum of Vedanta that the *jagat* (world of name and form) is *mithyā* (false or illusory). *The Mysterious Universe* and *The Universe Around us* of Sir James Jeans or Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World* or Pere Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*, all throw ample hints regarding the limitations of science, Swami Ranganathananda's epoch-making book, *Science and Religion* has succeeded in proving the complementarity of science and religion.

However, the religious approach, not of Vedanta, but of *Tantra*, answers properly to the claim of the in-depth study of man, which is the subject-matter of

* Based on an extempore lecture on the subject, delivered by the author at Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Calcutta on 4.1.99.

VEDĀNTA AND TANTRA - A SYNTHETIC STUDY*

—Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly

Vedanta, comprising the *Upanisads*, *Brahma Sutra* and *Bhagavad Gita*, studies the subjective universe of the individual soul (*Jivātmā*), cosmic soul (*Paramātmā*) and the underlying infinite all-inclusive Reality (*Brahman*). Hence Vedanta proceeds on the lines of philosophical synthetic analysis and tries to discover the unified ultimate field of reality. *Tantra* is an analytical study of the multifarious objective world. Hence it adopts the scientific method of study. A glimpse of the *Positive Sciences of Hindus* by Brajen Seal and *A History of Hindu Chemistry* by Prafulla Chandra Roy will indicate how vast was the canvass of Hindu *Tantra sastra*, which made valuable contribution in the scientific fields of Surgery, Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology, Geography and Geology, Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Sociology, Political Economy etc.

Thus we see that Vedantic philosophy studies the eternal principles and *Tantra* studies the ever-changing world. But the world consists of two aspects, viz. the physical universe and the subtle universe. Modern sciences, both natural and social, deal with the external, physical and social universe, whereas *Tantra sastra* deals with the subtle forces behind the physical world, to forge a link between *Jagat* (World) and *Brahman* (God). Of course, even modern physics has arrived at a stage, where scientific laws have begun knocking at the door of *Sakti* or *Prāna*, which is the primeval source of all energy.

The Relativity Equation of Einstein, ($E = mc^2$) has almost established that not only all matter is ultimately reducible to energy, but also that there is nothing real like matter. It sounds almost like the dictum of Vedanta that the *jagat* (world of name and form) is *mithyā* (false or illusory). *The Mysterious Universe* and *The Universe Around us* of Sir James Jeans or Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World* or Pere Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*, all throw ample hints regarding the limitations of science, Swami Ranganathananda's epoch-making book, *Science and Religion* has succeeded in proving the complementarity of science and religion.

However, the religious approach, not of Vedanta, but of *Tantra*, answers properly to the claim of the in-depth study of man, which is the subject-matter of

* Based on an extempore lecture on the subject, delivered by the author at Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Calcutta on 4.1.99.

religion, for Tantra is the practical or applied aspect of Vedanta. Tantra undertakes the detailed scientific aspects of *Nididhyāsana* (technique of worship and meditation). *Tantra* has the capacity of raising atheistic science to the level of a truly theistic science. Thus *Tantra* is the logical link between *Vedanta* and science.

The Perennial Philosophy :

The Vedanta offers the perennial philosophy or *Sanātan Dharma* of the Hindus, which has universal application for the whole of humanity.

According to the famous philosopher, Aldous Huxley, at the core of the perennial philosophy the following four fundamental doctrines are found :—

i) The phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness is the manifestation of a Divine Ground, within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent. This Divine Ground is called Brahman, whose creative, sustaining and transforming aspects are manifested in the Hindu Trinity of *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and *Rudra (Siva)*.

ii) Human beings are capable not merely of knowing about the Divine Ground by inference ; they can also realize its existence by a direct intuitive knowledge gained through *Yogic samādhi*.

iii) Man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal self (*Atman*), which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. 'An eternal portion of Myself has become a living soul in the world of life' (*Gita XV-7*).

iv) Man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to be identified himself with his eternal self (*Atman*) and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground (*Paramātman* or *Brahman*). Upanisadic aphorisms like, 'Thou art That' or *Aham Brahmāsmi* (I am the Brahman) or 'All this manifested universe is nothing but Brahman,' categorically establish this monism of Vedanta¹.

It is on the basis of the above perennial philosophy based on Vedanta that, after realization of God, an ancient Rishi declared. "Hear, children of immortal bliss ! Even ye that reside in higher sphere ! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion; knowing Him above you shall be saved from death over again. "Jesus Christ declared that he was the son of God. Upanisads of India

1. Aldous Huxley in Introduction to *the Song of God : Bhagavad Gitā*, translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, A Mentor Book, The New American Library, 1954, p. 13.

