

Keep your thinking on a very high level. Praise and blame, filth and sandalpaste must become alike. Nothing in the world should be repulsive to you. Look into your own heart and become repelled by the repulsion. It is only so long as the mind is filled with the thought of God, with the awareness of His Presence, that there can be real rest.

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Food, sleep, toilet, clothes etc., should be given only as much attention as is needed for the maintenance of health. What is the use of merely well-nourished body ? Rather it should become an aid to the spiritual life. Exclusively to this end must the current of life be diverted, away from the world, moving entirely in the direction of God. Take pains to discover for yourself the various things that you can do with real joy and that will bring you nearer to God. Has anyone ever become great by sitting down and saying "I cannot" ?

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Anger, greed and the like must be altogether abandoned. Neither should you be swayed by praise or prestige. Do not retort, in a spirit of contradiction to anything that is said. Reply politely with a smile and say no more

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All work must be done as a service to God. The longer you can be inwardly stirred by the feeling of His presence, the more will your body, your mind and your actions progress towards the Divine state of being (*Divya Bhava*). Attune yourself solely to God. Where the thought of God is, there He Himself is present in the form of that thought. To seek truth is man's one and only duty.

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Learn by heart hymns and verses in praise of God and repeat them whilst you move about. Never allow your mind to be idle. Keep it engaged in the repetition of a mantra, of God's name, of sacred hymns and the like, or else in pure Remembrance.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH MA

[Translated from Bengali]

— Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Dhaka Ashram, August 20, 1939

In the morning Ma was sitting in front of the Smriti Mandir and conversation with devotees was going on.

Pramatha : Tell me, Ma, how can I get rid of my doubt ?

Ma : As soon as He is realized all doubts are resolved. Unless and until your spiritual power (*chaitanya sakti*) or your Guru are revealed, doubts will not cease.

Pramatha : This is no reply to my question. I repeat, please tell us what we have to do to resolve our doubts.

Ma : Start by putting into practice what you have gained from your Guru. By continuing to do so, His mercy will resolve all your doubts.

Abhaya : This is not correct. Even though you say it, we cannot believe it.

Ma : I never ask anybody to listen to my advice or to accept it. This body merely voices what you evoke from it. However, some people do receive from these words what they are seeking. On the other hand some derive no benefit, since they don't require anything. This is somewhat like this : suppose you have dropped something on the way. Someone coming behind you may notice this but goes on, while someone else picks it up carefully and makes use of it. My words are like this.

Pramatha : Please tell us how to get rid of our doubts.

Ma : Have I not already told you to start your work with whatever your Guru has bestowed upon you. Quite often it is asked, how can the mind become still through japa ? Everyone is anxious to have peace of mind, because without stilling the mind *ananda* is not possible. Here is one way to set the mind at rest.

I have already explained to you that **Guru** mantra and *Ista* are one. To contemplate the Guru or the *Ista* and to perform mantra japa amounts to the same because the Name and the Named are identical. So start by repeating the mantra received from your Guru. During this japa meditate on the image your Guru has indicated to you or on your Guru's photo. Where exactly should you concentrate during meditation ? It is good to concentrate in the heart because this is the place

where joy and sorrow arise. However, if your Guru has instructed you to concentrate on anyone of the six chakras, (along the meridian of the body as explained in the Yoga Sastras) it is a different matter. You will concentrate in whatever spot that the Guru has indicated. You may have read about the chakras that are situated in different locations of the body, and how each chakra has a different shape and a special presiding deity. This body has not studied anything, but it speaks on this subject because it has actually and quite clearly seen all this. By meditating on these different chakras, various states or spiritual experiences may be the result. But let us leave all this now.

You will start your meditation by imagining your Guru or *Ista* enthroned in your heart. There is yet another reason for concentrating in the heart. If you want to grow a tree out of a seed, you bury the seed under the earth and go on watering it. Due to your care and through the strength of the soil the tree grows out of the seed. Why do I stress the strength of the soil ? Because in order to produce a tree out of a seed, good earth is necessary. Even though the tree grows upwards, its roots remain underground, and it is the roots that constitute the life of the tree. Because it is seen that however many branches and twigs may be chopped off, the tree does not wither since its roots are intact. To enable the tree to grow you water it regularly. This water you pour at its bottom surface, not directly into the roots. The water reaches the roots and helps the tree to grow. Similarly, the roots of this body-tree of ours lie in the head while the branches are down below. The heart is the foundation of this tree and any nourishment given here will reach the roots. For this reason one should meditate in the heart.

A devotee : Where exactly is the heart ?

Ma : The heart is everywhere, in the hands, in the feet, in every part of the body. Yet, when we speak about the heart we normally understand this place (pointing to Her chest). This is where one should concentrate while meditating.

Now, what should you do when sitting down for meditation ? Whether it is the Guru or the *Ista*, whom you have placed on the pedestal in your heart, contemplate His form. But during this meditation you find that your mind cannot remain steady. You cannot keep your mind fixed in one place even for a minute. This is why I advised that after placing your Guru on His seat in your heart, watch your breath moving in and out. It is this breathing that enables us to remain alive. However different human beings, animals, birds, etc., may be in species and also each creature from the other, in this respect, as far as *prana* (life) is concerned, they are the same. Because they all remain alive by breathing. Hence, enthrone your Guru in your heart and contemplate Him as pervading the whole universe through *prana*, the

breath of life. The Guru is all-pervasive. So one should perform japa of the mantra received from the Guru and simultaneously watch one's breathing.

Everybody can do this. But the practice of japa in rhythm with one's breathing should be done on the advice of the Guru. If it is done merely because one has read about it in a book, there is the possibility of the brain becoming over-exerted. All the same, in many cases it is seen that by this practice the japa fits in naturally with the rhythm of the breath. In such cases there is no danger.

For performing puja you have seen how people mould an earthen image and then instil life into it by some special rites. Consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) exists everywhere. It is equally present in every creature (*jiva*) as well as in earth. But because we do not realize that living consciousness is also present in clay, we mould an earthen image and then instill life into it through some special ceremonies. Similarly, enthroning your Guru in your heart, think of Him as pervading everywhere as the life force (*prana*) and then engage in your japa while watching your breath moving in and out.

The benefit derived from watching the movement of one's breath while practising japa is that the mind becomes somewhat calm. Whether it is a picture or an image, the mind cannot concentrate on it for any length of time. But because breathing implies movement it is a little easier to tie the restless mind to it. In a similar fashion, to make a restless child remain quietly in a room, one has to provide the kid with a toy.

Now consider something else : the waves that arise in water are nothing but water. Yet, because of their movement they appear to be separate. The same substance is simultaneously quiet and in motion, broken into parts and unbroken. This constitutes the ceaseless *lila* of the universe. Beyond that there is a state where there are neither water nor waves. This is the unmanifest (*avyakta*).

If you concentrate on the waves for sometime you will find that they are nothing but water. In the same way if you continue for some length of time to carry out your japa while concentrating your restive mind on your breathing or on your Guru in the guise of *prana*, you will find that your mind has become calm, and the consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) that is always present within you becomes revealed of itself. Once this revelation has taken place there is an end to doubts.

Another advantage of carrying out japa in rhythm with your breathing is that it can be performed everywhere, at all times. Inhaling and exhaling continues without a break; so all you have to do is to perform your japa in rhythm with your breathing. There is no need to keep a picture or photo in front of you. Besides, people proceeding by whatever path, whether that of devotion or dedicated action or

knowledge, can carry this out. To imagine one's Guru to be the life force (*prana*) of all creatures is helpful on the path of knowledge. To enthrone his Guru or *Ista* in one's heart is helpful on the path of devotion; the performance of japa and the like is an aid on the path of dedicated action. So you see, this method of sadhana will suit aspirants regardless of the path they pursue.

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In the evening I returned to the Ashram and found Ma seated on a cot on the veranda of the Siva Temple. Speaking to an old man, She remarked: "Baba, do keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth."

The old man : Are my words so very harsh ?

Ma: (smiling) Not that. When you keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth it will melt slowly and keep your mouth sweet. That is to say, if you do not keep your tongue idle but engage it constantly in japa, you will get the taste of its sweetness. Otherwise a "return ticket" has to be taken -- one has to come back again and again.

Addressing another person, Ma said : "Here we are staying in a dharmasala, this is not our real hearth and home. If it were, could we be forced against our will to leave it? When the call comes we cannot delay even for an instant, neither do we get the opportunity to make preparations. As we are so we have to quit. This is why I request you to try and follow a path by which you can return to your real home and not have to wander from one dharmasala to another again and again.

Pointing towards an aged lady, Ma said: "Ma, with your Gopal remain inside your room and shut the doors. This is the way to peace. One by one you have lost all your teeth, now you are toothless (*bedanta*).^{*} If you cannot stick to your Gopal, you will have to return again and become toothless once more.

Another lady : Ma, I cannot bear the worries and troubles of my household any longer. There is constant unrest.

Ma : No, you are still liking it, otherwise how could you live in it ? Once a house catches fire, can one remain in it ? One has to run away with great speed. Since you are still living in it, it appears that although there is some trouble, yet you are still fond of your home."



* *Bedanta* -- toothless. & *Vedanta* Philosophy, a play upon words.

A VISION GRANTED*

—S. N. Sopory

In September 1952 I got orders for transfer from Calcutta to Bombay after a posting of four years, during which period I got more opportunity to be near Mataji than at any other time before.

Both my wife and myself were, naturally, thinking all the time how and when we would again have such a wonderful opportunity, particularly because we were proceeding to a place absolutely on the other side of the country and far away from the region usually visited by Mataji those days.

Many friends and office staff came to Howrah Station to see us off with many garlands and flowers the sight of which in such profusion carried our thoughts away to a different world. We were thinking of Mataji all the time, thinking how nice it would have been if these garlands and flowers could be offered at her lotus feet, instead of being given to us.

The train steamed out and gradually the waving hands got out of sight, but our thoughts remained with Mataji and we talked of nothing else. We took the longer route to Bombay via Allahabad, because my wife had to get down at Allahabad. We had heard that Mataji was likely to be at Vindhyachal, near Mirzapur and so my wife's programme was to go to Vindhyachal from Allahabad and then to proceed to Gorakhpur to see her ailing sister.

Next day when our train reached Mirzapur, which is the nearest stop of the mailtrain for Vindhyachal, there was such a strong urge to have Mataji's *Darshan*, that I got down and looked all around to see if by chance Mataji was at the station. This was a futile attempt, since Mataji usually went by car from Varanasi to Vindhyachal.

Soon the train left Mirzapur and in a short time it was passing over that portion of the railway track which is seen from the Vindhyachal Ashram or from which the Ashram can be seen, far away on top of the hill. I was so excited that I opened the door of the compartment and stood holding the hand rails in order to have as clear a

*. Collection from the old writings of late Sri. S. N. Sopory, one of the very old Kashmiri devotees of Shree Ma.

view as possible of the Ashram, as if the view through the window was not enough.

Lo and behold ! a miracle happened. My earnest desire to have Mataji's *Darshan* was fulfilled in a most unusual and unexpected way. Right in front of me, on the lowest portion of the ridge of the hill and far below the Ashram. I saw as clear as day-light that Mataji was standing there facing my side with a group of Ashramites whom I could recognise. At this distance of time I don't remember all the names but Narain Swamiji, Bunidi, and a few others were there.

I was so overjoyed and excited that I forgot to do *Pranam* but instead of that I rushed inside the compartment and picked up a towel that was lying on the berth and started waving it frantically in order to make my presence known to Mataji.

This occurrence left me in a daze for some time. However, I had a very clear *Darshan* of Mataji, little realising at that time that even the lowest part of the ridge was so far away from the train that a clear view could not be had in normal circumstances. It was as if the whole group picture was magnified to a very large size, and even the hillside was, so to say, shifted closer towards our side to enable me to have the *Darshan* as if in a normal way.

My wife had not seen anything and so I explained everything to her and at the same time I put down the entire episode in writing in a letter to Didiji. I gave it to my wife to hand over to Didiji. I also mentioned in my letter how grateful I was for Mataji's infinite kindness in blessing me with her *Darshan* even in a most impossible and unusual situation in a most extraordinary way.

Much later it became clear to me that Mataji in her great compassion had not only granted my wish to have her *Darshan* but also had a *KHEYAL* to bless me with her Grace in all my endeavours in the new place to which I was going. I was going to the Head Office of my company to take up a new challenging job. By Ma's grace I proved my worth and was promoted to the highest rank.

Another more important aspect in which Mataji's *KHEYAL* and Grace touched me was in regard to my services in respect of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. It was almost against insuperable odds that I pressed for the *Samyam Saptah* of 1954 to be held in Bombay. There were very few devotees in Bombay those days, such as Mooljibhai and Nandubhai Desai and a few other. It was absolutely and entirely due to Mataji's Grace that it became possible to hold the *saptah* in Bombay. Subsequently this function turned out to be one of the most successful ones and till now many Mahatmas and others remember it so. Mataji stayed on for three weeks with us, and that by itself must be a near record as a stay in continuation of any *Samyam Saptah* ! Many new devotees came to Mataji as a result of this function, to name a few important ones, Shri B. K. Shah, Shri D. I. Kania and several others.

The outstanding services rendered by this new group of Bombay devotees since then to Mataji and to the Sangha as such are unique and therefore it can be said that the *Bombay Samyam Saptah* in the year 1954 was a very important event in the history of the Sangha, which ushered in a new phase and new direction in the services rendered for progress of the Sangha and towards the furtherance of aims and ideals preached by Mataji. To me it dawns now that somehow Mataji in her *KHEYAL* picked me as an instrument to render some little service in this direction on that day when she accorded her Holy *Darshan* to me, who was being carried away at sixty miles per hour in a mail train !

Now to complete the story I must relate what Mataji was actually doing at the time when my train was passing Vindhyachal. My wife wrote to me after going to Vindhyachal that Mataji came out to the verandah of the upper floor room of the Ashram on the Astabhuja Hills a little before the train was to pass, and stood there looking in the direction of the Railway track. The persons mentioned by me were with her at that time. The verandah has a sloping roof and the shade prevents clear vision from outside even at a shorter distance. From a long distance it was an impossibility to recognise a whole group of persons.

Just as our train came in sight Mataji remarked, "Is there any known person travelling by the train today ?" Bunidi said that to their knowledge no one was going. Soon afterwards Mataji said, "Look some one is waving some cloth". In reply to this Bunidi said that some third class passenger must be drying his clothes. After that Mataji remained quiet. The significant and interesting fact is that Mataji intentionally provided proof of the fact that she knew that some one known was in that train and she had come out of her room specifically for that reason. Still more significant is the fact that out of infinite kindness she responded to some thought wave of mine that must have reached her and she gave me her *Darshan* by projecting the entire image of her group to a point within my view, and at sufficient magnification, to be lifelike and normal in every way.

I was pining for her *Darshan* and the response from the other side was immediate and instantaneous, and so much so that out of her infinite compassion for her child she also lost no time in giving me not only her *Darshan* but a view of all those who were with her. My own interpretation of this particular act on her part is that by my mentioning the names of all the others, an authenticity was attached to the whole episode. Otherwise my story could be considered as day-dreaming. This act of kindness on Mataji's part proves the oft mentioned saying that if you take one step towards God, God takes two steps to come to you, and pick you up in His arms. This is just what Mataji did.

What compassion ! What magnanimity ! Jai Ma ! Our Ma !



CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI VIJAYANANDA

Q. - What can I do about all my defects of character and about failure ?

A. - Keep in mind that in *sadhana* (and life) we have to learn to fall and get back up again and again, like a child who is learning to walk. The child will not say "I don't want to make the effort to try again" ! When you see your faults and when you fail, just learn the lesson and go on, forgetting about the failure (excessive feelings of guilt are useless).

Remember your victories !

With the right mental attitude, you can see that your defects of character are an occasion to learn, that the noise outside can be a help to concentrate on your inner silence etc.

Socrates himself used the bad temper of his wife in order to learn how to keep cool in any situation; one day she was so angry with him that after screaming she threw water on him. Very calm, Socrates just said: "After thunder comes the rain" !!

A fall occurs every time we become proud, but it's precisely the way to learn humility.

Remember that it is also normal to have defects of character, otherwise you would not need any *sadhana* nor any *guru*. Just stop identifying yourself with these faults, simply *observe* them, without action upon them. For example, if you have a tendency to criticise people, keep lucid about them (see their defects clearly), but avoid thinking and talking about their faults, and put your attention mostly on their positive qualities.

However, it is important to be lucid while you see the divine in everyone: you should not mix with people who are not fit for you. Dirty water is also water, but you do not drink it.

Q. - How can we know whether we are making any progress spiritually ?

A. - The most important sign is the diminution of negative emotions like anger, fear, desire etc., or at least a major ability to control them. This usually goes with more love and compassion for everyone, while being less attached to family and friends. Meditation is actually mostly a help for that; there is little use in meditating if the results cannot be seen in daily life with a better self-control and more compassion ! We should try to always keep in harmony

with our surroundings and with everybody. So if you practice meditation regularly but cannot control your anger, you should stop meditating (just repeat your mantra and observe your thoughts), and start by learning how to deal with your negative emotions.

Q. - When negative thoughts come to my mind, how can I chase them away ?

A. - The best way is just to observe them and let them go without fighting against them, without acting upon them, just avoiding to identify yourself with them. Say "it is my mind, it is not me". Negative thoughts are a mere product of the mind with no reality. A spiritual discipline helps to keep a silent mind; you learn to use it when it is necessary and to leave it quiet the rest of the time, just like your hands and feet remain still when you don't need them.

When you cannot do that, then an easier way is to substitute them with positive thoughts with the repetition of your mantra, with prayer, *kirtans* etc. For example, if you want to conquer sexual and romantic desires, you can try to see the Divine in every person instead of their physical appearance, seeing the divine Mother in each woman and Shiva (or any other manifestation) in each man.

Q. - Would you please give us some advice on how to keep a good health ?

A. - First avoid orienting too much your attention on your body, and put it more and more on the Divine, using *japam*, meditation, *satsang* etc. (these practices also have a very good influence on the immune system). The mind is powerful, so the more you think of the inevitable small physical problems (we all have some !), the more they become important. If you think about Ma or any other manifestation of the Divine, they become much smaller !

When you are ill, of course the first thing is to do your best to be cured; but before you are well you can try to use the suffering as an opportunity to become less attached to your body.

Q. - What do you think of the numerous cases of depression in Occident ?

A. - Ma used to say that the world is a big madhouse... Who is crazy, who is mentally sane ?

Apart from the cases of depression that are really psychopathological, many depressed people in Occident have a deep spiritual longing for renunciation, but they are not fully aware of it; it is not part of their culture and tradition, unlike Indian culture. A sign of this is that some people get better by orienting their life towards more spirituality.

A good thing to be aware of is that even in the worst thing that happens there is at least one "white point", the seed of something positive; and even in the best thing or event there is a "black point", something that goes wrong or that is disappointing. This is well illustrated by the symbol of *Tao* (*Yin* and *Yang*). Depression also can sometimes be a "blessing in disguise".

Q. - What are the characteristic of *Vedanta* as compared to other spiritual paths ?

A. - *Vedanta* is simple, it has no complicated methods or rituals. There is nothing external to fight against: all is inside of you. By purifying the mind through discrimination between illusion and Reality, and by respecting *Dharma* in every aspect of your life, your real Self appears !

The essence of *sadhana* is explained in just two words in *Katha Upanishad*: "*Avriti Shakshu*", which means "look inside". In the *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali, Raja Yoga is described as the cessation of mental waves.

Although I like its simplicity, *Vedanta* is not an easy path at all - as a matter of fact it is not adapted to everyone. One of the main difficulty of *Vedanta* is renunciation. Very few people are ready to renounce pleasures, wealth, power honours, worldly love ... But those who can are on the surest way to attain inner peace, Self-knowledge and the supreme Joy that is infinitely more intense than any worldly pleasure.

Q. - Why are *brahmacharin (i) s* and *sadhus* so often easily influencable ?

A. - Because being deeply oriented towards spiritual life, many of them are not aggressive, and are so kind that they tend to accept almost anything from anybody ... It is a good quality for a spiritual seeker, provided he has also a great ability to discriminate between what is acceptable and what is not.

It is just what is expressed in the story that Ramakrishna told about the cobra who used to kill or do harm to many people. One day, the cobra was about to attack a great sage, who neutralized it without even touching it. The cobra was amazed and listened to the sage when he told it to stop harming people, because it was accumulating a lot of bad *karma*. The cobra agreed, and even received initiation from the sage. After its new *guru* left, the cobra repeated its *mantra* continuously and did not attack anyone, not even the smallest animal. It lived on some grass and herbs, becoming very slim and weak. The children were not afraid of it anymore, and even started being cruel with it, beating it and throwing it in the air. The cobra did not defend itself, practising a total *ahimsha* (non-violence). The next year, when its *guru* came back to

see it, the cobra was not to be seen anywhere. The sage asked the children, who said that the cobra had died. But he knew that his disciple could not die before attaining Self-realization, since it was under his protection, so he called it. Finally he heard a voice saying "*Guruji* I am here ! " The cobra was well hidden and in very poor health. So the sage asked it why it was so skinny and full of scars. The cobra said gently. "Oh, the children were just playing... " Its *guru* replied: "You are stupid ! I told you not to harm anyone, but if someone wants to harm you, you can hiss and show the hood, so that he leaves you in peace !"

This is what we should do when we have a spiritual life: avoid getting angry and avoid hurting anyone, but when it is necessary *pretend* to be angry or even threatening, in order to protect what has to be protected.

Q. - Does a *yogi* still has a fear of death ?

A. - A *yogi* who has reached the supreme state is not scared of death anymore, not being identified with his body and knowing when he will die. He is also free of the most subtle fears, like fear of failing to accomplish fully his own religious duty, or of doing something wrong spiritually. He is fully identified with the Divine, and when the time comes his body will just fall, like a leaf falls from the tree: the tree (divine *Conscience*) is not affected by it.

Before you reach that state, remember what Ma used to say: death is like going from a room to another, or like changing your clothes. In reality, we are usually more afraid of suffering than of dying. Usually we imagine how death might be according to what we saw or heard about other people's death. So we often think that it might be terrible, although it is often just like falling asleep ! Anyway, death is just the end of your "envelope", the body; the Being that is the real you is Eternal, and can never be damaged in any way.



JAI MA

—Dhiraj Sapru

... ya mate - life Is - 'good' or 'bad' - shallow things - all they ever do is segregate - which in 'common' language spells "DISTRUCTION".

... therefore, aspire to be "nirgun" - which means not a state of 'absence' of temperament, rather being fully - conscious of it; or it's like this - if you "knew" that you are angry, you would want to know "why" - an earnest - willing - inquiry by it's very virtue of being, will nullify and devour the seed of anger... you know what is trying to be gotten at, don't you ...

but really, and, fathom this, man - you know, sometimes she's so very close that she's you - playfully asking with all the innocence of a upright - little -girl, "why aspire only to experience mere fleeting glimpses, sometimes, of "THAT", that which in reality pretty much covers the entire - eternity; come on, my dearest, let go, take the plunge, be a living part of the whole - won't you, sweetheart ?"

... consider that in the light of this - pleasure is actualiy nothing but a sand-trap on path of a sadhak - engaging him in irrelativities; which of course has nothing to do with his being in a joyous state...

Stand apart and see this - should pleasures bind you, the only outcome possible (eventually) is pain ...

that is the. eternal law... for, fastened to the horse, the cart must follow...

"Be in the world - but not of it" - says madhav through the Geeta; get into that - to explore out the 'true' nature of things; things marked out as "top-priority", sometimes, don't as much as bother, nor matter ...

"Life" is one-simply because - IT always has been ...

the hugest 4 - D, interactive - film is forever on, projected on a screen big enough to project on IT's here' - IT's 'now' - you are in it - as always ... no, it's no achievement being in it -not till one learns the secret of "withdrawing - from - the - show" at will ...

"Be in the world - but not of it"

you see, it is thus, the mother to Buddhahood is the wish for enlightenment - which is nothing other than Prajnaparamita - transcendent wisdom or ma; She becomes the very path - walking along which, She merges into Herself - That is Divinity, or "altogetherness"....

jai ma



VALUES OF VEDANTA FOR MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

—Prof, Bireswar Ganguly, D. Litt.

Vedanta means the philosophy of the highest knowledge; Vedanta offers the best ideal in the information age. The world has entered the third wave of civilization, after the second wave of industrial revolution. In this computer age of electronic revolution, management has attained a critical dimension. Management means management of organization. Organization may be of family, business or nation: Everywhere there is the problem of human relation. Human relation improves when we know our destination. Our destination is to be happy by making others happy. This is possible only when we accept Vedantic philosophy. Every religion has its four essential pillars, e.g. theology, mythology, ethics and rituals. Ethics offers the highest common factor and similarities are found in the ethical sector. Vedantic scriptures are of three types or *Prasthān*. The Upanishads are called the *Shruti Prasthān*. They offer the perennial philosophy of Vedanta. *Nyaya Prasthān Brahmasutra* is a logical treatise. It reconciles all Upanishadic anomalies. Vedantic ethics is propounded in *Bhagavad Gita*. It is also found in *Mahābhārat* and *Manu Samhitā* known, as *Smriti Prasthān*. The moral code of *Gītā* is meant for divine players. It synthesizes social welfare with personal desires, integration of the secular with spiritual life. All these are found in the *niskām karma yogi's* life. *Karma* becomes *Yoga* when to God offered, *Karma* becomes *nishkāma*, if to self-interest social good is preferred. No worker can claim the full fruit of his labours. His work produces surplus value for others. Others are also part and parcel of the Divine. 'Work done mainly for social welfare is not thine. Thou art an actor in God's social drama. Worldly activities are also offerings to Rama'. The *Varnas* are based on qualities and aptitudes. They are not hereditary. This view is *Gita's* certitude. The *Brāhmin* is a *Jnan Yogi* for intellectual pursuit. He can also indulge in spiritual pursuit. The *Kshatriaya* shall fight and rule on earth; the *Vaishya* shall produce wealth for home and hearth. The *shudra* shall offer labour in factory and farm, and shall not indulge in activities of social harm. Business management covers all the above four. Capital and organization cannot function without labour. For successful business all three must be efficient. And all three must be honest and proficient. Capital should be supplied through honest savings. Labour should be offered through honest strivings. Manager is an administrator in a

business firm. He is a *Kshatriya*; his aim is the social concern. He may have high intelligence quotient, but he will not succeed without high emotional quotient. High emotional quotient shall be supplied by Vedanta. Vedantic ethics is the practical aspect of Vedanta. By adopting the *Karma Yoga* of Gitā's Sacrament, wealth and prosperity shall be assured to management.

Public administration to-day has dropped the values of life. There is all-around selfishness, corruption and strife. To make administration conform to norms of social welfare, it is necessary to imbibe the values of Vedanta to inspire. Without Vedantic ethics of divinized social service, corrupt administration will lead the nation to precipice. Practical Vedantic ethics is found in principles of *Rājdharma*, as mentioned in *Manu Smriti* and *Mahabhārat Shānti Parva*. The ideal code of conduct as enunciated for rulers, should be adopted by modern administrators and ministers. For achieving this goal the ideals of life need re-orientation, for which *Bhagavad Gitā* gives the best practical presentation.

II. VEDANTIC ETHICS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT :

There are four ideals of Hindu life, viz, *dharma* (morality), *artha* (economic activity), *Kāma* (sexual life) and *moksha* (liberation from desire). *Kautilya*, in his *Arthashāstra*, admitted only the first three for social and political action, for the last is relevant only for a few highly evolved individuals. However, he emphasized the role of *dharma* (righteous conduct) even for economic, political and biological activities, in order that a civilized civil society may function.

Vedantic ethics from the days of the Vedas to the period of *Mahābhārata* war was affirmative and not escapist. Escapism crept in later on through the influence of Buddhism and *Mayavadi Vedanta* of Shankarāchārya.

The following eight formulae of Vedantic scriptures capture the essential elements of Hindu code of conduct, based on the perennial philosophy of Vedanta :-

1. Everything, animate or inanimate in this universe is the habitation of God. One should enjoy life in a spirit of renunciation and sacrifice and should not covet the possession of others.

(*Ishopanishad*, 1/1)

2. Perform only such pure duties, which are beneficial to others. Abhor such acts which are detrimental to the society. We should follow the precepts of morality.

(*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 1/11/2)

3. God utters through the sound of thunder cloud, (*Da, Da, Da, ...* control your senses, give away your surplus possession in charity and have compassion for others.

(*Brihadāranyak Upanishad, 5/2/3*)

4. Ten qualities of a religious man are :

(a) Patience (b) forgiveness, (c) non stealing, (d) non-covetousness (e) purity of body and mind, (f) control over the senses (g) wisdom, (h) learning, (i) truthfulness, (i) control of anger.

(*Manusmriti, 6/92*)

5. The perennial duty of the righteous man is to behave with others in a non-violent way in action, speech and thought, as well as to have mercy and charity.

(*Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 296/34*)

6. Devoted each to his own social duty, man can attain the highest perfection. From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all the universe is pervaded, worshipping Him (God or Brahman) with his own moral duty, man can attain liberation (perfection).

(*Bhagavad Gitā, XVIII/45-46*)

7. Thy right is to work only; but never to the fruits thereof. Be thou not the producer of the fruits of (thy) action; neither let thy attachment be towards inaction.

(*Bhagavad Gita II/47*)

8. Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, Whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O, son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me.

(*Bhagavad Gita, IX/27*)

We see from the brief discussion of Hindu ethics above, that the derogatory Marxian epithet of 'religion as an opiate to life' does not apply to the vibrant, dynamic religion of the Hindus.

Christian ethics and economic development :

The Marxian analogy of opium for religion may be applicable to the Roman Catholic code of conduct which is escapist and other-worldly in nature, but not to the Protestantism of Martin Luther, which was the corner-stone of the ideology of reformation, renaissance as well as the industrial revolution. The rise of capitalism was possible in England, France and Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, because of the protestant emphasis on abhorrence of luxury, encouragement of savings, honest and efficient labour and industriousness. As

against the old Chistian dictum 'It is easier for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the rich man to reach the gates of heaven', the Protestant dictum was : 'Heaven is not a dumping ground for the failures on earth. 'The ideal policy for protestant merchants and industrialists was : 'Honesty is the best policy.' Japanese capitalists also adopted this ideal, but unfortunately for merchants, industrialists and bureaucrats of India today the Popular motto is: ' 420 is the best policy'.

Ethics in decision making :

Now-a-days in successful western as well as eastern business enterprises, ethical considerations are an important criterion in organizational decision-making. The most popular ethical decision criterion is the utilitarian criterion, in which decisions are made solely on the basis of their consequences. "The goal of utilitarianism is to provide the greatest good for the greatest number. This view tends to dominate business decision making. It is consistent with goals like efficiency, productivity, and high profits. (Stephen P. Robbins : *Organizational Behaviour*, 10th ed, 2003, 2nd Indian Reprint, 2004, Pearson Education, Delhi, P, 1443). According to Robbins, 'an organizational culture most likely to shape high ethical standards is one that is high in risk tolerance, low to moderate in aggressivness, and focuses on means as well as outcomes. Management can adopt a combination of the following practices to create a more ethical culture : (Ibid : Pp. 538-539).

- a. Be a visible role model;
- b. Communicate ethical expectations;
- c. Provide ethical training;
- d. Visibly reward ethical acts and punish unethical ones;
- e. Provide protective mechanisms.

Robbins has gone to the extent of suggesting spirituality for improving modern organizational culture, for "we have now come to realize that the study of emotions improves our understanding of organizational behaviour" and hence "an awareness of spirituality can help you to better understand employee behaviour in the twenty-first century. (*Ibid*: P.542). He suggests the following reasons for emphasizing spiritual values:

- a. As a counterbalance to the pressures and stress of a turbulent pace of life;
- b. To provide an answer to the meaning of work;
- c. The desire to integrate personal life values with one's professional life. (*Ibid*, P. 543).

the power of positive thinking in managerial motivation :

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world civilization is passing through the third wave of civilization, ushered in by the electronic and computer revolution. We have seen how the ethics of Protestant Christianity helped in motivating successful capitalist entrepreneurs during the industrial revolution of the second wave of civilization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Success in business as well as administration lies in the confident positive thinking of managers, entrepreneurs and administrators.

Vedantic ethics as propounded in *Bhagavad Gitā* can successfully supply the positive thinking needed for successful managers and administrators. The ethics of reformed Christianity also is akin to that of *Leelavādi Vedanta*, as found in *Bhagavad Gitā*. Norman Vincent Peale in his international best-seller, '*The Power of Positive Thinking*,' (Norman Vincent Peale : *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Pub: Simon & Schuster, Inc, 1987, Hindi Trans;: *Sakārātmak Soch Ki Shakti*, Pub. Manjul Publishing House, Bhopal, 2003) has narrated, innumerable examples of proper managerial motivation, leading to success in business by emphasizing the following sermons of the Bible: -

1. Phillipians - 4:13, - "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me".
2. Mathew - 9:29 - "According to your faith be it unto you."
3. Romans - 8:31 - "If God be for us, who can be against us ?"
4. Luke - 17:21 - "The Kingdom of God is within you."
5. Mathew - 17:20 - "For verily I say unto you, if ye have fath as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

the concepts of dharma and rajdharma in mahabharat and manusmriti :

Introduction : It is difficult to translate the term 'dharma' as used in the *Mahābhārata* and *Manusmriti*. The term *dharma* conveys different meanings at different places, viz. religion, faith, virtue, religious merit, morality, righteousness, duty, law, justice, spirituality, etc, and *adharmā* conveys contrary meanings of them. However, the chief motive of Maharshi Veda Vyasa in writing the great epic of *Mahabharata* seems to be the glorification of *dharma* and the aim of the war of Kurukshetra was the establishment of the Kingdom based on *dharma*.

Veda Vyas has classified *dharma* into *swadharma*, *nishkama dharma*, *rajadharma*, *yoddha dharma*, etc. to reconcile diverse actions of *dharma* found in the ideal characters of the epic. The concept of moral duty runs as an under-current in the use of the different terms, though the actions of the characters show the relative nature of *dharma* under different circumstances. The glory of *dharma* and the good actions coming out of it are proclaimed by the poet through the utterances of Yudishthira, Dhritarashtra, Kunti, Draupadi, Narad, Vidura, Bhisma, Krishna, Gandhari and many others.

The qualities and duties of a good king are found in the *Rajadharma* section of the *Shantiparva* of *Mahābhārata*, wherein Bhisma Pitāmaha, the grandsire of the Kauravas and *Pandavas*, delineates the qualities of good Kings and duties of Kings, in answer to questions put to him by Yudhishtira. As we find a clear concept of *dharma* in the sixth chapter on 'Āshrama *dharmānushashan*' of *Manusmriti*, so we find a detailed and clear description of *rajadharma* in the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of *Manusmriti*. Other ancient texts on *rajadharma* are *Shukrantiti*, *Vidurprajagar* and Chanakya's *Arthshastra*.

However, the qualities and duties of Kings, as described in all the above texts are meant for a monarchical form of government of ancient patriarchal and feudal societies and apparently not for modern democracies, though the concepts of *dharma* in general and *swadharma* in particular are meant for universal application and are relevant for the individuals even to-day.

the Concept of Dharma in Manusmriti :

In the sixth chapter on *Āshramādharmānushāshana* of the *Manusmriti* the ten characteristics of *dharma* are prescribed for Brahmins :

चतुर्भिरपि चैवेतैर्नित्यमाश्रमिभुद्विजैः ।

दशलक्षणको धर्मः सेवितव्य प्रयत्नतः ॥

(6/91)

The ten types of *dharma* (moral duty) should be preformed daily by Brāhmins very carefully in all the four *ashramas* of life viz. *Brahmacharya* (student-life), *garhasthya* (the householder's life), *Vanaprastha* (retired life) and *sannyasa* (the mendicant's life). According to some commentators, the dwija (twice born) is found not only among *Brahmanas*, but also among *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*, all of whom must pass through the four stages of life to attain the four *vargas* or *Purusharthas* (goals) of life, viz. *artha* (wealth), *Kama* (sex), *dharma* (moral duty) and *moksha* (salvation or self-realisation).

In the next shloka the ten types or characteristics of *dharma* are clearly stated as follows :

धृतिः क्षमा दमोरस्तेय शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकः धर्मलक्षणम् ॥
(6 / 92)

The ten types of moral duties are : (1) patience and perseverance, (2) forgiveness (3) non-covetousness, (5) purity of body and mind, (6) control over the senses, (7) enlightened intellect or wisdom, (8) learning, (9) truthfulness, and (10) control over anger or attainment of equanimity.

If the majority of men could cultivate the above qualities of *dharma*, the society would become an ideal place to live in and the *dandaniti* and *rajadharmā* would take care of the few who would violate the norms of *dharma* and indulge in anti- social activities.

[To continue]



THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

— P.C. Mehta

[Continued from before]

The 'Theravada School' or 'the doctrine of the elders', of Hinayana Buddhism':

This is the later stage of Hinayana Buddhism and its only surviving form.

1. Canonical Literature :

The first council of the disciples of Buddha called elders, met at Rajagrha near Magadha. They started collecting the doctrine, consisting of '*Tripitaka*' or three baskets. They are,

a) The '*Sutta*', containing five groups of collections called '*Nikayas*'. They deal with the '*dhamma*' or doctrines in the form of tales and conversations of Buddha. They deal with the practical methods for spiritual attainment. '*Dhammapada*' the Buddhist bible forms part of this '*Sutta-Pitaka*'.

b) The '*Vinaya*' which deals with the discipline of the monks and

c) The '*Abhidhamma*' are the philosophical discussions. They deal with '*dhamma*' or the same subjects as the Suttas, and include Buddha's psychology and ethics, but in technical and scholastic terms.

The entire canonical works were completed by 241 B.C. which was the date of the third council during the reign of King Asoka.

We now sketch the main features of the Pali Buddhistic literature. From this literature, we glean the doctrine of the Elders, which is the surviving form of the so-called '*Hinayana*' or lesser vehicle.

We have mentioned in para. 5 that in his first sermon at Sarnath, Buddha dwelt upon the '*Arya-Satya*', i.e. 'The Four Noble Truths'. The account that has come down to us of these Truths is now taken to represent, a later stage of the teaching.

2. The doctrine of '*Dharma*':

'*Dharma*' in its ethical sense is moral rectitude and is described by Buddha as 'The lamp of life' *Lankavatara Sutra* describes *Dhamma* as '*Guna Dravya Purvaka Dhamma*' i.e. *Dhammas* are those that are allied with qualities and substances.

According to '*Atthasalini*', *Dhamma desana*' means religious teaching. In Buddhism, '*Dhamma*' is used to connote the following.

- i) Moral rectitude ii) Scriptural texts,
- ii) Quality or 'Guna', iii) Cause or 'Hetu',
- iv) Unsubstantial i.e. '*Nissatta*' and soulless i.e. '*Nijjiva*'.

3. *Dharma*'- as 'The four noble truths':

Buddha's doctrine or '*Dharma*' is summed up in four Noble Truths:

- i) Life is '*Dukkha*' i.e. suffering. This means that life as ordinarily lived is suffering. Man ordinarily lives within the subject-object split, which is the root of desire or craving or grasping.
- ii) The origin of suffering lies in '*Tanha*' i.e. craving or grasping. That suffering has an origin means a belief in a cause. A dozen links of cause and effect, called '*nidana*' are already mentioned in para.3. This chain is '*Sansara*' which is the chain of birth, death and rebirth. The first two links show that the activity of past life prompted by ignorance gave rise to the present. The next eight links deal with the present and the last two links refer to birth and suffering that will follow from the activities of the present life. Thus from ignorance proceeds desire, desire leads to activity which brings rebirth with its fresh desires. This vicious circle is '*bhava-cakra*' or 'the wheel of existence'.
- iii) The cessation of suffering is possible through the cessation of '*Tanha*' or craving. Since removal of cause removes the effect, when ignorance is dispelled by cessation of '*Tanha*', the chain snaps because as we have seen the necessity is not absolute.
- iv) The way to cessation of suffering is by right insight, which is enlightenment about the true nature of one's self, gained through the noble eight-fold path.

We might mention at this stage that a simpler scheme for cessation of suffering found in old Buddhism consists of '*Prajnā*' of the four-fold truth. '*Prajna*' here means direct insight or immediate understanding as opposed to theoretical or mediate knowledge. Man should win salvation through self-reliance, not grace of God. This adage points to the fact that all the help may not come to fruition till man acquires immediate understanding. For immediate understanding to come about, '*sila*', '*yoga*' and '*sāmādhi*' are the steps. There can be no perception of the truth without control of thought and action. '*Sila*' means right conduct which includes virtues like veracity, contentment and '*ahinsa*' or non-injury. '*Sāmādhi*' is

meditation on the four verities. Diverse forms of Yogic exercises are recommended. Theoretical knowledge marks the beginning of the discipline.

The concept of right living differs in the case of a monk and a layman. The mode of life to be followed depends on one's capacity and inclination. Ultimate release is attained only after one becomes a monk.

In a monk's life also success comes by following the middle path of neither self-indulgence, nor self-mortification. Buddha's theory strikes a mean between believing neither in Being nor in Non-being but in becoming. Similarly it does not believe in chance or exclusive necessity but in conditioned happening.

The following are the constituents of the Noble eightfold path, referred to by Buddha as the Middle Path or the Golden Mean of avoiding the two extremes of indulgence and suppression. They are recommended for attaining enlightenment.

i) Right View, ii) Right aspiration, iii) Right speech, iv) Right and moral conduct, (or '*sila*') v) Right livelihood, vi) Right effort, vii) Right mindfulness, viii) Right contemplation. (or '*samādhi*')

Out of these, '*sila*' or 'right and moral conduct', and '*samadhi*' or 'right contemplation' are the most important elements. Right conduct and right meditation are the two fundamentals for right insight which brings emancipation.

4. *Sila* and *Samadhi*:

We are entwined all through by desire '*Tanha jāla*'. We can extricate from it only by '*Sila*' or right moral discipline and '*Samadhi*' or right meditation leading to concentration and '*Panna*' or wisdom.

A. '*Sila*' :

'*Sila*' means '*Sabba-papassa-akaranam*' meaning 'not doing any sinful act as well as being free from all sins'. In other words it involves all mental states and effort to remain on the right path. These are,

- i) '*Cetanā*' or right resolve,
- ii) '*Cetasikā*' right mental states which lead to right resolve,
- iii) '*Samvara*' or mental composure leading to self-control,
- iv) '*Aviti-kkāma*' which is not compromising with the above resolve either in mind, speech or action.

- v) '*Ahare-patikkula-sanna*' to view with aversion the desires for eating and drinking, by reflecting on their unpleasant metamorphosis. Thus the *sadhaka* looses attachment for eating and drinking and eats and drinks only to maintain the body for *sadhana*.
- vi) '*Catu-dhatu-vavatthana-bhavana*', to give up attachment to the body by viewing or meditating upon the body as made up of the four elements of '*ksiti*' or earth, '*ap*' or water, '*tejas*' or fire and '*vayu*' or air, no different from the carcass of an animal.
- vii) '*Anu-ssati*', to constantly contemplate on the virtues or greatness of Buddha, the Sangha and the Dhamma and the good effects of *Sila*'.
- viii) '*Caganu-ssati*', or the desirability of making gifts.
- ix) '*Marananu-ssati*', or the nature of death and
- x) '*Upasamanu-ssati*', to dwell upon the deep nature and qualities of the final extinction of all phenomena.

Samādhī :

'*Upacara Samadhi*' means the practical method of meditation process leading to *Jhana samadhi*'. It has to start with the practices of '*Sila*' and must proceed as follows.

B. 'Appana samadhi' :

- a) '*Asubha kammattana*', which is an effort at leading the mind away from the body by seeing the impurities of human bodies by going to the cremation grounds and observing the changes in human carcasses and realizing that in essence it is the same in the living form.
- b) '*Kayagata sati*', is the continuous mindfulness about the nature of the body.
- c) '*Anapana sati*', To sit in a quiet place and fix the mind in the '*passasa*' i.e. inhaling and '*Assasa*' exhaling process. To be conscious of the entire process of inhaling and exhaling.
- d) '*Brahma-vihara*' is the fourfold meditation of a) '*Metta*' or universal friendship, b) '*Karuna*' or universal compassion, c) '*Mudita*' happy disposition through wishing the happiness of all, d) '*Upekkha*' i.e. treating alike oneself, friend, enemy or third party.

- e) '*Kasinam*' or *Jhanas*' through the help of material things. Here recommended concentration is on a) earth, b) water, c) fire, d) wind, e) blue color, f) yellow color, g) red color, h) white color, i) light or j) *Paricchinn-akasa*' or limited space.

When the sadhaka finds that he can visualize the object even when his eyes are closed, he can leave the object and concentrate on it without its physical presence. Then the following procedure is adopted.

- i) '*Pathamam-jhanam*', or the earlier stage of meditation.
- a) It begins with '*Vitakka*' or discursive meditation. Here the mind is concentrated in understanding its form and name through its diverse relations.
- b) '*Vicara*' or 'steadily moving'. Here, the mind does not move in the object in relational terms but permeates it by settling down in the object without quivering.
- c) The mind fixed in these two states feels '*Piti*' or buoyant exaltation and
- d) '*Sukha*' or inward bliss.
- e) '*Ekāggata*' or concentration follows.

When the fifth stage of '*Ekāggata*' is reached, this first '*Jhana*' roots out the six ties of

- 1) '*Avijja*', 2) '*Kamacchando*' or playing with desires, 3) '*Vyapado*' or hatred, 4) '*Thinamiddham*' or laziness, 5) '*Uddhaccakukkuccam*' or pride and restlessness and 6) '*Vicikiccha*' or doubt.
- ii) '*Dutiyam-Jhanam*'.
- a) '*Ekodi-bhavam*': Here the mind has gone beyond the '*Vitakka*' and '*Vicara*' states and is in an unruffled steady state but has in it the '*piti*', '*Sukha*'. and *Ekaggata*.'
- b) '*Upekkhako*': Here the '*Piti*' stage is left and though the mind sees the objects, it is neither pleased or displeased. The mind is indifferent. This is the stage of '*khin-asava*'; where the asavas are loosened. The '*Sukha*' and '*Ekaggata*' continues and the mind has to be alert to see that it does not go back to '*Piti*'. Concentration on the chosen object continues.
- iii) '*Upekkha*' and '*Ekaggata*':

This is the last stage or *Jhana*'. Here the "*Sukha*' or happiness and '*Dukkha*' or misery vanish and the roots of all attachments and antipathies are burnt up. This

is a state of total indifference. With this comes '*Cetovimutti*' or complete extinction of '*Citta*', and the sadhaka becomes '*Arhat*'. The ideal of '*Arhan*' or 'The worthy one' is also in *Jainism*.

5) The ideal of '*Arhan*' and not of '*Bodhisatva*':

The final attainment is '*Nibbana*' or release or extinction.

Such a person is freed from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. As such the ideal for the '*Theravada*' school is that of '*Arhan*'.

Some claim that this ideal amounts to annihilation of the individual, (see @ VI. 8.6) instead of realizing one's identity with the absolute behind the flux, as in *Mahayana Buddhism*. This does not appear to be the correct view. In '*Kathamrta*' (Vol. iii. p.8), Buddha says, 'There is an unborn, an unoriginated, an unmade, an un compounded: were there not, O mendicants, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the made and the compounded'. This obviously refers to the permanent principle behind the evanescent. Secondly it is impossible intellectually to comprehend that inexpressible state. (see also para 30)

In *Mahayana Buddhism* there has now developed a further ideal; the ideal of '*Bodhisatva*' that is the ideal of working for the salvation of mankind after coming to enlightenment.



THE DIVINE MOTHER

— Dr. Premlata Srivastav

The purpose of Ma's descent on this universe has been to enrich and enhance the tradition of spiritual culture with Her divine aura and grace. The innumerable tales of Her Leela will forever remain contemporary to the people of this universe.

Ma Anandmoyi is a name synonymous with spiritual awakening in the world. She Herself was so completely detached and indifferent like the limitless sky, yet everyone was attracted to Her. And she responded with profound love and respect for all, irrespective of their caste, creed or religion. She considered all, whether human beings, plants, trees, birds or animals, weaved into the united whole, exuding the *Akhand Bhav*.

Waves of happiness ran across the massive crowds that gathered for Ma's darshan. They waited with utmost sincerity and immense perseverance. With Ma's darshan, thousand of those devotees would instantly tune themselves in a new found happiness. This treasury of boundless joy of Ma was open for all. Her divine glance and smiles, and Her infinite flow of pity and compassion attracted anybody and everybody. For one such glance of the Mother, the personification of compassion, people waited for hours together. Ma had a wonderful knack to bring people closer to Her. Ma befriended people of different, diverse culture, habit and creed as if she knew them for ages, 'and each of us thought Ma liked and loved me the most'. The reason for this feeling is that Ma actually was the soul of all of us.

The ever infectious smile of Ma swept the devotees, who lost their self during such drashans. When Ma laughed, each and every molecule of Her body laughed. As Her whole body stirred during those laughters, people wondered whether such divine exultation is ever possible for a human being!

The words emanating from Sri Ma were captivating. Her words and Her songs electrified the innermost core of the audience in attendance. It was a current of joy and happiness that generated. from the wonderful rendering. Ma's voice reverberated.

Though she always regarded Herself a child, but at every moment— in Her speech, song, smile, giggle, crackle, laughter, in every posture, in every pause of Her movement, there was an air of infinite, unexplainable sweetness and happiness. One darshan would have prompted the devotee to desire for repeated

darshans. She Herself has said' who ever has once been drawn to love this body will never succeed in wiping out its impression despite hundreds of attempts."

No propaganda, no public speeches. Neither did she gave diksha nor made disciples but with every darshan, she gave the devotees a sea of happiness. Her devotees were from every walk of life. From common people to renowned pandits, political leaders, rulers and bureaucrats, doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc of all creed, clan and religion and faith. They all came either out of want, curiosity, indistress or anything else and returned with coffers. This was divine peace amid din and chaos.

In Ma's presence, there were always some festivity or the other and the crowd of curious visitors. Massive crowds, but managed them so deftly ! It was Ma's attraction which drew people from near and far, time and again for that divine company. There have been several instances in which devotees worshipping, meditating or praying at Ma's feet have gained a kind of power and closeness to Ma.

Ma's enigmatic personality attracted commoners householders and vedantist pandits, Mahatmas alike. When she spoke about the supreme knowledge and wisdom Her few words sounded like the words of vedas. though she had hardly any formal education. Ma's sayings are found to be exactly as mentioned in the Shastras. Her speech has illuminated the dark alleys of life to guide people to the spiritual bliss.

Ma never went for debated solutions, nor did she impose anything on Her devotees. But when she discussed 'Bhakti' she personified it. It was for Her devotees to draw as much as they can from the Mother of the Universe. Someone got profound wisdom, someone else wealth, some other has got the path to stoicism from the divine self. But nobody has returned empty-handed.

Ma had all the pleasures at Her disposal but she was indifferent to them as she was always absorbed in the supreme bliss. An old devotee of Ma, Pannalaji, had once asked Her.

"After the bath in holy Ganges, people take home the sacred water containers matching their capacity. And I take the water in my curved palms. By the time, I reach home the water trickles out of the gaps in between the fingers. Nothing is left, that's how my condition is after I leave this place."

Ma quipped : "Baba, but your palms remain wet!

The comments of revered Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraji is worth mentioning in this context—

"She is extremely dear to the wistful Sadhak as well as for the dispassionate Sadhak. The one who is lustful, wants the pleasures. He is not attracted toward Ma but Her riches and wealth. Ma too gives him what he wants. She manifests Herself in the form he desires. But the Sadhak who is dispassionate, disturbed and distressed', who doesn't have any lust or desires but wants salvation, Ma relieves this sadhak from the bondage of the world.

Her supernatural divine personality is reflected in Her several bewitching bewildering Leelas.

From earthly point of view, Sri Sri Ma was an ideal daughter, an ideal wife and then the ideal Mother for thousands of Her devotees. She played the role of a housewife, administrator, friend to mention a few but ultimately Ma remained Ma, the embodiment of happiness "Universal Motherhood".

Ma's sympathy, compassion, pity and candour for the human beings are unparalleled.

The fact that Ma was present in the ashram was a source of immense pleasure, even without Her darshan. Ma would suddenly come out in public gaze, crackling and giggling and then the next moment will be vanished. This game of hide and seek by Ma has generated a flow of a titillating sensation in which countless wiseman, sadhak, sanyasis, family people, sinners, and afflicted persons have batted to purify themselves.

Ma was afterall, the mother of all.

Despite the din and chaos of the crowd of the devotees, Ma spent hours, sitting at the same place, Her face exuding that inexplicable charm and the atmosphere seized by an infinite happiness. Ma was always present in a unique detached mood.

In all situations, she was firm and composed. All Her manifestations and illuminations were with complete Bhav, in totality. Ma's nature was so benign that everyone who came in Her contact, considered himself or herself closest to Her. Without hesitation, the devotees offered their utmost at Her divine feet and enriched themselves with Her divine advice.

Whether visitng a king's palace or a commoner's thatched hut, whether alone or amidst a massive crowd, she had, in fact, no inclination for any particular thing. Those who were in Her constant company also, did not know when will Ma leave them.

Ma had no bondage. She could effortlessly shatter Her own empire and go away smiling in a split moment, leaving the devotees mourning Her absence.

Life Introduction (1896-1918)

(a) The Divine Descent

*Kheora, a tiny village in the interior of East Bengal of un-divided India (now in Bangladesh) suddenly came in limelight with the advent of Universal Mother, Ma Anandmoyee. She took birth at Kheora, as a human being in a poor brahmin family on 30th April 1896, at about 3 O'clock when the world was fast asleep.

She was the second child of her parents and scared by the death of their first child her deeply religious mother would lay her infant daughter daily below the Tulsi shrub (a kind of basil tree regarded as very pious in Hindu Mythology) invoking the blessings of the sacred tulsi on her. When the infant grew up she herself used to go and roll down there.

This little child was given the name of Nirmala Sundari Devi by their parents, who is now known to the world as Sri Ma Anandmayee or simply 'Ma'. Hence forth she will be referred here as 'Ma' only.

Ma's father Sri Bipin Behari Bhattacharya was a highly religious man with an ascetic allegiance. The most remarkable feature of his personality was a total apathy to the worldly interests. Eye witnesses say that he had long hairs and a shining bearded face full of contention and an inborn liking for God. He had a beautiful sonorous voice and used to play Ektara (single string instrument) while singing which lasted hours and hours together and sometime it would be dawn before this devoted soul finished singing hymns of various schools. People loved to attend his kirtans and songs wherever he sang with his melodious voice.

Ma's mother Mokshada Sundari Devi (Didi Ma) was also an extremely pious lady, very religious, calm and serene with an ever smiling face. None has ever seen her in anger. The contentment and patience were her outstanding qualities.

The extreme poverty of theirs, never worried her and any guest at anytime was always welcomed by her. She was pure and pristine as Lotus in a pond. Before Ma's descent she had seen several Gods and Goddesses in her dreams whom she felt were keen to come to her lap.

* Kheora village is now in Distt. Brahman Baria in Bangla Desh. In 1927, Ma with Bhola Nath and her parents went to Kheora. By this time everything was changed so even Didima and Dada Moshai could not find out the place and then Ma showed to them and then they also could recollect. With Didi's and Moulvi Prem Gopal's efforts this land was purchased for Ashram. On 17th Feb' 1984, a delegation of few devotees went there including myself. We were moved by the hearty reception given by the muslims of that village. They beautifully sang a welcome song and said "Ma is our Mother also, our own Mother."

Didima continued to witness several Gods and Goddesses in her dream even after Ma was born. Even when she was carrying Ma she had an ill-health. Nevertheless neighbours said— she is looking much beautiful and shining.

One day Mokshada Devi lighted a lamp at the altar of Tulsi. Suddenly she discovered a marvellous sight of an extremely beautiful Goddess with a wonderful glow of the rising sun, standing in front of her instead of Tulsi. A few moments later, a fascinating ray had replaced the Goddess. The rays travelled in a circular way and entered the body of Mokshada Sundari. She lost her conscience and fell down at Tulsi Manch.

It was heard from Didi Ma that contrary to the normal child neither did Ma cry nor did she make any other noise. Afterwards, to this Ma said "why to cry? I was looking at the mango and neem trees through the holes of the thatched hut."

[To continue]



FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

— "Kirpal"

Dehradun Ashram, 14th March, 1966

Shree Ma stops in front of the Kishenpur Ashram gate and then proceeds towards "Kalyanban". All do Pranam. Shree Ma returns. She asks Br. Sushil — you must get your stomach ache cured, you have been eating rotis — now you should eat rice and vegetables and curd, the best is curd in water, in the morning.

Then Shree Ma asks about Sunanda's food. He should have rotis in the daytime and milk at night.

Then about the new boy Gaur — He is not to clean all the vessels. He is not a servant. He is a brahmachari, like Jogesh, Manindra.

Then as the ashram girls are late for the 10:30 a.m. reading of the Holy scriptures, etc., Shree Ma said, "If one is not strict in following the rules and regulations, one cannot advance on the spiritual path. Similarly in worldly matters".

Rajmata Tehri comes for a brief visit on her way to Mussoori. Sri. Charu Banerjee's son Gopal comes. At the very time of his father's death, at Vrindaban, kirtan was being held. He had had the Gopal *Murti* installed at the Vrindaban ashram.

Shree Ma said, "Saffron and sandalwood are ground together and then added with washed sesamum seeds and then put on each tulsi leaf, and such 1008 leaves were offered in the puja. Everything should be done at the appropriate time. This increases one's intensity for the realisation of God. It should not be even one minute this way, that way. You should get up early in the morning. If this body says to do some work, and if some other program is already there, then you should say "Ma, we have to attend the program". As you have followed a disciplined manner in worldly matters for ages, for so many births, similarly in spiritual matters also you should do likewise. As the sun rises in the morning and at night darkness prevails; that is the rule. You have been to school, college and office. You have followed the disciplines. Why don't you do so now ? The ashram girls can do everything together".