

Ananda

Newsletter of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

Issue No 22 – November 2021

Contents – First part of April 2020 Amrita Varta



Sound file:

<http://www.anandamayee.org/mmedia/mp3/Umauma.mp3> Sri Ma sings at the Durga Puja in 1974

Source of sound recording: Anandamayee Ma. Recordings. DIV_bMS00556_AU_020_A_Del_Side_1. Performed by Anandamayee. 1896-1982. Anandamayee singing Durga Puja 1974. -Repository: Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University. Digitized content accessed via <https://sds.lib.harvard.edu/sds/audio/430373533>

Text file:

<http://www.anandamayee.org/new/Amaravani.pdf> Sri Ma's words in Amaravani, an article taken from Ananda Varta 1952/53 Vol 1, No 3.

Talk mainly in English with some Hindi, with English subtitles:

Swami Bhaskarananda

<https://youtu.be/M0PW9jvzj3Q> Sw Bhaskarananda talks about his sadhana in an interview by Sw Nityananda Giri in May 2001 at Almora Ashram.

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

VOL. 24

APRIL, 2020

No.2

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Editors Note

1. In order to ensure proper receipt of the quarterly journal Amrit Varta, it has been decided to slightly enhance the yearly subscription to Rs.325/- with effect from January 2020. Your heartfelt cooperation is earnestly solicited.
2. This journal is published in four separate languages – English, Bengali, Hindi and Gujrati, in the months of January, April, July and October.
3. The journal mainly publishes articles related to Shree Shree Ma. We invite articles from devotees about their divine experience of Shree Shree Ma and also on religious literature of any country or religion.
4. Efforts are being made to make the journal more attractive, interesting, appealing and lucid and to spread the nectorial preaching of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee for the benefit of mankind in all fields of life, whether worldly or spiritual.
5. Gift the journal to your friends and distant family members and encourage them to subscribe.
6. Advertise yours or your friend's shop, office or company in the journal.
7. Donate to the Amrit Varta a/c. and help us to uplift the quality of the journal.
8. All correspondence regarding the journal for articles, advertisements, subscriptions, etc. may be sent :

(a) By post to the following address :

The Managing Editor, Ma Anandamayee Amrit Varta,
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(b) By email at : ssaspublication.vns@gmail.com.

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-----MANAGING EDITOR - BRAHMACHARINI DR. GEETA BANERJEE (INCHARGE).

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

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MATRI MANDIR - KHEORA
BIRTHPLACE OF
SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE

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

- Ma Anandamayee

'Akhand Bhagwat Smriti' Japa

On the occasion of the ongoing 125th Birth Anniversary of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, it is been decided to revive the '*Akhand Bhagwat Smriti*' Japa, to be participated by one and all who hear about it. Shree Shree Ma has always said, "*Hari kathā hi kathā aur sab vrithā vyathā*" (To talk of God alone is worthwhile all else is in vain and leads to pain). Shree Shree Ma also used to say, "This body begs for 15 minutes in day from all to be devoted completely to God in the form of *japa*, *bhagwat-paath* or *bhagwat-smaran*. And once chosen, this 'time' cannot be altered in any condition.

Hence we request you to inform us your time slot of 15 minutes (of your choice) for offering at the lotus feet of Shree Shree Ma. This record will help us to determine if any slot of 15 minutes has not been utilized within the 24 hours. May Shree Shree Ma's infinite Grace showering on us be remembered again in the form of this '*Akhand Bhagwat Smriti*' japa, during this 125th *Maha Abhirbhaav Mahotsav*.

Swami Nirvanandaji Maharaj

In service of Ma
General Secretary
Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha
Kankhal, Haridwar-249408.

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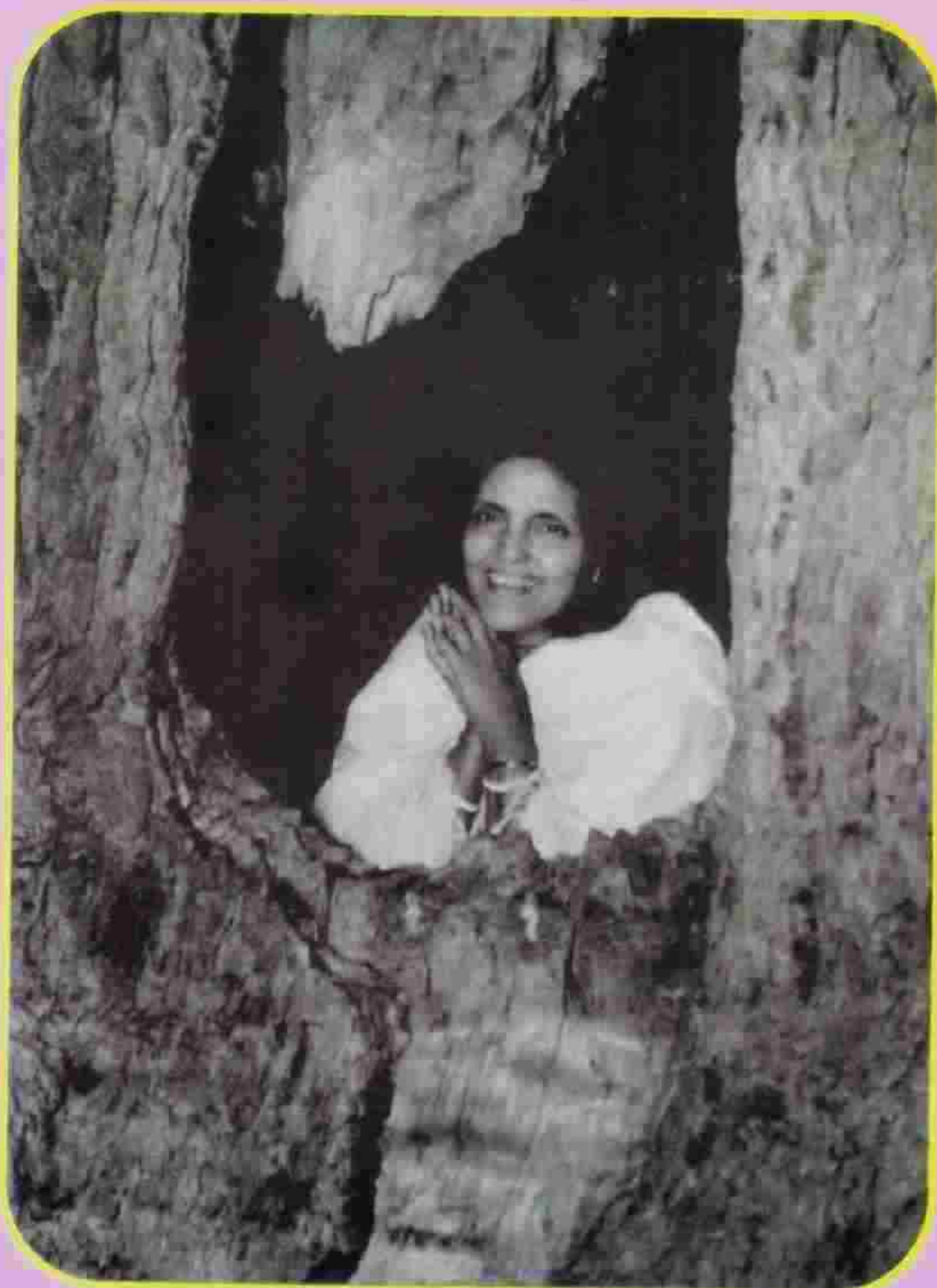
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Refer Ma's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltXaLLAkoDQ>

It is our sincere request to all readers who have not sent their subscriptions for the year 2020 and 2021, to send the same at the earliest. The curious readers are also requested to subscribe for the magazine.

--- Managing Editor, '*Ma Anandamayee Amrit Varta*'



Matri – Vani

1. A long life is a mark of virtue. The longer one can live, the more the sufferings (*karma-bhog*) are worn out. Contemplation of death should not be done, rather one should think that, my sufferings are getting abolished.

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2. It is the duty of women to serve their husband and family. They have not been born for their own happiness.

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3. The mind is restless by nature. It will naturally dart this way and that. As long as it does not attain its *svadhan* (inherent wealth), does not attain *shuddh bhāv* (pure consciousness), till then it will not attain peace. Hence I call the effort to attain *svadhan* as *sāadhan*. *Sāadhanā* is for steadying the mind only. Once the mind is steady, little remains to be desired. In order to steady the mind one must adhere to a single *bhāv*, such as repeating the 'name', taking part in religious discussion, reading religious books etc. Devoting more time to pious ideas leads to greater development of the pure mind.

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4. Just as a *guru* or teacher is required for acquiring worldly education, similarly in the religious sphere also a *guru* is required. Authentic and genuine efforts are needed for the attainment of a *sadguru*. If the efforts are wholehearted, the *sadguru* has to appear. You see, when a child calls upon the mother and is in all tears rolling on the dust, can the mother stand apart, unconcerned? She is bound to come. You should also plea for a *guru* in the same manner. He will come and surely come. You see, we are not servants of God. God Himself is our servant. He is bound to supply to us what we desire.

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5. You see, everything occurs because of habit. Whatever habits are formed, that itself passes into one's nature. We often say that, we do this,

eat this, drink tea, wear *dhoties*, etc. But actually we neither wear nor eat. The *dhoti* itself wears us and tea itself consumes us. If we wore or ate then we could have shed these again at will. But how many of us can do that?

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6. *Brahma* is both finite and infinite. He is present in his entirety within the finite and also within the infinite. Just as when you touch my finger, you touch me, but I am not the finger. If you touch my cloth also, you have touched me though I am not the cloth. Just as a part of my body is myself, again my whole body is also myself. Being one too He is many and being many too He is one. This is His (Divine) play.

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7. One is affected by the emanations from the objects with which one stays. Just as if you approach a hot object you feel hot, again if you go near a cold object, you feel cold. If you stay with worldly matters, if you stay with disturbing matters, disturbance will arise. Staying with divine matters or pious matters only there is infinite peace. Besides that, in worldly matters there is only partial peace, which is peace mixed with anxiety. So always remember Him. Whether it is *Kali*, *Krishna*, *Allah* or *Khuda*, it does not matter at all. Because all are One. The real thing is to try to remember Him constantly.

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8. To awaken the spiritual essence whatever you do, *pujā* (worship), *japa*, *dhyān* (meditation), *kirtan*, *dān* (donate), in that only you will get benefit. At the outset while doing *japa*, it is advisable to stick to one 'name' and try to get it established on the mind. Hence one has to do *japa* of the 'name' that he naturally likes or that given by the *guru*. Once it gets assimilated within the mind, the man rises to a higher level. Also, a person does not meditate, meditation occurs spontaneously.

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9. We are now in a state of (*abhāv*) want. That itself is now our (*svabhāv*) nature. Just as, when we feel hungry, we feel wanted, later, on eating, this want goes away. Then again we feel the desire for sleep, rising from

sleep we then feel the desire for roaming or conversing. In this way one or the other desire is always occurring within us. We have established ourselves in this state of desires. This is only called the desire-based state of nature. One has to move from this state to his true nature. Man has the ability to move to this innate nature. Hence it is said that, just as man has within him the veil of ignorance, similarly he also has the door to knowledge. Through this door of knowledge man reverts back to his (*svabhāv*) intrinsic nature, attains (*sthiti*) his innate stable state.

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10. On trying to grasp worldly pleasures you are bound to lose it. The joy that I am talking of cannot be grasped. It occurs by itself and remains forever. Here the joy is not dependant on effort. Joy is one's innate nature (*svabhāv*). Material happiness is dependent on effort and is partial and temporary. And the bliss of *Satchitānanda* is eternal. The happiness that we are getting in the worldly life, compared to that the permanent happiness is already within us. We should try to attain permanence in that only.

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11. We can have no concept of Him (*Paramātmā*) from reading scriptures or listening to religious discourses. The scriptures only inform us the path. I call the (*śāstras*) scriptures as (*sva astra*) one's own weapon. Scriptures have various views. Each one of them are true. Whatever the sages could experience and attain in the course of their *sādhana* that they have written down in the scriptures. It cannot be understood simply by reading or listening. The proper meaning of the scriptures can be understood only when one has attained all those states. In this sense, all scriptures are true.

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12. Just as when you do not have an appetite you take medicines to increase your appetite, taking the 'name' of God is also like that. By repeating the 'name', the sense of want for the Almighty is awakened and then one is restless for attaining Him.

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Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasanga

Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

(continued from before)

All paths are ways to attain Him

5th Maagh 1355, Tuesday (18-01-1949) Today evening also after the *kirtan* there was a discussion for some time. Vaidyanath Shastri Mahasaya started the discussion. He had asked Ma a few days ago that, 'as many opinions, so many paths', whether this statement is correct or not. Today also when he picked up this topic, Shri Satyabhushan Rai asked Ma the meaning of this statement.

Ma said, "The statement that 'as many opinions, so many paths' means that if an opinion exists then a path also exists. It is already mentioned in your scriptures that various *rishis* have various opinions and based on these opinions for different different pursuits there are different different methods or paths. The law of *Chakradhāri* (Lord Vishnu) is also so marvellous that, people whose houses are on the brink of any of those paths, they will follow those paths only and try to attain God, that is, depending on one's *sanskār* the people select any one of the paths laid down by the *rishis*. The *rishis* have mentioned almost all the paths, in the scriptures."

Shastri: If all opinions are paths then the unscriptural opinion will also be a path.

Ma: Why will a wrong path be called as a path? And the one which you define as a wrong path that too has been defined as per the rules of the scriptures, then how is it different from the scriptures. Yes, if somebody says I will not at all listen to the scriptures, I will decide and follow my own path, then I will say that for him, that itself is a path. All paths are different methods to attain Him. Again, the path to attain Him is only one. Just as it is said, all forms are His form, all names are His name. Again He is One, unrivalled.

Shastri: The example you mentioned today morning that is the best I think. In the morning you had said that though the tree has several branches,

each one of them are connected to the one root. Holding anyone of these one can reach the root. Similarly in attaining God, as many opinions may exist or not, following any one of those, God can be attained.

Ma: Yes, then I had said, with any tip of the tree, whether it is the branch or the leaf, there is a connection with the root. Of course the analogy is not the same in all parts, but from that only one has to presume. It was then said that, if one becomes single-minded with the tip of the tree there itself the root or the seed of the tree is obtained. Just as the tree has seeds, in the seed too there is a tree. If the tree was not present in the seed then from where did the tree come? Hence the seed grows into a tree. Again when the tree grows, fruits are formed in its tips and in those fruits seeds are present. Again if the branch of the tree is cut and that is sown then from that too a tree is formed, fruits are formed and seeds are formed. Hence if one becomes single-minded with any part of the tree, the tree can be obtained there in totality. Since, at every instance at every place everything is present. Hence with whatever you become single-minded then there itself its manifestation will occur.

“Is it not said many a time that, you attain yourself. What is the meaning of attaining oneself? To attain oneself means to attain in totality. While attaining oneself, if something or the other is left out then attaining oneself has not yet occurred. When oneself can be attained in totality, then only it can be said that, what is everyone’s path that itself is my path or my path only is everybody’s path.”

“People worship Lord Krishna. Here, understand that, in spite of worshipping one Krishna, everyone’s Krishna is separate. In this context Krishna is infinite, again Krishna is One. In other words, He in spite of being One, depending on the people’s *sanskār* He has revealed Himself in infinite forms. See, man though retaining the same blood and flesh physique each one is different, everyone’s appearance is different, emotion is different and attitude is different, similarly Krishna though being One is separate separate Krishna for every person. The Krishna that you have attained, others though being a worshipper of Krishna will not attain that Krishna. This is called more than One. Again you attaining your Krishna too, in whichever way others have attained Krishna within themselves, that too you can attain within yourself. Your Krishna will exist separately within you, again along with it the infinite ways in which all others have

attained Krishna, that too will exist within you. Though the words have been said keeping Krishna in mind, this is applicable to Shiva, Kali and all others. Again pursuing the path of Krishna it is not that only Krishna can be attained in totality, Shiva, Kali and others also in this manner can be attained in totality. In this manner whenever attainment occurs, then only it can be said that, you have attained yourself. In this attainment if something is left out, if on any matter darkness or ignorance still persists, then it has to be mentioned that, you have not attained yourself. (To Vaidyanath Shastri Mahasaya) once upon a time you were a baby, where is that baby form of yours?

Shastri: That is present, again it has died too.

Ma: (Laughingly) It is the truth. In one sense it has died; because it does not exist. Again it can be said, that baby itself is present in this old form. In this sense the baby is alive. But know this, the various forms of your childhood or various forms of your youth, none of these have been destroyed. All are existing. Why only you all, for all the creatures existing in this world regarding everyone know this fact that, in this world whatever existed, exists now and will occur, when all of these, you will see minutely present within yourself, then only you have attained yourself. The other day discussion was going on that, one thousand years ago was it like this. To that, I had said that who says that one thousand years ago it was like this? I say what was present one thousand years ago that exists now also.

Shastri: Why, by also reading a book written one thousand years ago can we say like this?

Ma: Yes, you can. But I will say that one thousand years ago the person who had written that book, in the form he had written, in that very form it is still present.

Satyababu: Such an immense statement. Then will we understand that the Kurushetra war is still continuing. Napoleon Bonaparte is still present?

Ma: Yes, truly true all are present, exactly in that form.

Then Khukuni-didi came to call Ma, hence the discussion stopped.

Regarding Caste System and path for liberation

6th Maagh 1355, Wednesday (19-01-1949). Going to the Ashram Hall at 11 am found Swami Shankarananda lecturing like a storm favouring

Indian caste system. Maybe somebody had asked a question regarding Hindu caste system. When Swamiji's flow of lecture subsided a bit, Shree Shree Ma observing a Parsi lady started speaking. This lady was present yesterday too. She is a devotee of Shri Krishnamurti. Shri Krishnamurti does not believe in caste system, that there is a need of a *guru* that too he cannot accept. According to him enquiry of truth-untruth is the only path to attain God.

Ma started speaking, "All these Brahmin, Kshatriya etc., discrimination in caste system is observed; instead of concentrating on these, wherever one is present, if from there itself one make's efforts to attain God, then he will observe one day that the knowledge of discrimination of all these caste-race etc. have dissolved within himself. Then he will be able to see himself in all forms. In this state no question will arise on caste or racial system. This is one side of the discussion. Further you said that caste means only human caste; no other type of castes will be acknowledged and the only duty of the people is that, how through him ten people are getting served that has to be noted and to enquire about truth-untruth in every work; this is another side of the discussion. There is not much of a difference between these two sides. Because on reaching the root it will be seen that One only exists in infinite forms. But be aware, not accepting caste system and declaring enquiry as the only path for liberation, will not be true uniformly for everyone. Because whatever people may say or hear, by which path he will reach the truth that is destined and when the time comes he will move in his own path. Other than this there is no other way. But this statement is also true that, one who is saying that, other than reasoning there is no other path to the truth that is true for him only. And, in fact too, the path in which one has attained a minute touch of the Lord, he will always talk of that path only. There is a state when it is understood that, those who are speaking of that feeling they are speaking the truth and it is natural, being in that state they cannot speak anything other than that. Because being in that state nothing else is getting revealed in them. Again such a state exists when it is observed that, of which ever path people talk of all of it seems to be the truth. Only on attaining oneself in totality it can be said that all paths are my own path. To attain one-self means to attain God and to attain God means to attain one-self.

Stages of *Shakti Sāadhanā*

Shri Bhupen asked Ma, "Yesterday you had said that by starting *sāadhanā* with the help of *Shakti* one can reach upto *Shivatv* and then both *Shiva* and *Shakti* can be attained together. After that the power of *Shakti* should be utilized. I have not understood all these properly."

Ma: Yes, All those are topics of *Shakti-Sāadhanā*. Proceeding with the support of *Shakti*, one can reach upto *Shivatv*. Since within that *Shiva*, *Shakti* is also present, hence they can be called as a couple like *Har-Gouri* and *Radha-Krishna*. Attaining *Shakti* in totality in this form, She can then be utilized. Then just by wishing, *Shruti* (creation), *Sthithi* (stability), *Proloy* (annihilation) of the infinite Universe can be achieved. Because all these are the play of the Divine Power (*Shakti*); this only is Her glory. You consider *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Maheshwar* as separate. But in fact within each one of them the other two are present; where *Brahma* is, there itself are *Vishnu Maheshwar*, where *Vishnu* is there itself are *Brahma Maheshwar* and so on. Consider in a simple way, a marriage; you are one, but by staying alone you do not get joy, to remove this incompleteness you search for someone of your choice and get married. In this manner from one you become two and later become many. The creation of the Universe is also similar. Being alone there cannot be a play, hence two are required. For that reason *Shiva-Shakti*. Later this only, in regular succession becomes many and then the infinite cosmos is created. Again in the reverse order taking the help of worldly power when *sāadhanā* is continued in stages higher powers are attained and the more these powers are attained the more the attachment for worldly matters becomes diluted. In this manner in stages again one can reach *Shivatv*. Doing *sāadhanā* in stages which has been just mentioned this too is not the similar every time. Since *MahaShakti* (the Divine power) is present everywhere hence at any place at any instance that Divine Power can be attained. As I had said yesterday that, if one becomes single-minded on any part of the tree there itself its root is obtained. In the material world also it is observed that everyone do not get married and settle down. It so happens that, somebody gets married and the moment his marriage is over, alas there itself his family-life ends, immediately he resorts to asceticism and begins his pursuit for attaining *MahaShakti*. Here his marriage ceremony is only for a meeting with *Shakti*. The moment this want is fulfilled another of

his viewpoint opens up. So many weird things are observed in this world, isn't it? There are so many topics regarding this matter, can it be ever completed.

Discussing in this manner it was already twelve in the noon. Ma was taken off for *bhog*. We too paid our obeisance and departed.

Natural occurrence of *yoga-mudras* in Shree Shree Ma's body.

After dusk a *sanyāsi* from Bharat Seva-ashram came and sang a song for Ma and on his request Ma too sang a song for some time. After he departed we started conversing with Shree Shree Ma. Shri Vaidyanath Shastri asked Ma a question related with *nād*, *bindu*. I could not properly comprehend the subject or the aim of his question. Ma discussed in depth with regard to this *nād*, *bindu*, most of which was not apprehensible. Explaining *bindu* in a simple manner, Ma said that from which creation occurs that only is *bindu*. This *bindu* is also infinite and again One. Explaining the relation of *nād* and *jyoti*, Ma said, it is that which is related to bodily gestures i.e. where *nād* is *jyoti* also exists. Everything in this universe is luminous. By doing *trātak-sāadhanā* all these can be observed. If *trātak-sāadhanā* is done on a black *bindu*, later it is observed that, that black *bindu* is illumined in so many various forms. The reason for this is that, changes keep occurring in the aspirant also along with the aspirations. The aspirant is in infinite forms, gradually that understanding arises. Again *trātak-sāadhanā* can be done on *shunya* (nothingness) too. This is very difficult, concentrating on *shunya*, nothing around it or beyond it is observed. Ma further said, "Earlier that I had mentioned about *nād* and *jyoti*, understand that since within us too that *jyoti* is present, we are able to visualize the worldly *jyoti* like electric light etc. Again with the help of that *jyoti* we can see the darkness too. Though the term 'seeing darkness with the help of *jyoti*' seems absurd, but it is the truth. It is how you know, removing darkness by lighting a lantern, the shadow or darkness of the lantern is also visible, this, is also like that."

Conversing in this manner Ma started talking about the experiences of Her own life. How Her *āsanas* occurred, how from Her mouth the *strotrās* used to emanate. While talking about the *strotrās*, Ma said, "When the different states of aspirations were passing through this body then had observed that, just as the *āsanas-mudrās* etc. used to occur by automatic movement of the hands and legs, similarly as a result of the

kriyā, by automatic movements of the various parts of the mouth like lips, tongue etc., *pranav* (Om) and other *stotrās* have issued out. It is not that, along with the *kriyā*, only the hands, legs or the mouth changed movements, the *nāri's* within the body also changed in various forms. Then, it was a state of an aspirant, hence everything happened very secretly. *Kriyā* was occurring over the body and were observing that the body is undergoing various *āsana-mudrās*. Then at that moment, I observed that suddenly everything has stopped. On searching for its reason saw that, somebody else is coming and hence all these have stopped. However before stopping I did not know that somebody is coming here. Again many a time, all these used to occur among people too. The funny part is that, just as because of the *kriyā* several changes used to occur in the body, again many a time without waiting for the *kriyā* too, the *āsana-mudrā-stotrās* have taken place; these emanations are natural, innate. Since these are innately present hence these used to be emanated. Why will it wait for *kriyā*? Here is the difference between supernatural (*aloukik*) and natural (*svābāvik*). Supernatural, we call all those, when staying in one world (*lok*), something of the other world is displayed. And natural means, that which is present, only that. Since everything is present everywhere at all times, hence whenever whatever is emanated, that itself is natural. Earlier, regarding this body, utterance of various facts used to occur a lot and listening to them several people used to say, 'She always talks about Herself only.' Now, utterance like old days, do not occur. It is not because of this type of local gossip that, all these have been stopped. All these have stopped on its own. And when the facts of this body were being uttered, then if I had felt that the utterances were mine, maybe then it would not have emanated in this manner. While uttering all these, I used to feel that this body is completely separate from myself. Hence saying anything related to this body is the same as saying about any other person."

Conversing in this manner it was ten 'o'clock in the night. Khukuni-didi had come in between to take Ma inside but had returned back.

(to be continued)

* * * *

Amrit-Katha*

(certain incidents in Shree Shree Ma's Own words)

Bhaiji

(continued from before)

Whatever Bholanath used to tell me, that I always tried to complete. Whatever I could not accomplish, regarding that, instead of getting sad used to inform I am unable to do it. Hearing and observing me for so many days he was able to understand my emotions and attitude. That day when again I sat silently I saw where my father is present; going there I gave him something for his protection and then, at that moment from within, this thought arose that he will now live, but this also I understood from within how and with which disease he will leave his body. Later when I met father, then came to know that that some time ago due to asthma his condition had become very bad and a person had told him about a *kavach* (amulet) which had to be worn on the neck. He had done that only.

This incident is a few months after I stopped talking; hearing about the change in my attitude a *sadhu* (monk) expressed his desire to meet me. I told Bholanath that if he had a strong desire then he may come. He came one day in the evening. Bholanath made him sit down in a stool. I was sitting in my own emotional state in the place where I used to sit daily. Bholanath said, "The *sadhu* wants to talk with you." I gestured yes. Sometimes explained to Bholanath in this manner only. I was sitting facing the north so I sat facing the east. That *sadhu* asked a lot about me but my *kundali* (birth-chart) also has not been made nor could I answer his questions. This continued for some time. He then narrated my incident referring to another lady saying that they have attained *siddhi* (enlightenment). Then saw that from within this body *shlok* (divine narrations) etc. started pouring out and I made the lines of my *kundali* and then sat down. Looking sharply at the *sadhu* words emerged from my mouth, "So, have you attained *siddhi*, you rob and by giving false *taabij* you demand for money." In this manner all his hidden deeds started emanating from my mouth. Hearing this a few nearby people gathered

there. The *sadhu* was amazed. Frightened he shut the door of the room. Getting down from the stool on to the ground he told Bholanath to keep quiet. Then looking towards me said, "Please pardon me, I have made a mistake. Please tell how I can get *siddhi*. I have not attained anything." In the meantime my attitude of talking loudly had diminished. I said, "You say that you will not do like this any further." He did that only. Later I told him how he can attain *siddhi* by doing *puja* and various actions, etc. Whatever I had said to him that I had never done myself nor I had seen anybody doing it. Automatically all these emanated from my mouth. Happily he went away.

The state of a *sādhak*

Such a state arises in the *sādhak* (aspirant) that, whatever he observes he informs, he does not get any feeling of keeping it secret. Actually when the aspirant's knots (*granthi*) of emotion break down, then his attributes are really very charming. Along with the distraction of the senses, rudeness and or politeness or various other divine emotions are observed in him all the time. Whether it is rudeness and or politeness, an ordinary person will be disturbed, that emotion is only the true emotion. Any one of these emotions is a tempting thing for persons desirous of compassion. In this state bit by bit the aspirant's future and present all relations get detached. Hence for sometime the aspirant feels the extreme of rudeness and or politeness. But if there is any shortage in his attitude then both the emotions do not occur at the same time. Just as a person drowned in grief, even during his restlessness does not bare his clothes, he keeps wearing his clothes, everything goes about in a natural way. Similarly in an aspirant too, like the behavior of this body, along with the emanation of various emotions, if within, a steady disposition is maintained, then he obliterating all the above emotions will reach the state and emotion of innate peace.

(to be continued)

*('Amrit Katha' a book published in Hindi, from an old manuscript of Bhaiji, where Shree Shree Ma in Her own words intimates and clarifies Bhaiji about various incidents in Her life)

* * * * *

Pādpeetham Smarāmi

Udaytirth Kheora

Brahmacharini Dr.Geeta

In this twentieth century, in this conflicting environment, due to the distressed and ardent call of the devotees, for the welfare of mankind, once again the Lord of the Universe, the Divine Father descended on this earth in the form of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee.

Just as the grace of the Supreme Lord is beneficial to all beings in this world, similarly the place where His divine manifestation occurs, where His divine play unfolds, all those places are also very dear and beneficial to the devotees.

The name of one such village is Kheora, in the District of Brahmanberiya (then it was under Kumila District). This village has a uniqueness of its own. Regarding this village Ma Herself has said, "Kheora village is full of jungles. Within this too, as if an appealing joyous feeling and effect was observed. The surrounding of that place itself had an untainted and fascinating effect. Poverty never seemed to affect anybody."

Blessed is this land of Kheora where the Divine Mother appeared in the form of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma. In the very auspicious *brahma-muhurt* (4:00am early morning) of Thursday, 30th April, 1896 (*Bengali era: 19th Baishakh, 1303*) the courtyard of the house of a devoted brahmin Shri Bipin Behari Bhattacharya and his wife Smt Mokshada Sundari Devi (the parents of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma), started echoing with the beneficial sound of the conch shells. The auspicious moment was *Krishna Chaturthi* (moon calendar) in the third *prahar* (quarter) of the night. This date and time not only for India but for the whole world is an auspicious and pious moment, when the Divine Mother descended to earth in the form of a divine baby-girl, for whose glimpse, the hearts of the people yearned for again and again.

Today Kheora is not just a village for the devotees of Ma, but the place of Ma's manifestation, the pious and very eminent pilgrimage (*mahan-tirth*), the manifesting pilgrimage (*uday-tirth*). Ma's divine and

beautiful childhood unfolded in this very village. Ma's pious marriage also took place here. In the future this *uday-tirth* will one day become a place for spiritual mega gathering for all mankind, a divine pilgrimage where people from all sects will assemble in divine brotherhood and reverberate the atmosphere with songs in praise of Ma. The people will come from every part of the world to get inner peace and joy. This land will one day give solace and new hope to all the people enveloped in this dark and gloomy world.

Ma's father Shri Bipin Behari Bhattacharya (*Dadamoshai*) was the only child of Shri Trilochan Bhattacharya of Vidyakut and his second wife Smt Tripura Sundari Devi (Ma's *Thakurma*) of Kheora. Shri Bipin Behari had lost his father when he was quite young. However, he was bent towards religion and wanted to become a *sannyāsi*. While staying in Vidyakut, after completing his education he had left his home for the Himalayas. He was then brought back and given to marriage to Smt Mokshada Sundari Devi (Ma's mother *Didima*), who was the youngest daughter of Shri Ramakant Bhattacharya of Sultanpur.

After about one and a half to two years of marriage, Shri Bipin Behari along with his family left his father's home in Vidyakut and settled down in his ancestral home in Kheora. In this very village of Kheora their first issue was a baby girl, who died a few days after birth. *Didima* had mentioned that after her death Ma's *Thakurma* Tripura Sundari Devi had gone to the nearby Kali temple in Kosba for praying so that a boy is born to his son and daughter-in-law. But the divine play of the Lord is such that when she went into the temple to pray suddenly she asked for a baby daughter. She herself was astonished at this incident.

After that only Shree Shree Ma manifested as the second daughter of Smt Mokshada Sundari Devi (*Didima*) and Shri Bipin Behari Bhattacharya (*Dadamoshai*). *Didima* lovingly called Ma as 'Nirmala Sundari'.

Kheora village at that time was not too big. There were few Brahmins, few Kayasthas and the rest Muslim and other communities. All the neighbours around Shri Bipin Behari's house were Muslims. Ma used to visit these neighbouring Muslim houses quite often, because for Her the whole village was Her own house and hence She roamed around everywhere.

It has been heard that even in the winter months Ma used to go bathing in the night with Her *Thakurma* in a neighbouring pond. That pond is still present and its water is now very sacred for the devotees.

Ma's education (whatever She had) was also in this village only. Then in Kheora, there was only one primary school comprising of ten to twelve girls. By the time Ma reached the age of twelve, *Dadamoshai* became impatient for Ma's marriage. In February 1909 (25th Magh, 1315, Bengali era), Ma got married to Ramani Mohan Chakravorty (Baba Bholanath) of Bikrampur and had to leave Kheora. After two years *Dadamoshai* also left his maternal home in Kheora and settled down in his paternal home in Vidyakut.

Almost sixteen years later in the month of May 1927, after touring through various places Ma had visited Vidyakut and Kheora along with Baba Bholanath, Swami Akhandanandaji (father of Gurupriya-Didi), Gurupriya Didi, *Dadamoshai*, *Didima* and several others. By this time *Dadamoshai's* house in Kheora had been purchased by somebody else, who knew Ma and loved her too.

Everybody requested *Dadamoshai* to indicate the exact birthplace. But the place had changed a lot in these sixteen years and hence it was difficult for *Dadamoshai* and *Didima* to locate the place. Ma roamed around and showed everybody the various trees and plants and kept talking about the old times. A little later Ma went behind a house and standing at a spot picked up a little mud from that spot and started crying. Then everybody understood that, that very spot was Ma's original birthplace. Then *Didima* looking around recognized some signs and remembered the whole incident. That place was however covered with a pile of cow-dung.

After some time Ma standing at that spot and wiping her tears called the neighbours and said, "See, if you keep this place clean and virtuous you yourselves will be benefitted. Coming here if you pray piously then you will get the desired results. Do not desecrate or dirty this place." All of them were overwhelmed on hearing Ma's advice.

In the month of May 1937, Ma again arrived in Kheora village with several others. There were five palanquins and one small back-palanquin. Many walked all the way from Kosba to see Ma's birthplace. Covering

almost five miles in about six hours they reached Kheora. In the meantime, an intolerable rain had started. But the villagers remained gathered to see Ma. Ma showed around the places where She played and bathed in the ponds. The childhood playmates also came forward and started talking about the old days. Ma also enquired about those who were not present there. Surprisingly the old men and women too were paying their obeisance by falling at Ma's feet. They were seeing for the first time such a divine Motherly figure. The Muslim ladies and men also came and merrily talked of old times. Ma was also giving joy and happiness to all by sharing with them Her old memories. Till about two-thirty in the night people crowded around Ma and gossiped with Her. Everyone were extremely pleased with Ma's sweet and humble behaviour. Ma spent one day with the residents of Kheora in this manner and departed for Kosba the next day with the group.

A few days later on October 1938, Gurupriya-Didi along with Brahmachari Yogeshda and Dacca's Moulana Saheb Premgopal went to Kheora to establish an Ashram at Ma's birthplace. The birthplace was owned by somebody else for a long time. Hence Premgopal had also gone to explain to the residents about Ma and the importance of that place. The wife of Shri Lakshmi Charan Bhattacharya (late), Smt. Prasannamoyi Devi expressed her deep desire to donate her small land for Ma's ashram. The donation papers for the land was completed on 9th October, 1938 (*Ben. era: 22nd Ashwin, 1345*). This place too had been seen by Ma on Her last visit. She had said, "I had played a lot in this place adjacent to the pond." Everybody agreed to construct an ashram at this place though it was a little farther from the birthplace.

On the *Purnima* night of *Kojagori Lakshmi Puja*, all the villagers sang songs and *kirtan* on that allocated place. *Kirtan* continued till late night with great zeal and enthusiasm. Gurupriya-Didi departed from Kheora the next day leaving behind Yogeshda for managing the construction work of building a small residence, on that small land, which by Ma's grace had been obtained so comfortably. Moulana Saheb was also left behind along with Yogeshda in order to get possession of the birthplace as soon as possible.

Due to Yogeshda's incessant efforts and the enthusiasm of the villagers, a small building was constructed on that land in a very short

span of time. The construction included a room for Ma, a kitchen and a moderately sized *Nat-mandir* (hall for *satsang*). The inauguration of this newly built ashram was done in Ma's divine presence a few months later when Ma next arrived in Kheora. The actual birthplace, in spite of the sincere efforts of Moulana Saheb could not be acquired till then. However, everyone's fervent wish was finally achieved by the end of the year 1939.

(to be continued)

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LIST OF FESTIVALS

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| 1. Shree Shree 108 Swami Muktananda Giri Sanyas Utsav | April 13, 2020 |
| 2. Akshay Tritiya | April 26, 2020 |
| 3. Adi Jagatguru Shree Shankaracharya Jayanti | April 28, 2020 |
| 4. Baba Bholanathji Nirvan Tithi | May 1, 2020 |
| 5. Buddha Purnima | May 7, 2020 |
| 6. Shree Shree Ma's Janmotsav | May 2 - 11, 2020 |
| 7. Ganga Dusshera | June 1, 2020 |
| 8. Guru Purnima Mahotsav | July 5, 2020 |
| 9. Shree Shree 108 Swami Muktananda Giri Nirvan Tithi (Shravan Shukla Saptami) | July 27, 2020 |

Anandamayi Ma a 'Phenomenon'

Anil Ganguli

Anandamayi Ma is a 'Phenomenon', a wonder of wonders in the history of spirituality. To enquiries regarding her identity, she replies, "Whatever you think me to be." Self-illuminated, Anandamayi Ma is a 'Lotus' sprouting full-blown even at her advent, without a *guru's* guidance. Ma is the despair of her biographers, because a biographer's work is to mainly narrate facts relating to a person's life which are ascertainable. The concatenation of the events of Ma's life is not known and even the facts that are known admit of more than one interpretation. Incidentally, Ma's photographs are bewildering. Thousands have been taken, but not a single print leaves on one's mind the same impression as any other. A biography is expected to deal with one's aspirations, actions and achievements and mission. But so far as Ma is concerned, She herself says that she has no aspiration, no action and no achievement. Ma once told me, "This body has no mission, nor anything of the sort."

Ma has no patronizing air about her, no pretensions, and neither does she wear saffron robes associated generally in India with spiritual leaders. She introduces to all and sundry as, "your uneducated little daughter" and behaves as such with excelled cordiality. In this ever changing Universe, nothing can escape inevitable transformation through the lapse of time. The only exception is the supreme Truth, called *Brahma*, who is beyond the limitations of time and space and ever remains the same. Ma also seems to answer to the same description as disclosed by herself to Paramahansa Yogananda. She said, "My consciousness has never associated itself with the temporal body. Before I came in this earth I was the same. As a little girl I was the same. I grew into womanhood, but still I was the same. When the family in which I was born made arrangements to have this body (meaning herself) married, I was the same. And, Father, in front of you now, I am the same. Even afterwards, though the dance of creation changes around me in the hall of Eternity, I shall remain the same."

According to the *Gita* and the *Upanishad*, *Brahma* dwells in the heart of every individual and is essentially the same as the *ātma* or Self of each one of us. We are not conscious of our identity with *Brahma*, Ma is. She realizes that She, along with every other person, is *Brahma*. In the *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, Pratardan declares, 'I am the *prān* (the vital breadth, explained as *Brahma*). I am the conscious Self.' Some of Ma's sayings are comparable to great utterances of Vedic seers such as *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahma*) and *Tat twam asi* (That thou art).

Indeed, Ma is the embodiment of the ideal perfection revealed to the mystic seer of the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 'Where one perceives no other, hears no other, recognizes no other, there is fullness.' As seen by Ma, 'Oneness' has been expressed by her in words the gist of which is somewhat to the following effect, "Whether one takes the path of devotion where the 'I' is lost in the 'Thou', or the path of Self-enquiry in search of the 'I', it He alone who is found in the 'Thou' as well as in the 'I'. Why should one's gaze be fixed while treading the path? The gaze is He and the way also is He. Whatever is revealed or hidden anywhere, in any way, is 'Thou', is 'I'. The crux of Ma's teaching is Union, conscious union with *Brahma*. Ma confirms this again and again in various ways, through dialogues and parables, through letters and songs.

When Ma appears to us to be in communion with the absolute, does she at all take notice of us? This question once happened to be the occasion for Ma to say something unique about herself. "I am conditioned, as well as unconditioned. I am neither infinite nor confined to limits. I am both at the same time. My will would be irresistible if I expressed it. My being had existed before there was any creation, duration or dissolution of the world. If you say I am conditioned, you confine me within a limit; again if you say I am limitless, even then you are restricting me. I take food and go to sleep, hence I am subject to limitations again there is no need of food and hence I am above conditioning.

Ma's Eternal Truth – 'All One' message is, "As long as you see this object world, creation exists for you. When the activities prompted by the senses and by outer impulses have been renounced, your *inner self* will awaken. Then you will be able to fix your gaze on the Supreme Being and be liberated from the bondage of the vision that perceives the world of duality."

One of the keywords often repeated by Ma is *kheyāl*. Once I asked Ma what was the meaning of her *kheyāl*. She simply raised her hand upwards, indicating that *kheyāl* emanated from above. Thereupon I concluded that the motive force behind Ma's *kheyāl* must be the Will of God Almighty. Then, what is the difference between Ma's *kheyāl* and an ordinary man's *kheyāl* which means a wayward will? The answer to this question is implanted in Ma's saying, "There is only One and nothing but the One. Everything is in the One and the One is in everything." Therefore, so far as Ma is concerned, the question of the existence of an individual will, apart from the Divine Will, does not arise at all. An ordinary man's will arises from his personal desires. Ma's *kheyāl* is usually unpredictable and unconventional and sometimes apparently illogical and devoid of what is according to us rhyme and reason. All apparent contradictions of her *kheyāl* dissolve in her into a perfect sense of poise and proportion, inspiring awe and wonder. Yet Ma is full of sparkling humour. Indeed, she is a perennial fund of merriment.

Ma may be called a *crux criticorum*, a puzzle for critics. Inscrutable are her ways and enigmatic her words. Let us not try to explain what is inexplicable.

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Losing hope is losing all indeed. But has this loss of everything actually occurred? Is not the heart bubbling over with desires and hopes? This is the innate tendency of the individual. Perfect resignation gives deeper joy than anything else. Accept it as your sole refuge. Whatever God does at any time is wholly benign. If you can bear this in mind, you will be at peace. - Ma Anandamayee

Children section

Sw.Shivanaanda (Shri Saileshda)

I. The clever businessman

Shree Shree Ma narrated another story about search of God:

There was a Sethji (rich businessman). He was going for business purpose to a distant land. A thief came to know about this and disguised as a businessman came to the Sethji's house and said, "Sethji, you are going out for business, I am also going too. Thought, it would not be good to go alone with all my wealth and jewels. Since you are also going so I came to ask if both of us can go together, it will be safe for both of us."

Hearing the stranger and observing his behaviour, the Sethji had a doubt in his mind. But keeping his feelings to himself and based on the thief's request he agreed to go with him. He then kept his valuable jewels in a bag after counting them properly and departed with the thief.

The thief walked along with the Sethji but his mind was completely on the Sethji's bag. He was only thinking, when he would get a chance to catch hold of the bag and run away. After walking for the whole day, when it was dark they halted in a *dharmshala* (rest-house) for passing the night. After having their meals, they spread out their bedding and lay down. The Sethji fell asleep the moment he lay down but there was no sleep in the thief's eyes. Why he was not able to sleep that you must have understood? How could he sleep? His mind was only on the Sethji's bag full of jewelry. He was only thinking 'how can I get the bag?' Finally he got up and saw that the Sethji was in deep sleep. The thief thought 'I should not delay any more, this is the best time to run away with the bag of jewels.' So thinking he started searching for the bag, 'where could the Sethji have kept it?' He kept searching for the whole night but could not find it anywhere. About to be dawn, the tired and helpless thief lay down and started thinking it was useless to come all this way. The sun rose, the Sethji got up, washed his hands and face and got ready to leave for the journey ahead. What could the thief do, he also got up to get ready. The

Sethji opened his bag, counted all his jewels and found them intact. Then they departed for their journey. During the journey the thief started thinking 'how surprising, for the whole night I could not locate the bag, where could he have kept it?'

Again it was evening and they stopped in a *sarâi* (rest-house) for the night. Like the first day they had their meals and lay down. Today too the Sethji fell asleep immediately on lying. The thief started his job again, started searching for the bag, in his clothes, bedding and other items, but could not get a trace of the bag. Seeing it was dawn, like the first day he lay down and pretended that he was sleeping. This continued for a few days till they reached their destination. The thief continued with his job every night but he could not fulfill his aim. Daily the Sethji counted his jewels in front of the thief before starting for the journey. The thief finally broke down due to disappointment.

At last unable to control himself he questioned the Sethji, "O brother! Please don't feel awkward for asking this question. You are my friend. There is no benefit in hiding from you, I am not a businessman, in order to steal your bag of jewels I have disguised like this. Every night I searched for it but could not locate it. But every morning I saw it in your hands. Please explain its secret."

Hearing the thief the Sethji first laughed, and then said, "You too are my friend, there is no benefit in hiding from you. I had understood from the beginning only that, you have joined me in order to steal my jewels. Knowing all this too, I slept peacefully in the night. Because I knew you will never locate my bag. What I did, you know? I used to keep my bag below your pillow."

Shree Ma finished Her story and said, "See! God is present in this manner within every man, but man in search of Him, roams about in pilgrimage, in jungles, in mountains, etc. That the Lord is within him, he never understands that for a moment also.

* * *

He who has given you a mouth will also provide you with food. Observe strict truthfulness and be ever mindful of Him alone. It is for you to concentrate with all your might upon spiritual practices such as meditation and prayer, all the rest He Himself will get accomplished.

- Ma Anandamayee

Reminiscence of Matri-Darshan

Shri Tara Prasad Chattopadhyay

(continued from before)

Most of the blessings of Shree Shree Ma that we had was mainly in the Shree Shree Ma's Ashram in Kalkaji, Delhi. Writing about this Ashram reminds me immediately of Shri Dhirendranath Dutta, elder brother of Jitendranath Dutta (Jitenda). The area presently occupied by the Delhi Ashram was earlier an area covered with jungle. Dhirenda had first built a small room for himself at the designated area, after clearing the jungle, and staying alone in that isolated place, eating once a day, he had busied himself in building the Ashram. Initially Shree Ma's room, kitchen etc, was built. Later the ShreeNaamBrahma temple and others were constructed. Among the aspirants and *brahmacharis* who came along for aiding in the construction work, the support of Swami Paramanandaji and Swami Swarupanandaji are commendable. After the Ashram was built, during Shree Ma's presence very few people used to visit the Ashram. There was no fixed path or road to reach the Ashram within the jungle. While visiting the Ashram, we used to form a group and from the Kalkaji bus-stop traversed for almost half-an-hour through the pebbled and muddy fields with trees and shrubs, towards the direction of the Ashram. After reaching there and having Shree Ma's *darshan* we used to completely forget the difficulties of the path. Nowadays with Shree Ma's grace there are a lot of temples in this Ashram, the path to the Ashram is also well done and it is one of the important Ashrams of the Sangha. So many religious functions have been organized here in Shree Ma's presence, like, Shree Shree Durga Puja, Shree Shree Kali Puja, Annakut, Shivratri, Sanyam Saptah, etc.

Just as several devotees have received the grace of Shree Ma and have been saved from various calamities, similarly for not taking Her advise seriously or for not listening to it at all, several devotees have faced serious problems too. Let me relate here one such incident. Once a party of six devotees including my wife had gone from Delhi to have *darshan* of Shree Ma in the Vrindavan Ashram. On the day of their

departure from Vrindaban back to Delhi, Shree Ma all of a sudden left for an unknown place informing them that they should meet Her before leaving for the station. As it was already getting late and Shree Ma had not returned back, the group caught a *tanga* (horse-carriage) picked up their luggage on to it and left for the station. How strange! After trotting for a few steps the horse suddenly stopped, would not budge at all. Time was passing away; they then boarded another devotee's car and left for the station, hoping to catch the train. In spite of speeding off, the train had departed when they reached the station. Depressed, they waited at the station for the next train to Delhi. The next train, extremely crowded arrived at one'o'clock in the night. They somehow managed to enter into one of the compartments, paid a huge fine, as they did not have a ticket for this train, and reached Delhi, tired and troubled. All this trouble and problems occurred just because they had not heeded Shree Ma's advice, but with Her grace also they could reach home safely.

In 1969 with Shree Ma's permission we had gone to Bombay to be with Shree Ma and attend the *Janmotsav* in Shri B.K.Shah's house, which was more of an Ashram than his residence. On the day of our departure from Bombay, on requesting Shree Ma's blessings for our new residence in Calcutta, Shree Ma gave me a Mango after thoroughly looking at it for some time. We packed the *prasād* mango in our luggage and returned back to Calcutta. To our great surprise, even after seven days the status of the mango, while receiving it from Shree Ma and after it was taken out of the trunk was the same, fresh and bright. There was not the slightest difference in it. This is only Shree Ma's grace and nothing else.

In 1971, my eldest son, after getting his medical doctor's degree got a job in the Central Govt. C.G.H.S scheme. However because of the Indo-Pakistan war for Bangladesh, he was immediately posted as a voluntary doctor to the nearest border to serve the Borders Security Force, although this was not a part of his job. We were disturbed for this reason, still we went to Kashi Ashram for attending Shree Ma's *Janmotsav*, in May. When we got Shree Ma's *darshan*, we requested blessings for our eldest child. In reply Shree Ma said, "*Dikshā*? Let him come back, then it will be done." By Shree Ma's unimaginable Grace, we were now assured that he will return and will get *dikshā* too. He returned back very soon within one and half months, and then in July all of us went to Kankhal Ashram

for attending *Guru Purnima*. The day before the function, Shree Ma while giving several advices, mentioned about doing *japa* for twenty-one thousand times on *Guru-Purnima*. I could complete the mentioned amount of *japa* in two-three sittings. During the *japa*, I visualized two-three *beej-mantras*, which on informing Shree Ma, She advised us to attend the 'Om Shree Shree Durga mahotsav' in Dehradun Ashram.

Hence in October all of us went to the Dehradun Ashram and Shree Ma after blessing us informed that we will get *dikshā* on the *ashtami* day. On that day in the evening, Shree Ma took us to a open space opposite to the *puja-mandap*. Shree Ma told me to repeat the *beej-mantra* written on a piece of paper three-times. Then I did the same to my wife and eldest son, and finally my eldest son got his wife to repeat it three times. So in this way, with Shree Ma's infinite grace and due to our extreme good luck our initiation took place. Then Shree Ma offered us *prasād* and later gifted us the book '*puja-paddhati*' written by Shrimat Narayan Swamiji.

We are worldly (*sangsāri*) creatures. Even though knowing that the world (*sangsār*) is only '*sang*' (clowns) *sājāi* (established in) *sār* (essence), we forget our true essence and drown ourselves in this worldly essence. Shree Ma has bestowed on us several advices, one among these is: "Act with a pious mind, through these actions only try to rise in steps. In every action, keep Him attached, then nothing will have to be detached. All your work will get completed properly, it will become easier to find Him too. You will observe yourself growing within, just as a mother nurtures her child with care. Whatever work you do, do it with total simplicity and satisfaction. Then only completeness will occur in your actions. When the time is ripe the dry leaves will fall off by itself, and new leaves will sprout out.

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Earthly love causes intense suffering and does not last whereas the love of God gives extreme happiness. The ceaseless, never-ending current of Divine Mercy and compassion ever flows forth; in that current one should bathe.

- Ma Anandamayee

Notable Events and Sayings of Ma

Naren Chowdhury

I had numerous opportunities to be near Ma at different places, either alone or with my family members. Thus I have witnessed several of Ma's *leelas* and have heard related advises that She had uttered. A few of those which I recollect distinctly, with Ma's grace, are mentioned below:

(1) Bare feet should be covered

One day in June 1937, me and my wife were at Almora with Ma, when I asked Her, "On many occasions, we notice that you carefully cover your feet with several folds of cloth. Why Ma? You do not want us to ever look at your feet?" Ma replied, "It is not as you think. You do not know that several astral (bodyless) beings, gods, goddesses, saints, *rishis*, *munis*, etc, come to see this body. The bare feet should not be shown to them.

(2) Testing Ma

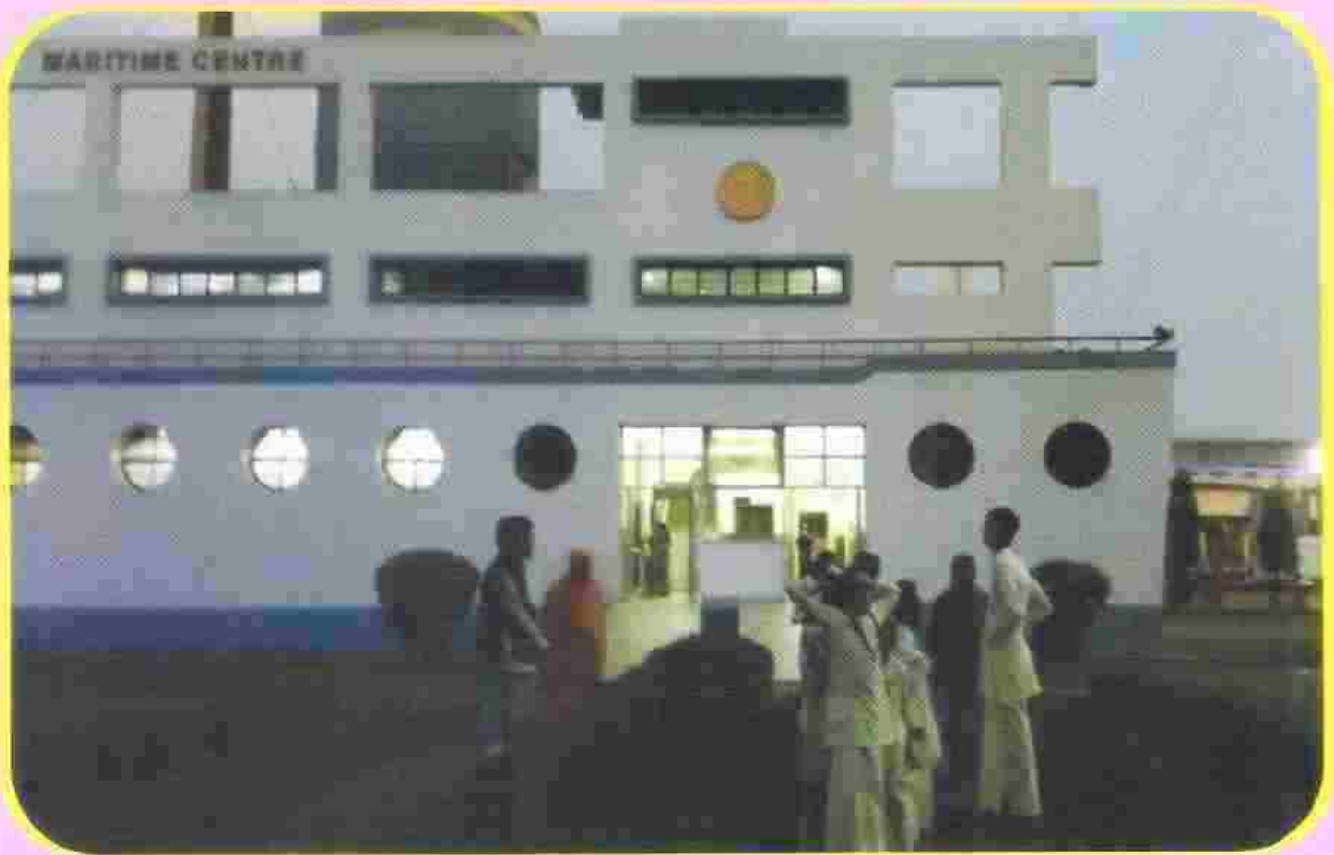
After Bhaiji breathed his last in Almora, Ma had become unconscious and in that state She was taken to Dehradun. She regained consciousness after three days and did not take any food for seventeen days, except two-three teaspoonful of water three-four times a day. I visited Ma during these seventeen days in Dehradun. I found that though the upper part of Her body, from head to waist, was warm and had sensation, the lower part of Her body was still more or less paralyzed and cold. One day at dusk, I alone was sitting on the bed-side close to Her head. I noticed that Ma was moving Her hands and fingers as if to exercise them. I got the impression that Ma was Herself trying to recover and somehow thought that I should test Her strength and so I said, "Ma, will you clasp my hand, so that I can know how much strength you have regained?" At this, Ma became completely motionless and Her fair and bright countenance suddenly darkened, the eyes became sunken and were half-closed. As She looked into my face, I was awfully frightened by Her intolerably piercing gaze. In an unusually hoarse and masculine voice, Ma passed the stern order, "Don't test me." The next moment, Ma became normal and resumed Her beaming and joyous appearance. My fright and anxiety



Kolkata Educational Tour - Science City, Kolkata



Amusement Park, Science City, Kolkata



Maritime Centre - Science City, Kolkata



Alipore Zoological Garden, Kolkata



Kripa Bhawan, Saltlake City, Kolkata
(Swapanda's house and his office)



Swapanda performing Ma's puja



Vastradaan to vidyapeeth students



Prasad distribution in Kripa Bhawan

were gone. Since then I have never thought of testing Ma in any manner whatsoever.

(3) Ma's abstaining meals

When Ma continued Her fast even after regaining consciousness after *samādhi*, nobody could remotely guess the real reason for Her fasting. Being over curious, I directly asked Ma, "Why are you not taking any food?" Ma's reply was terse but significant and easy to understand. She said, "In the course of *samādhi*, life had left the body for a while; hence the recovery is slow." From this I understood that Ma's body-soul was no longer in existence, i.e Ma's body was dead for sometime. Of course, recovery from that situation and revitalization and proper functioning of all the organs of Her body must take time. After realizing the actual reason for Ma's fasting, I never implored Her to take food, as several other devotees did.

(4) Biren-da's fasting

When Ma was observing fast at Dehradun Ashram, Biren-da was also staying at the Ashram. Biren-da looked upon Ma as his own little daughter. When Ma with Her body still partially paralyzed, was helped to sit up, She was unhesitatingly reclining against Biren-da's body for support. But inscrutable are Ma's ways. Even an ardent devotee of Biren-da's caliber could not correctly discern why Ma was abstaining from food, and most of Her devotees were insisting on Her breaking the fast. That is why Biren-da repeatedly implored Ma to take food. When all his persuasions failed, Biren-da decided to go on a fast himself, so that Ma may break Her fast. But when Ma dissuaded him from undertaking the fast, he bluntly refused saying, "Who are you of mine that I should go on a fast for your sake? I shall fast for the sake of my own health." After he abstained from food for a day, rashes appeared all over his body and finally he had to abandon his fast. Later he came to know of the reason of Ma's fasting and regretted for the same and for not listening to Ma.

(5) Disease-forms and devotees

In March 1938, when Bholanath was at Tarapith, he got an intimation that Ma was suffering from high fever at Raipur, near Dehradun. On his way to Raipur, Bholanath informed the devotees at Delhi about Ma's illness. The devotees of Delhi deputed me to go to Raipur to bring Ma to

Delhi, if She would consent to come. At Raipur, I saw Ma confined to a bed in a room of an old dilapidated *dharmshala* (rest-house), attached to the Shiva temple. Ma was getting attacks of high fever on alternate days. The fever would start in the evening and leave the next morning. One morning when She was free from fever, She said to me, "Last evening while I was conversing with you, the disease-form (Ma could distinctly see the different subtle forms of different diseases) was sitting at the corner of the room and weeping. It wanted to enter this body. I told it to wait and enter this body after I finished conversing with you." I said to Ma, "Will you please show me the disease-form? I will strike it hard with the broom and drive it away." "Why do you want to chase it away?" argued Ma. "You all love this body and like to play with it. The disease-forms also love this body and like to play with it. Why drive them out?"

I was bewildered to learn that Ma had the same love and concern for obnoxious disease-forms as She had for us, Her privileged human devotees.

(6) Ma appears as *Pārvati*

At a good distance of at least two hundred feet from Ma's room at Raipur Shiva temple, an elderly Muslim devotee of Ma used to patiently wait daily (often for hours) to have Ma's *darshan* for even a minute or two. Being a Muslim, he was not allowed to enter the Temple premises. One evening, just after sunset, I went to see this elderly Muslim devotee from close quarters. On seeing me he stood up and I observed that his face was beaming with joy looking towards Ma's room. I too turned back to look towards Ma's room. Just in front of Ma's room I saw Ma in a beautiful form of Goddess *Parvati* (the consort of Lord Shiva) standing at the foothills of the Himalayas. Her radiant face and exquisite features betrayed Her divinity. I considered myself blessed to have this rare vision of Ma because of the presence of the Muslim devotee. And he must be hundred times more blessed for enjoying this vision daily through Ma's grace.

(7) Ma not saving Bhaiji

After Bhaiji's sad demise, I regretfully complained to Ma, saying, "Ma, Bhaiji was the chief of your devotees. At Almora, he passed away in your presence. Why did you not save him?" Ma replied apologetically, "How could I save him? He was continuously praying to me that he may die at that moment in my presence."

(8) Paths are not same for all

After the Shree Shree Durga *Puja*, held in Ma's presence at Dehradun in October 1937, Ma and Her devotees went to Haridwar and stayed in Nankibai's *dharmshala*. One day, when Ma was sitting in a spacious hall in the *dharmshala*, with a crowd of over forty devotees, seated around Her, a question arose, "Could there be one common religion for all?" Answering the question, Ma said, "How could that be? Consider two leaves which have grown side by side from one stem on a single branch of a tree. If you critically compare them in all details, it will be found that they are not identically the same. There must be some difference in some part or the other in the two leaves. Similarly no two persons are identically the same. So many of you have assembled here. You are all seated in different positions. Hence, if any two of you will try to come to me, since you are occupying different positions, the paths leading towards me can never be identical. Thus, the path to God, for two persons how-so-ever similar, can never be the same. In the same way, paths followed by all seekers of God, i.e., their religions, can never be the same."

(9) *Sādhana*

Emotionally upset, one day in Delhi Ashram when I found Ma sitting alone, I said to Ma, "Ma, after we have seen you, we have no more duties to attend to." Supporting my point I quoted Shree Paramhansa Ramkrishna Dev, who said, 'If you light just one match-stick in a room, which has been left dark for a thousand years, the room is instantly lit up.' At this, Ma observed, "That is an odd excuse, persons like you often put forward. The thousand year long darkness may end instantly, but how can the foul odour in a room, which has been kept closed for a thousand years, go off? The task is not quite that easy. *Sādhana* has to be performed."

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God, the Ocean of Mercy, who, ever blesses the world, pours out His grace at all times. It is essential for man to consider everything that happens to be for the best; 'For the best' denotes that which is most helpful towards the realization of the Divine, the fullness of Bliss.

- Ma Anandamayee