



# ANANDA VĀRTĀ

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

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What is *Ātma-darśana*, face-to-face vision of Self? Seer-seeing-seen...when three become One, then and only then the merging in Totality. Nothing like action or inaction can arise—that is called steadiness in Selfhood (*Ātmasthiti*). Or *Ātma-darśana* from the viewpoint of form: Look! your own Deity everywhere. Just as it's said, "Wherever my gaze alights, instantly flashes forth Śri Kṛṣṇa." Perceiving anything as not Kṛṣṇa means the real darśana hasn't happened yet. With clear-eyed, unifying vision—self-evident the One Beloved.

When *pūjā* and similar rituals used to happen, in exactly the prescribed manner—the śakti, āsanās, mudrās, sentiments, whatever elements appropriate for worshipping a specific god or goddess—everything would occur spontaneously in this body out of that *bhāva* (an inclination within self-wholeness). Far from being a play of imagination, all that was as clear as you people are right here and now. Every detail was beautifully arranged. In fact, everything required issued of its own accord out of this body! The *mūrti* (image) of god or goddess was taken out from this body, made to sit down in front, and *pūjā* proceeded. Then, *pūjā* completed, everything merged back into this body in the same way and whence it had first emerged.\*

It must be realized—everything is possible.

The purpose of *pūjā* is revelation of the one Ideal (*Iṣṭa*). To find yourself, to be poised in *Ātmā*, worship the Ever-Beyond. In doing that *pūjā* the puzzle of duality-nonduality occurs not. *Pūjā* without expectation of worldly benefit centers on Bhagavān alone.

Be ever intent on uncovering the Mahāyoga (absolute Unity) that reveals the fact of being eternally yoked to the Divine.

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\*Sri MA refers to a six-year period before age 30 when She played at *sādhana*, taking up and attaining perfection in the teachings and practices of every major and minor tradition.

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# MATRI UPADESHAMRITA

*I am only a child and do not know how to lecture or give discourses. Just as a child, when it finds something sweet and good takes it to its mother and father, so do I place before you what is sweet and good. You take whatever pleases you. Mine is only a child's prattle. In fact, it is you alone who question and you alone who answer. You beat the drum and you hear the sound.*

—Mataji

( *Mātri Upadeshāmrita*, “The Nectar of Mother’s Teaching”, comprises excerpts from various sources of Sri Ma’s spiritual instruction on selected subjects —compiled by Sister Uma )

## ON GURU

(Continued)

In one form or another the grace of the Guru must be obtained. Until the Guru is found it is man’s duty to invoke and try to realise God by looking upon all forms as His Form, all names as His Name and all modes of being as His.

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*Question* : How can I come to know my true nature ?

*Mataji* : Have you obtained a Guru ?

*Questioner* : I love the name of Rāma. Today itself it has occurred to me again and again that you indeed are my Guru.

*Mataji* : By obeying the Guru's instructions, by carrying out the injunctions of the *śāstras*, your question will find its solution. Seek *satsang*. By the Guru's grace achievement comes.

*Questioner* : I look upon you as my Guru. I pray for the blessing of the Guru's touch for everyone taking part in this *Samyam Vrata*, since it is forbidden to touch your feet and there are hardly a few minutes available for personal questions and advice. Your gate-keepers do not allow us to go near you.

*Mataji* : God alone is the one Guru. If you pray inwardly, God will respond to your prayer and grant it.

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Placing your trust in your Guru, practise the seed mantra you received from him and contemplate the Beloved (*Iṣṭa*). It is imperative to have unswerving faith in one's particular *Iṣṭa*. What is the use of seeking initiation again and again? Rather is it not of the utmost importance to strive strenuously after the full revelation of the form under which He has manifested Himself to you?

Whenever practicable seek *satsang*.

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*Question* : What is the work of the Guru and what the work of the *shishya*?

*Mataji* : It is said that the *shishya's* task is to efface the ego and become as a blank. There is a story of a king who invited the best artists to paint frescoes in his palace. Two painters were working in the same hall at opposite walls with a curtain

between them so that neither of them could see what the other was doing. One of them created a marvelous picture which evoked the admiration of every onlooker. The other artist had not painted anything at all. He had spent all his time polishing the wall. He had polished it so perfectly that when the curtain was removed the picture of the other painter was reflected in a way that made it appear even more beautiful than the original.

It is the disciple's duty to polish away the "I-ness".

*Question :* But then the major portion of the work has to be accomplished by the *shishya* ?

*Mataji :* No, because it is the Guru who paints the picture.

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*Question :* Why has the Guru to be contemplated on the crown of the head ? What harm is there in thinking of him in the heart or in the centre between the eyebrows ?

*Mataji :* It is right to meditate as indicated in the *śāstras*. He at whose feet one is enjoined to surrender one's head, where should his place be if not on the top of the head ? Nevertheless, the Guru who is Knowledge itself is everywhere and therefore may be visualized in any place of the world or in any part of the human body. When the transmission of the Guru's power has taken effect, everything becomes permeated by the Guru. All the same, at the level of spiritual practice, the place for the contemplation of the Guru has, as an aid in meditation, been fixed at the centre on the

top of the head, or on Mount Kailash for the Guru who is Śiva and for Śiva who is the Guru.

*Question* : When one's Chosen Deity (*Iṣṭa*) becomes displeased, the Guru delivers one. Why cannot one's Chosen Deity save one when the Guru becomes displeased ?

*Mataji* : Because it is the Guru who reveals your *Iṣṭa* to you.

\* \* \* \*

The relation between Guru and *shishya* deserves to be called eternal only when the Guru is possessed of divine power and can and does communicate this power to the latter at the time of his initiation. This power being eternal, the relation between the Guru and *shishya* as thus established is also eternal.....

No true relation between Guru and *shishya* can exist unless this relation is assumed to be eternal. This implies that the Guru ought to be capable of communicating power to others as a matter of grace.

It is only in the case of a divinely gifted, powerful Guru that a temporary slackening of the disciple's faith cannot do much real harm inasmuch as the hidden power of the Guru infused into the disciple and functioning within him steadily, though unconsciously, has invariably a tendency to come up and lead him to a deepening of his faith.

In a case where the disciple's faith in his Guru is genuine and firm, any limitation in the Guru is not a hindrance. However, as soon as this faith is shaken for any reason whatsoever, difficulties are bound to arise. For, except by faith, which

naturally invokes divine grace and does not depend upon the individual merit of the Guru, there is no other way to render the relation with the Guru eternal....

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A person who has genuine faith in the Guru is unable to hate any human being, for this would amount to hating the Guru. The Supreme Guru is present within each and everyone. It is necessary to be firmly convinced of this fact. Patience is an indispensable part of *sādhana*.

To carry out the instructions of the Guru without questioning is the greatest service of all.

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*Question* : What does *Guru seva* (service of the Guru) mean ?

*Mataji* : To obey the Guru's instructions without reasoning.

\* \* \* \*

*Question* : While living in the Guru's Ashram, what is better ? Serving the Guru or engaging in meditation ?

*Mataji* : Whatever the Guru advises is best.

*Questioner* : But the Guru does not say anything about this ?

*Mataji* : Then he is not a Guru. To do the Guru's personal service is not possible for everyone. It requires special capacity. Suppose you do the Guru's personal work for a time and then someone else is asked to continue and does it in a different way and this upsets or irritates you. This is not called service. You should, on the contrary, feel happy that some other person also has the



chance to serve your Beloved in his or her own way.

Always remember that whomever you serve, you are serving God (*Janjanārdana*) in that particular guise. So many people come to the Ashram and there is no end to the opportunities of serving them in this spirit. Even if some of them be bad or mean, do not forget that they have come to the temple of God. For this reason serve them to the limit of your capacity, although they may not keep up the same attitude after leaving the Ashram. Serve the pure intention that has moved them for the moment. Whether you provide food or water, or sweep the place for them or assist them in any other way, it is service to God in the shape of man. Thus, there is any amount of scope for service in an Ashram.

Obey the Guru implicitly ! Whatever he may ask you to do, try to carry it out. If it be disagreeable or troublesome, accept it as your *tapasyā*. Although it is true that so long as one is bound by the knots (*granthi*) of "I-ness", perfect faith is impossible, nevertheless exert yourself to the utmost to act upon the Guru's orders. If you are able to remain in meditation continuously, nobody will ever dream of expecting any service from you. But if you linger about aimlessly for part of the time, you should certainly do service of some sort.

\* \* \* \*

To carry out scrupulously the Guru's instructions is the greatest service. It is written : "The

gratification of one's own will and pleasure is called self-indulgence ; the fulfilment of Sri Krishna's will and pleasure is called love." Therefore, to put into practice without reasoning the Guru's orders means engaging in the greatest service of all.

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The Guru's words are mantras. According to the Guru's instructions practise *sādhana* with deep religious feeling and God will *have* to respond.

\* \* \* \*

The way to God-realization is indeed straight and simple. The mantra which the Guru communicates is certainly the most excellent one. If the mantra received from one's Guru is repeated in the right manner, realization is bound to occur. How wonderful God's dispensation is ! When the power transmitted to you by the Guru begins to function, action will not create new karma anymore. If one enters fire one will of necessity be burnt...

\* \* \* \*

*Question* : What is mantra *caitanya* ?

*Mataji* : A mantra that has become alive ; that is to say, that which the mantra represents becomes revealed. The seed is sown by the Guru, but unless the soil is properly prepared the tree will not grow. An ordinary seed may die if not tended, while the seed which the Guru sows is immortal. All the same, the earth has to be dug up and made soft and receptive ; then the stones have to be removed and the earth is sieved and so forth. If the seed is not watered it cannot develop. The regular practice according to the Guru's instructions

provides the nourishment that will make the seed grow into a tree.

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*Question* : What exactly does *Bhagavat chintā* (the thought of God) mean ? Since I have not seen God and do not know Him, how can I think of Him ?

*Mataji* : At times you want to buy something that you have never seen. You nevertheless think of it, go to the market and finally get it.

At present you are on the level of belief and acceptance of what you have been told. You know the mantra and you know the Guru : The mantra is God and the Guru is God. In actual fact there is nothing but God. Anyhow, you accept the Guru ; therefore meditate on him.

*Questioner* : But I do now know the Guru ; I only see his body.

*Mataji* : Never mind. Concentrate on the little that you know of him and on the mantra, and carry out the Guru's instructions. The mantra is the seed. Having obtained the seed, the whole tree is potentially there. All you have to do is to bury the seed in good earth and tend it carefully. The tree will grow of itself. When you have found the Guru and received his instructions, you have in very truth found everything, just as the tree is contained in the seed.

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*Question* : Will there be no results if someone takes the Name of the Lord without being initiated ?

*Mataji* : Why shouldn't there be ?

*Questioner* : I believe the *śāstras* declare that unless one takes on a Guru nothing much can be achieved.

*Mataji* (smiling) : The Guru resides in your own heart. But ordinary people are unable to rely firmly on their own Self. So they have to take refuge in an external Guru. But in actual fact the Guru resides within one's own heart. It is He who prompts you to say you can succeed by repeating God's Name even without taking recourse to a Guru. On the other hand, when the time is ripe, it will be He who will make you say that without taking on a Guru nothing can be achieved. Then you will see how intense your longing for a Guru will become, so that you will run hither and thither searching for Him. The essential fact is that the Guru enthroned in your heart dictates to you what course to follow as and when the need arises. The main thing to do is to follow his advice.

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God Himself appears as the Guru. He has to be invoked full of faith. Just as a *vighraha* must not be regarded as a stone, so the Guru must not be regarded as a human being. If you look upon Him as a human being you have not found a Guru—can a human being ever be a Guru? The significance of the word, "Guru", is "Jagadguru" (World-teacher). A World-teacher is one who diverts man from the path leading to death and puts him on the path of Immortality. He who does this is the inner Guru. Once the Guru has accepted a disciple, He will never leave him until the Goal has been attained. The question of

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leaving does not arise at all. Where can the Guru go? Does He dwell in the realm of coming and going? Therefore, if one calls Him, "Guru", it has nothing to do with the body that is transitory. The Guru resides within. So long as the inner Guru has not been revealed nothing can be achieved.

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There is only one Guru, and that is Satchidānanda. He alone is the Teacher. My attitude toward God is that of a child toward its mother. One can get human gurus by the million. All want to be teachers. But who cares to be a disciple?

—Sri Ramakrishna

# SRI SRI MA'S SELF-INITIATION

From : In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Sri A. K. Datta Gupta  
(Translated from Bengali)

When this series of articles was started in the July-Oct. 1979 issue of *Ānanda Vārtā*, the first article was a translation of an article that had appeared in Bengali in the May 1954 *Ānanda Vārtā*. At that time the very first of these articles which had appeared in Bengali in the 1953 birthday number was somehow missed out. It is now published below. It deals with Mataji's *līlā* of *sāadhanā* and the fascinating episode of Her Self-initiation as narrated by Herself in Her inimitable style.

Sri Anandamayi Ashram,  
Varanasi, July 28th 1949.

This morning, while discussing other topics, Professor Sudhir Gopal Mukherji asked : "Ma, I am eager to hear how exactly the first manifestation of Guru-power took place within you."

*Mataji* (laughing) : First of all let me tell you : this body is exactly the same now as it was in childhood. There is no such thing as an initial or a subsequent stage for this body. I am saying this while sitting on the banks of holy Ganga ! (Everybody laughs heartily) Nevertheless, a play of *sāadhanā* did take place for this body : for some time it assumed the role of a *sādhaka* and all the conditions and stages that are traversed by a *sādhaka* were fully manifested in this body.

Do I not repeatedly say : “I must now go and see how Nani<sup>1</sup> is ? Am I not aware of her condition while sitting here that I have to go upstairs to see her ? But although knowing fully well how she is, I do go again and again to see her ; my *sādhanā* took place in a somewhat similar fashion.

*Sudhir Gopal* : We are very keen to hear from you how your *sādhanā* started and how your initiation took place in due course.

*Mataji* : This body’s father was very fond of singing *kirtana* and religious songs. They included songs of various religious sects, such as *Śaktas*, *Vaiṣṇavas*, etc. He slept very little and usually spent his nights singing devotional songs. When this body was about four or five years old it asked him one day : “Baba, what is the purpose of singing the name of Hari ?” He replied : “By calling out to Hari one comes to see Him”. I again asked : “Is Hari very big to look at ?” He replied : “Yes, very big.” “Is He as big as this field here in front of us ?” “Much, much bigger. Why don’t you call Him, then you will be able to see for yourself how great He is.”

This was how I began to sing His Name. But right in earnest the repetition of the Name commenced when Bholanath took me to Astagram after our marriage. In the house where we stayed there was another person who was Bholanath’s friend. Although I was always heavily veiled, he used to address me as “Ma”. He let us occupy

1. Nani was the wife of Sri Sudhir Chakravarti. She had come on a visit from Calcutta and fallen ill.

the room in which his own mother had breathed her last.

In early childhood I had been taught by this body's mother to take great care of the tulsi plant. So on arrival in Astagram I prepared a *tulsi mancha*<sup>1</sup> in the courtyard. Daily I used to place flowers and lights there in such a way that people would come and perform their *praṇāmas* reverently at the *mancha*. It was due to this *mancha* that preparations for holding a *kirtan* in front of it were made subsequently.

When the *kirtan* started I was engaged in nursing a patient. But on listening to this *kirtan* for some time, I fell down as if in a faint. In this condition there was no longer any question of modesty or purdah. Before this I used to veil myself heavily and conduct myself with the utmost propriety.

On seeing my condition everybody thought I had a fit. They raised me up and sprinkled water on my eyes and face. Just as perspiration trickles down a human body in an incessant stream, so blissful ecstasy (*ānanda*) oozed out of every pore of this body. It appeared as if I had become one with the *kirtan*.

But if people become immersed in ecstatic emotion while singing *kirtan*, this is of a different nature because it is connected with *kriya* (action) and hence there is a touch of worldliness about it. But this body's condition was not due to any *kriyā*. So

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1. *Tulsi Mancha* A raised platform with a *tulsi* plant in the centre.



worldliness was entirely excluded in this case. Furthermore the experience of *ānanda* was somewhat different—of its own right.

After my being in such a state of *bhāva*<sup>1</sup> during the *kirtan*, the singing of the name of Hari was continued regularly, whereas previously this used to take place only occasionally, not according to a fixed routine.

At this point of the conversation, Sri Sri Ma was being called for Her meal. So we performed our *praṇāmas* and stood up to go. It was decided to continue this discussion in the evening.

At about 5 p.m. I went to the Ashram. Ma had not yet descended but a little later She came downstairs and sat down in the courtyard. Sudhir Gopal, raising the topic of the morning, said : “The reason for asking questions regarding Sri Sri Ma’s *dikṣā* is that among us Hindus there is a tradition that without a Guru no religious practice can be started. But exceptions can be seen in the cases of Sri Aurobindo and yourself. Although Sri Aurobindo did in fact resort to a Guru to start with, he progressed far beyond the Guru to a much higher state of achievement. He himself said that he reached this state only by total surrender to God. He further declared that if someone is really deeply anxious to receive the grace of God, then it is not difficult to obtain it. Therefore, even if the Guru is not fully enlightened this need not prove an obstacle. On the other hand, even if the Guru is fully enlightened but the disciple has not the right foundation or is unable to surrender entirely to God, then the Guru cannot provide substantial assistance though his own Knowledge be complete.

*Mataji* : Well, do you think that as soon as you depend entirely and with your whole being on

1. *Bhāva* Spiritual ecstasy, generally emotional in nature. *Bhāvas* usually occur on elevated stages of the path of *bhakti*.

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God, His grace starts functioning in you, or do you say it is due to the Lord's grace that you are able to surrender to Him completely? I pose the question: when the earth is struck with a crowbar and the crowbar penetrates into the earth, is it due to the force of the blow or because the earth yields a path to the penetration of the crowbar?

*Sudhir Gopal*: It is difficult to say which comes first and which afterwards. It seems that both occur simultaneously.

In any case, apart from Sri Aurobindo, in your case also there was no sign of any Guru. This is why I wished to ascertain whether your spiritual progress was due to taking on a Guru or did it come about without any Guru whatsoever?

Would you please continue from where you left off in the morning when you said that during *kirtan* your body would fall unconscious.

*Mataji*: Yes, after that incident this used to recur off and on.

Near where we lived there was a house belonging to a family of carpenters. They used to build boats. During the day they worked hard but after sunset they would sing *kirtan*. Although their house was invisible because of a bamboo-grove, yet the sound of their *kirtan* reached my ears. Whenever it was heard this body would react sharply. Later it came to pass that whenever I merely glanced in the direction of that house, everything there seemed to brim over with supreme bliss. And even though there was no possibility of any social relation with them, there was indeed a blissful relationship due to their *kirtans*.

There was a little boy in the carpenters' house who used to come to me. Whenever I asked him

to sing *kirtan* he would dance and sing simultaneously. This body had the *kheyāla* to make him dance while he was singing. When doing so he used to go into a *bhāva*. When his mother saw this *bhāva* she got frightened and told me : “He is still a child, please do not make him dance when he sings Hari’s name”. Since his mother objected to it, the boy was no longer asked to dance. But whenever he met me he would shout loudly : “*Hari bol, Govinda bol !*”

Anyway, this body continued to become unconscious when hearing various *kirtans* at various places. At first efforts were made to keep this secret. But even these efforts were of short duration ; because when the flood of *bhāva* was really roused, then all efforts to suppress this were of no avail. The fact that I had these *bhāvas* during *kirtan* was a source of amusement to some people. I would make light of their criticism by appearing to join into their amusement. For this reason nobody tried to prevent these *bhāvas* during *kirtan*. In fact, with the exception of Bholanath, people were hardly aware of what was taking place. Moreover, I at that time had the *kheyāla* that my *bhāvas* should remain hidden as far as possible from the outside world.

Subsequently an accomplished singer named “Gagan Kirtania” came with his party to perform *kirtan*. It was arranged that after the *kirtan* they would have a meal before departing. Thus various dishes had been prepared for them in advance. When the *kirtan* started I beheld two boys of tender

age dancing in the midst of the *kirtan*. The funny thing was that this body also took on the role of a child and assumed the restless behaviour of a child. It repeatedly ran to the kitchen to see whether the food was all right, and again ran hurriedly to the place of the *kirtan*. In this manner this body was hastening hither and thither. Although the chief objective of all this moving to and fro was to make sure whether the food was all right, yet there was no real precaution taken to see that the food was indeed safe.

A wooden couch had been placed near the *kirtan* for us to sit upon. This body would sit on the couch and time and again hurry to the kitchen like a small child. In the course of all this nobody noticed when exactly this body came to lie motionless on the couch. When the *kirtan* ended and it was time for the singers to be fed, it was discovered that a dog had entered the kitchen and spoiled everything that had been cooked. On seeing this, Bholanath became furious and started looking for me. After much searching he found me lying unconscious on the couch. On calling out to me he realized that I was indeed senseless. On whom could he then vent his anger? In the meantime the people next door quickly cooked fresh *kitchuri* and other things and somehow fed the singers. But I remained unconscious during the whole night. When I did not come to my senses even the next day, Bholanath called the singers together and resumed the *kirtan*. When the *kirtan* had been continued up to 3 p.m. my consciousness returned.

From that time onwards people would look upon this body's *bhāvas* as a form of hysteria. Bholanath duly wrote to the parents of this body. They also became anxious on hearing the news. But this body's mother did not come to see me. She felt that if these *bhāvas* were a help on the spiritual path, why should she take a wrong step in being an impediment to it? Thus pondering over the matter she did not visit me even after learning of my so-called illness.

Later on, when coming to Bajitpur after leaving Vidyakut, (of course quite a lot is being omitted that happened in between) then also this sort of *bhāva* occurred again and again. Bholanath always used to take precautions to keep this secret from neighbours. When *kirtan* was sung I was not allowed to go outside. The doors of the small room in which I was staying were kept shut. I used to roll along the floor of that room. However, in spite of all precautions, a rumour spread that Ramani Babu's (Bholanath's) wife had been dancing during *kirtan* with a drum on her shoulder!

Just at about this time the Gurudeva of the local sub-registrar's mother arrived. He was a worshipper of *sakti* and used to wear bright red robes. On being told of my condition he expressed the wish to see me. So Bholanath took me to his residence. There I was made to sit beside an image of Śiva. Since arriving at Bajitpur this body used to regularly repeat the Name while sitting in a yogic posture. At such times various

*bhāvas* used to pass through this body. For instance, suppose I was seated repeating the Name, I would spontaneously start to spin round, still locked in a yogic *āsana*. So when being made to sit near the Śiva Linga, this body automatically assumed yogic postures and spun round once or twice. The Gurudeva observed this. Thereupon he kept on sending me messages through others to the effect that he was a *Siddha Puruṣa* (perfected soul) and, if I so desired, could be instrumental in communicating to me the direct vision of God. I merely listened to all these messages.

During his next visit to the house of his disciple, he told Bholanath that he wished to perform a *pūjā* in our house. When I heard of this, I pointed out to Bholanath that if the Guru was coming to perform a *pūjā*, he should also be offered a meal. Bholanath thought this very appropriate. So he invited the Guru to a meal and made all necessary arrangements. But owing to his work in the Court he could not remain at home during the visit. As Bholanath was leaving for the Court, I asked him: "I am remaining alone here, what should I do when the Guru comes?" Bholanath replied: "What can you do? Give him what he asks for and do as he tells you." Although this body was a very young housewife, yet Bholanath never felt any qualms in leaving me alone. Even when going on tour to the district, he never arranged for anyone to stay with me. For this reason people used to speak ill of him, but Bholanath had seen enough of my

bearing to realize that this body was fully capable of taking care of itself.

So in due course, after Bholanath's departure, the Gurudeva arrived. I had previously kept ready everything that was necessary for his *pūjā*. So he started on his worship, and I was busy cooking the food. At the conclusion of his *pūjā* he called me. I veiled myself and came and stood in front of him. He asked me to sit on the *āsana* (carpet) of the *pūjā*. I complied as I had been told by Bholanath to do as the Guru requested. When I was seated on the *āsana*, he asked me to perform the *achaman*<sup>1</sup>. As this body was not in the habit of doing *pūjā* or any other ritual, I asked him how exactly I was to perform the *achaman*. He sat on his stool and showed me with his hands how to do it. Now it so happened that as soon as this body was seated on the seat for *pūjā*, its behaviour suddenly changed completely. The correct posture for *pūjā* was automatically assumed. There was then no question of shyness or modesty. My hands also started performing certain *krīyās*. On beholding all this the Gurudeva became frightened and at once asked me to get up from the *āsana*. This is why it is said that if something is genuine, there is nothing to be feared. Even if you fling it into flames, it will not burn; even if you throw it to the tiger he will not be able to swallow it. However this may be, just then Bholanath returned and the Gurudeva, after having his meal, departed.

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1. *Achaman* Preliminary purification with water before performing any ritual.

bearing to realize that this body was fully capable of taking care of itself.

So in due course, after Bholanath's departure, the Gurudeva arrived. I had previously kept ready everything that was necessary for his *pūjā*. So he started on his worship, and I was busy cooking the food. At the conclusion of his *pūjā* he called me. I veiled myself and came and stood in front of him. He asked me to sit on the *āsana* (carpet) of the *pūjā*. I complied as I had been told by Bholanath to do as the Guru requested. When I was seated on the *āsana*, he asked me to perform the *achaman*<sup>1</sup>. As this body was not in the habit of doing *pūjā* or any other ritual, I asked him how exactly I was to perform the *achaman*. He sat on his stool and showed me with his hands how to do it. Now it so happened that as soon as this body was seated on the seat for *pūjā*, its behaviour suddenly changed completely. The correct posture for *pūjā* was automatically assumed. There was then no question of shyness or modesty. My hands also started performing certain *krīyās*. On beholding all this the Gurudeva became frightened and at once asked me to get up from the *āsana*. This is why it is said that if something is genuine, there is nothing to be feared. Even if you fling it into flames, it will not burn ; even if you throw it to the tiger he will not be able to swallow it. However this may be, just then Bholanath returned and the Gurudeva, after having his meal, departed.

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1. *Achaman* Preliminary purification with water before performing any ritual.



On his next visit to the town he again wanted to see me, so Bholanath brought him to me. He started talking of various subjects, including how he had attained to perfection by worshipping the Goddess Bagalā<sup>1</sup> and another Deity as well. Now it can often be seen that when one lives in the shelter of Truth, the power of Truth automatically manifests. This is what happened on this occasion. As soon as he mentioned that he had achieved *Bagalā Siddhi*", this body retorted with extreme vehemence : "What ? You have attained to *Bagalā Siddhi* ? This is a complete lie !" Thereafter the actual facts of how he had gone wrong in his efforts on each and every occasion were loudly divulged through this mouth. On hearing all this the Gurudev became bewildered. Bholanath kept on asking me to keep quiet. For fear that someone might hear what I was saying he shut the doors. But what was the use of crying : "Shut up ! Shut up !" Whatever is meant to happen through this body is bound to come about. Bholanath had on previous occasions tried many times to stop me by force, but to no avail. So then the Gurudev was compelled to confess to this body that he had not got any *Bagalā Siddhi* or any other *siddhi*, but he wanted to know from this body what he had to do in order to attain to it. The funniest part of the story is that, as soon as he asked this question, this body at once furnished him with the complete

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1. *Bagalā* One of the ten *Mahāvidyās*, forms of Devi in which She manifested Herself to Śiva. *Siddhi* means Realization, fulfilment. Also occult power gained by yogic practise.

