

Ananda

Newsletter of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

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Contents – Second part of April 2020 Amrita Varta



Sound file:

<http://www.anandamayi.org/mmedia/mp3/Naratanapaya.mp3> Pushpadi sings Naratan Paya Aur Pyari Bolo Ram, Ram, followed by Sri Ma singing Ram,Ram

Text file:

<http://www.anandamayi.org/new/Upadeshamrita.pdf> Sri Ma's words in Matri Upadeshaamrita, an article taken from Ananda Varta 1980 Vol 27, No 2, by Sister Uma.

Swami Padmanabhananda

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQLntoqjE2c> Sw Padmanabhanandaji, General Secretary of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh talks at the Samyam Saptah in Kankhal on 15th November 2021.



H H Raja Joginder Sen Bahadur and H H Rani Kusum Kumari
of Mandi preparing for Shree Shree Ma's *aarti*
(behind: Shri Gurupriya Didi, Vishudha-di and Buni-di (Jutika Guha))



Shree Shree Ma being offered *bhog* by H H Rani Kusum Kumari of Mandi
Venue: Mandi Palace, Himachal Pradesh



Shree Shree Ma taking a rest on arrival at the Mandi palace



Shree Shree Ma being decorated with flowers, garland & scent
by H H Raja Joginder Sen Bahadur of Mandi



Shree Shree Ma resting in the Mandi palace with the Rani Sahiba in the forefront and Swamiji behind Ma



Shree Shree Ma on a trip to Revalsar in Raja Sahib's beautiful Ford Car, along with Rani Sahiba and others



Shree Shree Ma along with H H Rani Kusum Kumari of Mandi



Shree Shree Ma along with H H Raja Joginder Sen Bahadur of Mandi

Faith in God

M. M. Gopinath Kaviraj

Faith is the effect of hearing something from someone who is worthy of our credence and we naturally take his words as true. This is however faith based on ignorance and hence is called as blind faith. This blind faith or faith without any real basis, not illumined by the light of one's own knowledge can be scared away by the frightening look of reasoning and argument and can be lost forever. Although this faith may be termed as blind, its existence cannot be denied.

Blind faith with its basis in truth, has many advantages. It easily prompts one to action without the help of argument or reasoning. Later on, when the action brings forth the desired results, it becomes stronger and unshakeable. It is then no longer blind faith. Arguments then no longer can undermine it. The actual development of the human mind depends on this type of faith.

If the seed of faith is sown in the heart of a person by the words of some high soul who has attained enlightenment, it may develop gradually into consummate knowledge. This type of faith, though not illumined by one's own knowledge, is not, as a matter of fact, based on ignorance.

Faith in God arises because of two different aspects. (1) Rudimentary stage of faith or simple faith: Learned elders or aspirants who have experience in spirituality and have acknowledged the existence of God, preach about it from time to time for the welfare of the people. As long as their theories are not refuted by convincing arguments, it is natural for many of us to believe them in obedience with the respective tendencies of our minds. (2) The higher stage of faith arises from direct knowledge through spiritual activities. As he makes progress in spiritual discipline he obtains proof in every step that the simple faith which he hugged as real is undoubtedly so. As one advances on the path of inner self, one comes across such unusual occurrences and repeatedly witnesses such miracles in his life which compels him to acknowledge some highly powerful Intelligence as the controller of the whole visible world and also of the supersensual world. Here is an illustration to elucidate this point.

While going towards his destination, a man passes through a distant and un-inhabited jungle at the dead of the night. He has finished his provisions for sustaining himself. Fatigued with wandering all day and night he has no energy to move any further. The attack of wild beasts is also apprehended. Besides these physical problems he may also be suffering from mental tension and worries. In such a terrible situation, when he perceives the dark shadow of death approaching, in the twinkling of an eye, he beholds a glorious divine form, wearing a countenance full of affection, mercy and tranquillity, appearing before him and removing away all his fears addresses him soothingly, "Why are you afraid, dear? Look at the light glimmering over there. Go there and all your wants will be fulfilled. I am with you. There is no room for fear." So saying the divine form vanishes and right ahead of him he finds a hut with a lamp burning. He goes in, gets the required food, clothing and rest and shelter for the journey too.

However staunch an atheist he may be, and whatever doubts he may have as to the existence of God, because of the feeling that surged in his heart due to this incident, he will have to acknowledge there is a surely a Higher Power which manifested itself like a loving friend in dire need and protected him. It is immaterial whether this Power is termed God or anything else. But there is no doubt that the Power is all-loving, all-intelligence, extraordinary and supernatural in all respects. Several such events occur in the life of a man which cannot be explained by the ordinary relation of cause and effect. The sole objective of this Power is to do good to the person in question.

It cannot, however be expected that all people in this world will believe and have faith in God. Faith in God does not manifest itself in equal measure everywhere. There is a time for its manifestation. Through education, culture, scriptures, example and precepts, and the teachings of high souls produce faith in a pious heart. But the element of time also has to be taken into consideration.

As long as one feels satisfied with acquisition of material and transitory objects, or, on failing to acquire them, wistfully looks to the physical world for help, his attention will never divert towards the existence of a Power which is beyond the perception of our senses. If all our

ambitions are achieved by exploiting the visible world, why should we look for satisfaction in an invisible Power? However, a human being, having his plans thwarted, in spite of strenuous efforts of various kinds, by incessant obstructions, with adverse circumstances, gradually realises the limitations of his and that of the worldly power.

As long as man's ego is constantly being enforced in so many diverse ways in this world, it is hardly possible for him to consider himself as being permanently dependant and backed by that Higher Power. When the force of egoism gets gradually weakened by the forces of action and repercussions of this world, the hollowness of the worldly power is realised and acknowledged. Then the existence of the Divine Energy working within him and all around the universe gets unfolded within him.

That is why a person cannot really believe in the existence of God till the time is not ripe for the same, i.e. till the ego or tendency to enjoy worldly pleasures diminishes.

Hence, as his aspirations (*sādhana*) progresses, his inner self also grows and he arrives at a certain stage of his life when he begins to realise that nothing that the world can afford, will satisfy him permanently. He experiences a sense of utter helplessness which is actually an indication of his spiritual upliftment. His internal feelings diverted from the sensory world, gets directed towards the unknown, inscrutable and infinite Divine Power with an intensity proportionate to the intensity of his aspirations.

The Srimad Bhagwat Gitā says that there are four types of people who having faith in the Lord embrace Him, (a) those who are in distress, (b) those who seek worldly objects, (c) those who seek divine knowledge, (d) those who have attained spiritual knowledge. Again there are people in the world in the same condition but do not have faith in God. It is hence clear that the mind of a person cannot be drawn towards the Lord even though he may be in affliction, or a seeker for knowledge, or has a desire to obtain a worldly object, or possessed of wisdom, until and unless he has it in his *sanskār* (spiritual merits achieved in past lives). Then faith in God takes root by teachings from spiritual adepts and association with pious people (*satsang*) and then it increases from strength to strength as one advances in the path of spiritual activities (*sādhana*).

As the Lord is infinite, so both belief and disbelief in Him are within His laws. A person who today has put his foot on the ladder of faith in God, in this or in previous births, may have been a disbeliever of Him. We have come across numerous such instances in the history of every religion. Sainly individuals have certified that one who is a down-right non-believer today may and does rise to heights of a transcendent devotee, if and when his present stock of *kārmic* enjoyments and sufferings gets exhausted and is able to revert back to his past habit of renunciation. Hence disbelief also constitutes a necessary stage in the life of a human being. This disbelief ultimately gets transformed into faith, and therefore in truth it is not evil. Since we in general, who cannot see far into the future and consider the present as the only platform of life, are led to think that disbelief in God is likely to be harmful. In other words, if disbelief in God is only a preliminary stage leading onto faith, then the harm accruing from it is only temporary, and must be accepted as such, in view of the ultimate good.

If it is accepted that God is the truth, and if the mind can believe in it and so become wrapped with it, then no matter whether this faith is not grounded in knowledge, by reason of the power of this faith itself, a definite relationship is established between the human mind and God. This faith which is founded on reality becomes instrumental in leading a man onward in slow and gradual stages to a realisation of the Truth Absolute. The believing soul is then able to come within the orbit of the Divine Attraction and gets drawn towards Him every moment. By virtue of this faith, the believing soul sheds its faults, whatever their number, almost effortlessly. The fruit of faith is life everlasting of Light and Bliss. The fruit of lack of faith is subject to the death and darkness, the soul has to undergo a course of endless journey from birth to birth, can there be a greater misfortune than this.

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It is man's duty to try to cultivate faith and devotion in God. Pains are characteristic of this world; by this man is taught to understand this world. And then detachment from pleasure and enjoyment ensues.

- Ma Anandamayee

The glorious spirit of Amarkantak

Brahmacharini Dr. Guneeta

Shree Shree Ma always says “*Ek vahi vahi vahi*” (Only He, Only He, Only He exists). He Himself is omnipresent in infinite forms. His creation of the Universe includes both micro organisms as well as macro organisms like us, human beings. The Supreme Father, the heavenly Lord not only creates the Universe but also operates and assigns the duties and paths of every creature in the Universe. About forty years ago, the late Swami Narayananda Tirth was writing his book ‘Santana Vatsala’ in Bengali and publishing few pages from it regularly in the Bengali version of the quarterly magazine ‘Ananda-Varta’. He wished to get the same published in the Hindi version too and hence said to me one day, “It is my wish that you translate this book in Hindi.” At that time I was studying *Shastri*, but still translated several pages and got it published in the Hindi version regularly. For some reason, the publication of Ananda-Varta was terminated and hence my work also got discontinued.

However, during these years, I was translating in Hindi few other books. While continuing with volume seven of the book by Shri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta, suddenly a thought came to my mind that the job of translating ‘Santana Vatsala’ is unfinished for quite some time and it has to be completed first. Though I had firmly decided to start on this venture, the main problem in hand was to find out how much had been translated and from which page to continue. Brahmacharini Geeta Didi helped instantly in locating the magazines and sending me xerox copies of all the articles published in ‘Anand Varta’. The next hurdle was to go through the articles and decide how and from where to start. Then in the month of July 2019, I decided to visit Amarkantak alongwith Geeta Didi, who immediately arrived in Bhopal along with two others.

Shri Milind Kopargaonkarji of Amarkantak regularly visited Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Bairagarh, Bhopal. Late Shri Deenbandhu Maharaja, a ardent devotee of Shree Shree Ma, is the *guru* of Milindji’s *guru*. Shri Milindji is also completely devoted to Shree Shree Ma. The images of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma, Shree Narmada Ma and Shree Gayatri Ma is installed in his worshipping dais. He has completed several

purashcharan (tantric-mantra ceremony) while staying in Amarkantak. He had asked me several times to visit Amarkantak but I myself could not spare time for the same. However, during *Chaitra-Navratri* (March-April, 2019) when he visited us and requested me for visiting Amarkantak, I instantly agreed and said I will stay there for almost fifteen days. Till then there was no thought or decision made by us on this matter. In the month of June, 2019, suddenly the craze for translating 'Santan Vatsala' took me by heart. However a lonely and quite surrounding was required for this job. On informing Shri Ram Narayan Tiwari, the manager of the Ashram, he contacted Milindji and made arrangements for our stay there. He then escorted us i.e., Geeta didi, Sumanda didi, Nisha, Radhaji and myself in the train 'Amarkantak Exp' from Bhopal, reaching Pendra Road station at four'o'clock in the morning. Since it was dark and the road to Amarkantak from there was through a jungle, we waited in the station till dawn. At six'o'clock, a friend of Tiwariji staying in Pindra Road came along in a car and took us to Amarkantak, which is about 28km from there. The car was passing through a hilly scenic beauty of nature. The golden ray of the early morning sun was glistening on the greenery all around, the hills staying with us for most of the time and above the light blue sky was totally captivating with the early birds of various color chirping and fluttering unrestrained. We were enchanted at this scenic beauty. Very much wanted to capture this astounding beauty of this road journey in our mobiles. Enjoying and watching the hilly nature around us passing away speedily we suddenly found ourselves in Amarkantak.

We reached our destination in Amarkantak in an hour's time. The car stops in front of a verandah of an extremely captivating pink colored bungalow surrounded by a garden with a variety of plants and red, blue, yellow, pink colored flowers of rose, jasmine, decorative flowers, oleander, etc. Everyone shouts out together Oh, it is like heaven. Seeing a black dog coming towards us we all get a bit frightened, but suddenly it stops when a sweet voice saying JaiMa - JaiMa emerges in the form of Milindji. His heartfelt welcome address drenches us in the ocean of joy and happiness. We seemed to have forgotten all our travel stress. Milindji also thanks Tiwariji for escorting us here comfortably.

We were taken inside the house by Milindji through a marbled verandah and were amazed with its beauty. All around there was a marbled verandah

with attached rooms and a green lawn in the centre consisting of various flowering plants and colored shrubs. the plants were laden with shoe-flowers and roses. There was an attached kitchen too with all necessary arrangements made available. We were all getting emotional, seeing all these systematic and charming arrangements made available for our stay in Amarkantak.

After properly settling down we had our bathes and went upstairs to hang our wet clothes. Wow what an extraordinary view of the Vindhyaachal hills all around clad in greenery and the surrounding too full of green vegetation as far as the eye could see. Here not a pinch of sadness or pain can penetrate one's mind. As if in the form of the ancient sages the innumerable trees all around were meditating on the blissful Lord. All around there was an attitude of peace and silence. This solitary silence cannot disturb one's consciousness, on the other hand, it was filling the body and soul with complete happiness. The purity of the blue sky was making me remember those lines of a poet –

'Neel jhalak jhalke jhalak, chalak chalak chavi jaat.'

'lalit lalit jin ka amar, lalna lakhat lubhay.'

Sunanda didi and Radhaji made arrangements for cooking. Our *Thakurji* was with us. Offered *bhog* to *Thakurji* and put him to rest. We too then had *prasād*. Quite a comfortable arrangement was made for us like beds, new bedspread and quilts. Though the pure environment of Amarkantak did not make us too tired, still we took rest for a while. Tiwariji after seeing all our arrangements returned back to Bhopal. I had decided that, since with Shree Shree Ma's unimaginable grace I am fortunate enough to stay in the birthplace of the Divine Mother Narmada, I should complete the translation job which has been abandoned for the last forty years.

Our daily routine commenced from *brahma-muhurta* (i.e. four'o'clock at dawn), when we got up with the words '*Narmade Har*' on our lips and along with Geeta didi and Sunanda didi sat down to contemplate God's name. After sunrise we used to have our bathe and start our daily chore. My job was to wake up *Thakurji*, offer Him some light food and then sit down for the translation work. After bathing Radhaji used to get busy in making *bhog* for *Thakurji*, etc. and Nisha went out for gathering colorful

flowers, bathe *Thakurji*, clothe Him with a fresh dress, offer and decorate Him beautifully with the variety of beautiful flowers and then offer *bhog* with fresh fruits and sweets and culminate with morning *ārti*. We then used to have our share of the *prasād* of the fruits and sweets. Radhaji, Sunanda didi and Nisha then got busy with the afternoon *bhog*. Geeta didi helped me with the translation work. At around one'o'clock, after offering *bhog* to *Thakurji* and putting Him to rest, we used to have our afternoon meals. We had requested Milindji to have afternoon *prasād* with us too. After lunch we used to rest as per our taste.

Since we had received direct proximity with Shree Shree Ma, Milindji requested us that he is always eager to hear the various physically observed incidents of Ma. Milindji had a fixed schedule of visiting Narmada between two to two-thirty in the afternoon. Hence he had decided to hear Shree Shree Ma's narrations at five in the evening and used to arrive everyday at our residence exactly at that time. He used to leave at seven'o'clock for his daily worship and again arrive the next day in the afternoon for lunch. His spiritual practice (*sādhana*) was hence highly regulated and took care for our requirements and comforts too. Trying his best to rectify immediately any problem of light or water or health or any other minor problems. Found him to be a true *sādhak* of Mother Narmada. At sunset, *sandhya-ārti* of *Thakurji* took place followed by Ramayan *paath* and *kirtan* by Geeta didi. After the night *bhog*, putting *Thakurji* to bed, we kept *maun* (silence) from 8:45 to 9:00pm, had a small dinner of *prasād* etc. and taking Mother Narmada's name and *jay-gaan* (song of praise), we departed to our respective rooms for the nightly rest.

Our days were passing with joy in the blissful garden of Ma Narmada. The translation work was going on in full swing. With the cry of '*Narmada Hare*' every now and then and especially after waking up and before retiring for bed, our inner strength was increasing by tenfold. There was no awareness of the passing away of the hours and days. The month of *Savaan* (15 July-15 August) arrived. A local devotee brought a new swing for *Thakurji*. We felt as if *Thakurji* Himself arranged for a properly sized swing for Himself. In the evening with the blowing of conch shell and ringing of bells, *Thakurji* was seated on the swing. Now everyday *Thakurji* was enthroned on the swing and decorated with colorful flowers *Thakurji* had a completely different charm and beauty. We were also overjoyed

with this spectacle. One day during the evening *satsang* we asked Milindji how the name Amarkantak came into being. He said that during the churning of the divine ocean by the Gods and the demons, Lord Shiva had become disturbed with the intense heat of the poison, which he had swallowed. Lord Vishnu had advised Him to take rest in the cool environment of the Vindiyachal Hills. Baba Bholanath went there and became engrossed in deep meditation. After an unknown period of meditation, a drop of sweat trickled down from his throat. Lord Maheshwar opens His eyes and finds a maiden standing in front of Him with folded hands. The Lord understands that she is the outcome of His sweat. Gangadhar-Visheshwar directs the maiden to serve mankind in the liquid form. The maiden asks for a boon saying, "Your name should always be linked with my name." Hence the maiden's name became (*'narm dadaati eti Narmada'*) Narmada. Hence now also in this area the sound '*Narmade Har*' is heard everywhere. The second boon asked was, "Every pebble of mine will be *Shankar*." In fact now also every pebble found in the River Narmada is considered as a *Shiv-linga*. There is an unique importance of *Narmadeshwar Mahadev*. The third boon asked was, "*Na Mridaye*" meaning 'I will never change into mud', that is, 'my water will never dry up'. With the blessings of Lord Ashutosh the River Narmada never gets dried up. Narmadaji is ever flowing majestically.

Amarkantak is the non-grammatical or local form of Amarkant. Hence Amarkantak is considered as the birth-place of Mother Narmada. Finally the translation pending for the last forty years was completed here today. The pain of the thorn of the pending job of several years was completely removed today. The realization being felt now cannot be expressed in words.

We had completed almost twenty days of our arrival in Amarkantak. We had not left our residence to go anywhere, except for walking in the secluded paths in the morning or evening. After the completion of our aim without any hindrance, we decided to hold a *kumari-puja* and visit the tourist spots here. Padma Shukla didi had arrived for the last five days for sight-seeing. Amarkantak is the centre of Adivasis. We had invited nine young adivasi girls for the *kumari-puja*. They were the children of the adivasi ladies helping in our daily chores. Although they were of dark complexion, still their faces were very sharp and bright as if Mother

Narmada has Herself arrived in the form of these girls. Being adivasi, they were offered rice-dal and puri-halwa. Padma didi had brought sweets from Bhopal. The girls accepted the food heartily. They were given a donation of rupees eleven each. Their simple smiles and stammering words touched our hearts. The helpers were also donated clothes and food.

Our residence was established by Sangha pracharak Shri Bhagwat Sharan Mathur. In 1983, respected Mathurji joined the Bharatiya Janta Party. Now also he is attached as a Sangha pracharak. Respected Milindji was also a Sangha pracharak. Few years ago he felt a passion for *sāadhanā* and hence he left the work of Sangha pracharak and took to *sāadhanā*. Shri Mathurji after purchasing this land asked him to make a small cottage here. Ma Narmada got a *sāadhanā* intended cottage built through him and him a disciplined *sādhak*. Two days were left for our departure. On 10th August Milindji took us for sight-seeing of Amarkantak. First we bathed in the river Narmada. The bathing ghat was very beautiful and there was an unusual pleasure in bathing. In front of the ghat was the temple of Ma Narmada. There were several small small temples nearby. There is a small stream here which is considered as the origin of Narmada. Originating from here only Narmadaji moving upstream takes the form of a huge river. After that we went to Mai ki Bagiya, where it is said that young Narmada comes to play. All around the jungle are huge mango trees, accompanied by red and black faced monkeys. There is special medicinal tree here which is called as 'Gulbakabli'. Medicine for the eyes is made out of it and it is very useful for the eyes. We also purchased a few small bottles of this medicine. On putting on the eyes though there is an initial burning but later on it gives comfort to the eyes. In Mai ki Bagiya there is a enchanting statue of young Ma Narmada made of black stone, from which we could hardly move our eyes away. It resembled the Bal-Gopal of the Gopal Māndir in Shree Shree Ma's Varanasi Ashram.

Then we departed for Sonmuda. This also has an interesting story. Ma Narmada was supposed to get married to Sonbhadra. In the courtyard of *Maiya*'s house a mandap had been constructed. That place still exists. Seeing the delay in the arrival of party of bride-groom, Ma Narmada sent her friend Juhela to find the reason for their delay. On reaching the bride-groom's house, Sonbhadra thought she was Ma Narmada and hence put the marriage garland around her neck. Ma Narmada declined to marry

him. So she remains unmarried or kumari. Sonbhadra turns towards the east and hence this is the origin point of Sonbhadra and is known as Sonmuda. The scenery here is very enchanting too. Like Brahmaputra, Sonmuda also comes in the class of large river. The waves of this river here are captivating. Tourists come here to watch these waves only. As Narmada *maiya* could not marry Sonbhadra, Narmada *maiya* turns towards the west and crossing Gujarat falls in the Arabian Ocean.

One day I had asked Milindji, "Lot of saintly people stay along the banks of Narmada, can we not have the good fortune to meet some of them? He had replied, "There are a lot of saintly people around but because of the mischiefs of the local people they penetrate deep into the jungle for their *sādhana*. There is one mahatma who is more than 125 years of age. He is continuously murmuring 'Sitaram Sitaram'. If he comes nearby you may be able to see him. But till now we didn't have the good fortune to meet him.

When we were returning from Sonmuda through the curving jungle road, all of a sudden Milindji orders the car driver to stop the car and says that Babaji is right in front of them. We were looking the other way and did not see a car parked ahead of us. Milindji went out from the car to meet the Babaji. He informs him that we have arrived from Shree Shree Ma's ashram and are eager to meet him. Babaji says that there is no need for a meeting, it is ok from here. Milindji then informs us, "Please don't go near him. He is the Sitaram Baba I had mentioned." We alighted from the car and watched him from afar. In the meantime the car turned around and passing very close to us departed away. We saw him perfectly and paid obeisance to him by bowing and joining our palms. He had a divine look, with black goggles on his eyes, red colored clothes and white hair. A feeling of deep satisfaction arose within me. Narmada *maiya* had blessed us by fulfilling our wish of seeing a holy person. There is mammoth blessing of such saints on Milindji. He had informed us that Sitaram Baba had taken donation from Bajirao Peshwa. He worked in the army as incharge of fooding. He is supposed to be more than 300 years old.

After the *darshan* of Sitaram Baba, it came to my mind that by this *darshan*, Narmada *maiya* has proved to me that the Amarkantak trip has been a great success.

Next day Milindji took us to see Kapildhara. We walked all the way from our residence to Kapildhara, where Sage Kapil had meditated. There is a waterfall here. In the middle of the jungle, from between the huge rocks this immeasurable waterfall falls down to more than a hundred feet. The beauty of this waterfall is beyond description. The mind gets so highly engaged in its beauty that it seems difficult for even the eyelids to fall. Milindji informed that there were few more waterfalls nearby, like Lakshmandhara, whose charm is more than Kapildhara. He mentioned that to see the other waterfalls we would have to come here again. The infinite blessings of Mother Nature are still hidden in the jungles of India.

The day of departure from Amarkantak finally arrived. On the night of 12th August we bade goodbye to Shri Bhagwatsharan Mathurji's 'Narmade har seva nyas' and departed for Bhopal.

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This is the time to mould yourself. You will have to resort to renunciation and fortitude. Try to make your mind the consecrated shrine of Divine-Thoughts and desirelessness. The first thing is to feel drawn towards God. What worldly life is you have seen; day in and day out one is immersed in an ocean of misery. This is only Sangsar. If happiness and peace has to be found in this world you have to aspire to God-realization.

- Ma Anandamayee

Our educational tour to Kolkata

The Vidyapeeth boys

From 15th to 25th December, 2019, we the boys of the Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth, Ma Anandamayee Ashram Kankhal, visited Kolkata on an educational tour along with our seniors, Shri Ram Prasad Balodi (principal), Shri Ashish Saklani (teacher), Swami Shivanandaji, Shri Ajit-da and others. From Haridwar station we reached Howrah station by train. From there a bus took us to Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Agarpara, Kolkata.

The tour started with Belur-*Math* and we were astonished to see the large expanse of the *Math*, the various temples and the *samādhi* of Shree Shree Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev, SriMa and Sw. Vivekananda. In the Vivekananda Museum we saw items like clothes, shoes, books and diary used by Sw. Vivekananda. From there we went to Dakshineswar, the famous Temple of *Ma-Bhavatarini*, an aspect of *Ma-Kali*, where *arti* was going on with the melodious beating of drums, bells and conch-shell. The next stop was the nearby Adyapeeth Temple enshrining the idols of *Radha-Krishna*, *Adya Ma* and *Sri Ramkrishna*.

The next day we went to the Alipore Zoological Garden and were thrilled in watching the various species of animals and birds, especially the zebra and the kangaroo. The following day we went to the Birla Planetarium and the Science City. In the Planetarium we learnt how the moon was born and saw models of the sun, moon, earth, spaceship, astronaut and satellite. In the Science City we truly enjoyed the various laughing mirrors. Then visited the National Park and the Eco Park.

One day we had been to Kripa-Bhawan, the office and residence of Shri Swapan Ganguly. We were welcomed affectionately and offered *bhog prasād* (lunch) and *daan* (gifts) by Swapan-da.

The rest of the time were spent in *bhajans* and *kirtans* in the Ashram and enjoying its vast green lawns, the nursery, the cattle-shed, the various temples, the pond and the Hoogly River (Ganges) flowing past the Ashram. We had excellent food and lots of fresh coconut water. One night we even had a camp fire and sang numerous patriotic and tribal hilly songs. On 25th, we departed from Agarpara Ashram for Kankhal Ashram.

Memorial Tribute Jai Maa!

Brahmacharini Dr. Guneeta

I. Late (Shri) Somesh Chandra Banerji (Somu-da)

If you have arrived in this world then you will have to depart from it too. That is why on this subject of transmigration, Shree Shree Ma says, "God is present everywhere in His infinite forms. On arrival one has to depart, whether it is two days earlier or two days later. Get ready to go back to your own home, this is a house of breath only."

There have been several devotees who had a strong belief in Ma's words and were always prepared to go back to their own home. Though they did not have any outward show. Behaving normally with everyone. I would like to mention the names of few of these pious married individuals whom I had the privilege to meet, namely – Dr. Gopal Dasgupta (founder of Anandamayee Karuna), Dr. Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta (author of 'Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasanga'), Dr. Anil Ganguly, Shri Jitendranath Dutta, Shri Nagendranath Chakravorty, Shri Harischandra Banerjee, and in this list recently another name gets attached Shri Somesh Chandra Banerjee (Somu-da).

Somuda as he was commonly known in the Ashram, was the youngest son of Shri Harischandra Banerjee. Somuda met Shree Shree Ma in the year 1948 along with his father. After he retired in the year 1998 from the post of General Manager, Uttarakhand Jal Nigam, he was reinstated for one and half years on the basis of his efficiency. After his final retirement he had dedicated his full time in the remembrance and service of Shree Shree Ma. During this period he also wrote a book, 'Shree Shree Maa Anandamayee – The Universal Mother'.

Somuda was attached with Shree Shree Ma right from his young age. They were three brothers, the eldest brother had settled abroad, while Ronju-da and Somu-da stayed in India with their parents, Savitri-di and Harish-da. Harish-da was a high level officer in Indian Railways and he too was very much attached to the Ashram and their whole family had an incomparable devotion and love for Ma. Harish-da though being a high

level officer there was not a tinge of pride in him. Many a time he used to arrange train tickets etc., for Shree Shree Ma, other ashram residents, and even devotees too. He was truly a saintly person. Maybe for this very reason as per Shree Shree Ma's *kheyal*, Harish-da's youngest son Somu-da got married to Km. Gayatri (Bulu-di), the second daughter of Shri Jadunath Bhattacharya (Mamu), younger brother of Shree Shree Ma.

Somu-da was the General Secretary of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha for a few years. He had a very polite attitude towards all whether young or old. And he always tried to incorporate Shree Shree Ma's advice in all his activities and also inspired youngsters to follow Ma's advice as far as possible. Somu-da had a personal room in the Guest House in Kankhal Ashram. Hence he spent most of his time after retirement in Kankhal Ashram along with his wife Bulu-di, mainly from the Holi festival to the Sanyam Saptah. The rest of the year he stayed in Kanpur with his only son Shri Swayambhu Banerjee, who too incorporates a devoted and religious personality.

Harish-da had built a house in Varanasi where he stayed after his retirement. According to his family tradition every alternate year he used to celebrate the *Sharadiya Durga-puja* in this house. During the in-between years, this festival was celebrated in Harish-da's brother's house in Kolkata. But almost all the members of both the families used to attend both the places.

The diamond jubilee celebration of the *Sharadiya Durga-puja* of Ranchi Ashram was held in October 2019. We the Kanypeeth inmates had gone there to attend the function, and there we met Somu-da along with his family. From Ranchi they went to Kolkata for their family *Sharadiya Durga-puja* ceremony in Kolkata. How would we know that, that was our last meeting with him. Though being younger to us, he used to call us respectfully as Guneeta-di, Geeta-di, etc. He loved to read the Amrit Varta and hence used to inspire us in bringing out every issue. We were in Bhimpura Ashram for the annual *Sanyam Saptah* celebration this year. On the morning of 7th February Friday, 2020, we got the heartbreaking news that, at dawn 5am our beloved Somu-da has departed for Shree Shree Ma's divine *Anand-Dham*. Learnt from his family members that the previous night, like every other day he had his dinner properly and talked with them too. At 4am in the morning having chest pain and

breathing problem he asked his son Swaymbhu to take him to hospital. He was immediately taken to the hospital. But in the fated moment his soul leaving his body departed for the divine and blissful destination at Shree Shree Ma's lotus feet.

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II. Late Brahmacharini Gopalpriya-di

"The divine almighty compassionate God, taking whose refuge all guilt get erased, take refuge in Him only. He Himself is the father, He is the mother, He is the friend, this knowledge one should have."

The above words of Shree Shree Ma is so very relevant for the one who was an exclusive devotee of the couplet Gods '*Radhe-Shyam*', our Gopalpriya-di.

Jabakusum hair oil is a popular and famous hair oil brand invented and owned by C.K. Sen & Company in West Bengal, with office at 34 C.R. Avenue, Kolkata. Brahmacharini Gopalpriya-di was born in this renowned and prosperous family in 1939 in Kolkata, and was the youngest daughter of Shri Dhirendranath Sen and Smt Sukriti Sen. She was named 'Chitra' by her parents and others lovingly called her 'Mintu'. Shree Shree Ma gave an appropriate name 'Gopalpriya', by which her whole character is revealed. Gopalpriya-di was truly fond (*priya*) of *Gopal* or *Krishna* and contemplating Him, bidding farewell to this mortal world got immersed in *Shree Shree Gopal's* Divine *Golokdhām*.

The estate of Gopalpriya-di's ancestors is in Kalna which houses the only Chaitanya temple built in Sri Chaitannya's life time. It is a renowned pilgrimage centre. Close to it is Sri Gauranga Mandir. The temple complex houses Sri Chaitanya's manuscripts and personal belongings. Her ancestors had built here the *Nat-Mandir*, etc., of the Shyam Sundar Radharani Mandir. Being built 300 years ago it's family members is still preserving the old tradition of celebrating various festivals ritually like *Dol Purnima*, *Rath yatra*, *Jhulan Purnima*, *Annakut*, etc. every year involving the people of the region irrespective of caste, creed or religion. During *Sharadiya Durga Utsav*, even now *prasād* is distributed to all who arrive there for the celebration. Almost all members, approximating almost a ton of this clan try to be present during this festival. Gopalpriya-

di while telling old stories of this *Dussehra* function used to say, "On *Vijaya Dashami* (the tenth day) day all the senior family members as per tradition used to sit down in a line and all youngsters are supposed to pay their obeisance (*pranām*) by touching the elders feet. Being the youngest in the family, you can understand the state of my health bowing down and touching the feet of all my elders. There was no one who bowed down to me."

Gopalpriya-di's elder sister Tushar-di was married in the family of Dr. Gopal Dasgupta of Varanasi, who also were ardent devotees of Shree Shree Ma.

Gopalpriya-di had a special affection for Lord Krishna (*Thakurji*). When all her elder sisters got married, she gladly accepted the responsibility of looking after her parents though there were a lot of helpers in the house. Serving Lord Krishna and her parents took all her time and hence she had no time nor interest for further education. After the death of her parents Gopalpriya-di alongwith her childhood companions, the enchanting couplet idol of Lord Shree *Shantinath* and Shree *Radharani*, and her elder sister Tushar-di arrived near Shree Shree Ma and stayed back in the Ashram forever.

At Shree Shree Ma's instructions, she was kept in Ma's service and received the compassionate grace of Ma. In spite of all this service she never forgot to look after her couplet Idols and also to stitch their dresses. After the passing away of Shree Shree Ma's divine body, Gopalpriya-di stayed most of the time in Shree Shree Ma's Vrindavan Ashram. Her daily routine included the *darshan* of Lord *Banke-Bihari* in the morning and *satsang* in *Har ki Bai dharmshala*. Because of her regular visits the *sants-sadhus* of Vrindavan attending the *satsang* looked at her with admiration, which included respected Sant Shiromani Ramsukhdasji and respected Shri Malook Peethadheeshwar. Her Lord Krishna helped her to accomplish her *sādhana* at, and *parikrama* of, the *Govardhan parvat*.

Once I had asked Gopalpriya-di, "You have been staying in Vrindavan for so many years. It is not possible that you have not felt the direct presence of *Thakurji* (Lord Krishna)." Gopalpriya-di replied, "These type of incidents should not be spoken, people will not understand its importance and meaning." On my request she informed me about it. The occasion was of some bathing ceremony. She was thinking whether she

should go for the bath or not, as she was already suffering from arthritis pains. In this excitement it became noon and she finally reached the bank of Yamuna for the bath. When the *ghat* was empty Gopalpriya-di, taking the Lord's name took a dip in the holy Yamuna and turned back to climb the stairs, she suddenly felt a terrible pain in her legs. Seeing nobody around, she prayed fervently to Lord Krishna. Suddenly she observed two kids around eight to nine years old playing a little further away on the Yamuna *ghat*. One of the child came near Gopalpriya-di and said, "*Maiya ka bhaya?* (Mother, what is the matter)." She informed him about her extensive pain and also said that since they were kids only, how could they help her. But the child pulled her along the stairs and then reaching the road called a rickshaw and informed the rickshaw owner saying, "*Baba*, take the mother to her place properly." Suddenly Gopalpriya-di realized that she had not offered anything to the child, she looked around, but the child was nowhere.

Days passed in this manner and slowly slowly her pain and trouble of the knee increased. Finally the knees had to be operated, but still she did not get comfort. Since she could not move around or take care two *sevika's* were appointed for her assistance. And since she was unable to serve her couplet idol *Thakurji*, it was decided to bring the idols to Kanyapeeth, Varanasi. After the *Thakurji* arrived in Kanyapeeth, she sent the required fund for His daily worship. She said that since her Lord was fond of comfort, she arranged for a air-cooler too for the summer months.

In the 1930's when Shree Shree Ma was touring alone with Gurupriya Didi, in Etawah, a Bajpayee family came in contact with Ma and became ardent devotees. They used to visit Vrindavan Ashram regularly. One of the present members of that family Shri Gopal respected Gopalpriya-di and in order to help her took her to Etawah. The whole family was delighted to be with her and listen to the divine incidents of Shree Shree Ma. When her health was further deteriorating she insisted to return to Vrindavan Ashram. She had even requested Shri Gopal Bajpayee to conduct her last rites.

In Vrindavan, another devotee of Ma staying in Ahmedabad made further arrangements in her room for her proper care and arranged for two *sevika's* too. Though she was completely bed-ridden her memory was excellent. Sant Malook Peethadheeshwar Rajendra Prasadji had said

that, “Didi is not in a normal state, she is in a special connection with *Thakurji*”.

In the first week of February 2020, she was admitted to the hospital and on 10th February, 2020, Goplapriya-di left her earthly body and transcended to *Shree Shyām Sundar*’s divine *Shānti-dhām.... Rādhe Rādhe*.

After the sad demise of Gopalpriya-di, Shri Gopal Bajpayee was highly disturbed and was missing her guidance. So he met Sant Malook Peethadheeshwar Rajendra Prasadji and informing him of his highly depressed state, requested for some guidance. Santji replied, “*Bhagwat-bhakt bhagwat-dhaam jaaker bhagwat-swaroop hi ho jate hain, ath: vah usi roop mein hi aapko dekhti rahegi.*” (“The devotee of the Lord, reaching the Lord’s abode, attains the Divine form, hence she will take care of you in that form only.”)

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Buddha – The Compassionate Saint

Brahmacharini Dr. Geeta

While collecting mangoes from a tree by throwing stones, one day a young boy’s stone hits Gautam Buddha on his head and it starts bleeding. The boys understood that Buddha will be angry and will now scold them. They stood there frightened. Seeing them frightened Buddha became thoughtful and tears started rolling down his cheeks.

The boys then saw Buddha coming towards them. Before the boys could say anything to him, Buddha said, “You have thrown stones on the mango tree. In return the tree has given you sweet mangoes. But when the stone you threw hit me, I then could only give you fear.

Conclusion : Only Saints have the ornament of compassion.

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Ashram Varta

Brahmacharini Geeta

The New Year day, 1st January 2020, like every year, arrived this year too, with the ecstatic news of the commencement of *Paush Parbon* (the holy festival in the Bengali month of *Paush*). *Bhog* of *pithhe-paish* was offered in the temples of all Ma Anandamayee Ashrams.

In the Varanasi Ashram, *kirtan* was held from dawn to dusk along with a special *yagna* in the *Gayatri yagna-shala*. Because of the excess cold, the program started from 5:30am with the following *Usha-kirtan* sung by the Kanyapeeth girls –

‘Jai Ma Anandamayee, Japa Ma Anandamayee, Loh Ma Anandamayee Naam Re’.

Then the *kirtan* group of Kanyapeeth girls went around the *Gayatri yagna-shala* three times singing –

‘Jai Ma Savitri, Jai Ma Gayatri, Jai Ma Shibani, Jai Jai Ma.’

‘Jai Ma Savitri, Jai Ma Gayatri.’

‘Namō Namō Yagna-Devata, Namō Namō Yagna-Devata.’

Then continuing with the *kirtan*, *‘Jai Ma Savitri, Jai Ma Gayatri, Jai Ma Shibani, Jai Jai Ma,’* the group went over to *Ma Annapurna Mandir*, and then across the lane to *Jyoti Matri Mandir*. Going around the *Matri Mandir* three times along with singing, the group then went upstairs to have *darshan* of *Shree Shree Gopalji*. The kanyapeeth girls melodiously sang – *‘Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare’*, while going around the *Gopal Mandir* three times. The *kirtan* then continued throughout the day in the Kanyapeeth verandah. In the evening, the *kirtan* group while singing *‘Hare Krishna’*, again went from *Gayatri yagna-shala*, to *Ma Annapurna Mandir*, then to *Gopal Mandir* and back to the *Yagna-shala*, now singing –

‘Jai Ma Savitri, Jai Ma Gayatri, Jai Ma Shibani, Jai Jai Ma.’

‘Namō Namō Yagna-Devata, Namō Namō Yagna-Devata.’

Then Shailesh-da’s (Sw.Shivanandaji) song *‘Param Punyadham Varanasi Ashram Pranami, Namō Namō Yagna-Devata’* was sung

followed by Shree Shree Ma's *kirtans* – '*Dhoro Lao*', '*Chai Anando Chai Prem*', and '*Hari-bol*'. The function culminated with *Hari-loot* of *batasa*, followed by *arti* of *Gayatri-mata* and *pranām-mantra*. Finally few minutes of *kirtan* followed by *pranām-mantra* was held in the Kanyapeeth verandah.

On 29th-30th January 2020, on the occasion of the pious *Basant Panchami*, worship of *Shree Shree Ma Saraswati*, the Goddess of knowledge was held in every Ma Anandamayee Ashrams.

From 31st January to 6th February 2020, *Sanyam Saptah* was held in the Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Bhimpura, situated on the banks of the pious Narmada River. The inaugural function of the *Sanyam* held on 30th January began with the *Ved-paath* by the Kanyapeeth girls. Then Shri Jagatbhai (Shri Jagat Kantharia) first praying at the lotus feet of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, bowed to all the invited distinguished *Sadhu-Mahatmas* and then informed the regulations of *Sanyam*. This was followed by a joyous and heart rendering, precise and short lecture series by few of the eminent *Mahatmas* like Shree Chaitanya Giriji of Bhimpura, Sw. Utmanandaji of Kailash Ashram, Br. Samathmanandaji of Chinmoy Mission, Sw. Omkarananda Tirthji, and others.

From 31st January the *Sanyam Saptah* started as per schedule by the *vratis* (participants) in the *pandal* set up for this purpose. First *Usha kirtan* and then individual worship by the *vratis*. Worship and *aarti* was culminated in the adjacent temples of Matri-mandir, Shiv-mandir, Hanuman-mandir at the same time. *Ved-Paath* at 7:30am, from 7:45am to 7:55am *kirtan* and then with the blowing of the conch-shell, *Sanyam-dhyaan* took place from 8:00am to 9:00am, which was followed by *kirtan* again. After that reading of the original verses of various scriptures *Gita*, *Chandi* and *Upanishad* was done. Sw. Uttamanandaji used to explain the *Upanishad* beautifully, heartily and with great simplicity. Ramayan and Vishnu-Sahasranam reading also took place sometimes. After the culmination of the morning session, the *vratis* were offered *prasad* and rest for some time. The *vratis* again took their seats in the hall at 2:30pm, *kirtan* occurred from 2:45pm for 10 minutes and then with the blowing of the conch shell at 2:55pm the meditation started and continued for an hour. At 4:00pm the meditation is broken with *kirtan* and a short discourse of the *Devi Bhagwat* by Sw. Omkarananda Tirthji. At 6:00pm, *arti* and

pranām mantra was held in Ma's room, followed by *sandhya-kirtan* in the *pandal*. Then *Acharya* Shri Chandrakant gave a melodious explanation of the *gopi-geet* and *benu-geet* of the *Bhagwat*. From 8:45pm to 9:00pm as usual *maun* was held, followed by *prasad* for the *vratis*. Later during *Matri-prasanga*, lively and informative lectures on Ma was given by Shri Raghavji, Sw. Nirgunanandaji, Brahmacharini Geeta, Brahmacharini Guneeta, Br. Biplab-bhai, Br. Shyamal-bhai and others. The next six days continued in the same fashion. On 6th February, the seventh and last day, in the night the *Sanyam-Saptah* concluded after *maha-nishar dhyān*, *kirtan*, *aarti* and *pranaam-mantra*, distribution of *prasad* and finally with the *kirtan* – '*Jai Shiv-Shankar Jai Narmade-Har. Jai Jai Narmade, Hara Hara Narmade.*' On the eighth day after the *Yagna*, everyone wore the *yagna-tika* on their forehead and concluded the *Sanyam-vrat*. After that as usual, there was *Sadhu-bhandara* and normal lunch for all.

Within this week, on one day *Ma-Narmada's* birthday was celebrated in the evening with all the devotees floating *diyas* in the holy Narmada-River. The pious, quite and solemn *Ma-Narmada* touched the hearts of every individual present and participating in the holy *Sanyam* and staying for a few joyous days in this Shree Ma's Ashram on the banks of the river Narmada is a precious gift for all.

On *Maghi-purnima* day, 9th February, a special festival was held in Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Tarapeeth. On the same day in Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Varanasi, the annual *Satya-Narayan puja* was organized.

The festival of *Maha-Shiv-Ratri* was held with heartfelt joy in every Ma Anandamayee Ashram on 21st February. In the Varanasi Ashram, in the Kanyapeeth Hall, combined worship of Lord Shiva and *kirtan* was held from sunset to next day dawn at every *prahara*, creating an extraordinary divine ambience all around.

The fiesta of colors, *Basant-Utsav* or *Dol-purnima* or Holi is celebrated with joy and enthusiasm in every Ma Anandamayee Ashram. The Lord of divine love Lord Krishna is installed in Ma Anandamayee Ashram Vrindaban, in the form of *Shree Chhaliya*. The festival of Holi was held here like every year with grandeur and beauty. In Ma Anandamayee Ashram Varanasi too, the story of the advent of Lord Krishna in the form of Lord *Bal-Gopal*, the sweet little adorable darling

of Ma Anandamayee, on 9th August 1954, is known to many. In the evening of 8th March, on the podium next to the *Yagna-shala*, Lord *Shree-Narayan* (in the form of a *Shaligram-shila*) was worshipped and then the effigy of *Holika* was burnt in the courtyard of Kanyapeeth. On 9th morning, on the same podium, special *shodshopchaar* worship of *Shree-Narayan* was held alongwith offering of Holi-hue or *aabir* to *Shree-Narayan* by all present. Then all present went to the Gopal-Mandir to play Holi with *Bal-Gopal*. With the blowing of conch-shells and beating of drums, *Bal-Gopal* was brought outside, from his throne to the temple hall and was seated on a brass plate on Ma's cot. After that every individual present could not control their excitement and started coloring *Bal-Gopal* with various hues or *aabir*. The festival of Holi with *Bal-Gopal* continued for almost half-an-hour after which *Gopalji* was taken inside the temple, bathed with milk, curd, ghee, honey, sugar and water and then finally with *panch-gobyo*, along with the chanting of *ved-path*. *Gopalji* was then magnificently dressed up and garlanded with flowers of various colors. Then after worshipping with all essential and necessary *mantras*, *Gopalji* was offered *bhog* of *kheer*, *noni*, *malai*, various sweets and fruits. The idols of Lord *Krishna* and *Bal-Gopal* of the Kanyapeeth were also bathed and worshipped at the same time. Beautiful and intoxicated *kirtan* was continuously going on by the Kanyapeeth girls creating an enchanting atmosphere in the Hall. It was difficult to forget such a play of *Holi* with *Bal-Gopal* and everyone present hoped to be present for the same occasion next year too.

From 30th March to 4th April, the function of *Basanti-Puja* was held in Ma Anandamayee Ashram Varanasi, with the minimum of austerities essentially required for the worship. As known to all, the first *Basanti-Puja* was celebrated in Varanasi Ashram in the year 1944. Ma Anandamayee Ashram Delhi was supposed to celebrate its first *Basanti-Puja* this year.

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Verily, abounding sorrow is the essential characteristic of life in this world. Fix your mind on God. Let His name be ever with you, imperceptibly, relentlessly; time is creeping away.

- Ma Anandamayee

God Realization

Sri Chinmoy

God is the only Truth. God is All-love, All-Beauty, All-Bliss, All-harmony. God thinks of us more, infinitely more, than we think of God or of ourselves. Since God has the capacity to create infinite beings, the whole creation, we are His instruments, hence he has the capacity to think of each and every one of us in His inimitable Way.

Initially, it is extremely easy for us to think of God as the Creator and not being within the creation, because when we look around we see that God's creation is full of imperfection. However later a person gets properly convinced through his spiritual master that God exists and that God is everywhere and in everything. But until the aspirant has realized God himself, this will be just a mental knowledge. He has to go deep within himself in order to feel these truths i.e., he has to become spiritual. Unspiritual people accuse a spiritual person that they have no sense of reality, they are afraid and do not want to take responsibility of the world and hence are abnormal. A truly spiritual person will never ignore the outer world in which he lives. He knows the world is the manifestation of God, how can he ignore God's outer manifestation. Several turn to spiritual life, turn towards the inner self out of desperation and frustration from the outer world. But spirituality is a necessity of every human being.

The path of spirituality is three-fold, love, devotion and surrender. So first we have to love God. When we love another person, we try to spend our precious time with that person or think of him, i.e. we try to devote ourselves to him. Similarly in the spiritual life we have to truly love God. Once we feel the love for our God then naturally we will have the inner urge to offer our pure love to Him and devote more and more time for Him, i.e. devote ourselves to Him through our aspiration and self-dedication. So we finally realize that we have to surrender to Him all that we have. And what do we have? Ignorance and/or 'want'. Our unconditional and unreserved surrender to the Supreme is absolutely necessary for God-realization.

Man loves and expects love in return. But when we love a child we do not expect anything in return. We love because he is the object of love, he is lovable. Similarly is the feeling of a devotee to his Lord. An aspirant, a devotee loves God unconditionally and hence he loves all mankind for the sake of his Lord, who abides in all. His love breathes in humility and selfless service. And from this love and devotion arises the essence of surrender. Total surrender is a spiritual miracle. It touches us how to see God with our eyes closed, how to talk to Him with our mouth shut. Our surrender is a very precious thing, it is the un-foldment of our body, mind and heart onto the Divine within us. God's all-fulfilling Grace descends only when our unconditional surrender ascends. The more it ascends the more we can understand the Divine Grace all around. The more we surrender, the more God demands from us. Because, according to our capacity He demands our manifestation. In our absolute surrender is our realization, realization of the Self, realization of God the Infinite.

To surrender and realize we pray and/or meditate. Prayers and meditation are medicines to cure our inner life. When we pray, we talk and God listens; when we meditate, God talks and we listen. True prayer is the ascent of our consciousness towards God and to realize Him. True meditation is bringing God's consciousness into our own consciousness.

In order to realize our inner self we should have the hunger to attain it, that is, we should have aspiration to begin our inward journey. Hence aspiration is the endless road that leads eternally toward the ever-transcending beyond. When we aspire during our meditation, we feel that the vast sky the vast ocean inside our heart. By spirituality i.e., by prayers and meditation to God, our life of desires which gives us only frustration, gets nullified by the life of aspiration, of satisfaction, of peace. Hence prayers and meditation are essential for peace of mind. Peace is the harmonious control of life. Peace is Bliss eternal. We will own peace only after we have totally stopped finding faults with others. We have to feel the whole world as our very own. So from today let us resolve to fill our minds and hearts with tears of devotion, the foundation of peace.

*May my soul's beauty, my heart's purity and my mind's sincerity try
to make the kind Earth happy.*

- Sri Chinmoy

Gurupriya Didi's priceless treasure

Brahmacharini Guneeta

Shree Shree Ma at Mandi, Kulu, Manali.

Respected Gurupriya Didi has gifted a priceless treasure for the future generation by documenting Shree Shree Ma's divine *lilas* in her diary printed in several volumes of the book series 'Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee'. I have presented here few incidents from this book series for the ardent devotees of Ma.

Gurupriya Didi writes : "21st Jyeshth 1358 Tuesday (June 1951). Avdhutji has arrived from Solan. *Satsang* is continuing on a grand scale. Raja Saheb of Mandi has given instructions that as long as Ma is here, till then Rani Saheba need not follow *purdah* and all ashramites can visit the palace without any restriction. Today we went to Revalsar along with Ma in a car and returned by evening. There in the pond trees float on the water and all surrounding trees are deities. Lomas Muni also did *tapasya* here. Inside the temple there are idols of Lomas Muni and Lord Buddha. In the pond we observed three clay islands floating along with several small sized trees. For the whole day we stayed on the hillock facing the Gurudwara and Haribaba's *satsang* was held here. All arrangements in Revalsar were organized by the Raja Saheb.

23rd Jyeshth 1358 Thursday (June 1951). Today we went to Kulu which is forty kms. from here and we reached there in one and half hour. A tent was pitched in the garden of the palace of Kulu. Rani Saheba of Kulu welcomed Ma from the bottom of the hill and escorted Her to the palace. Ma was carried with every pageantry and various arrangements were made for welcoming Her. Raja Saheb of Mandi had brought along cameramen who were continuously taking photos.

24th Jyeshth 1358 Friday (June 1951). Today we left for Manali from Kulu, which is twenty-three kms. From Mandi. Avdhutji showed special interest for this place. Ma had come earlier to these Kulu hills twice. The natural beauty of this place is inexpressible. The mountains covered with lush green grass and vegetation and down below the Vyas river gushing forth had its own beauty. We were all spellbound witnessing this enchanting view. On the roadside, in a tree there were many cavities, which appeared

to look like a house with doors and windows. Avdhyutji along with Ma went and sat near the tree. Raja Saheb of Mandi wished to inscribe Ma's name near the large cavity, but on searching couldn't find a knife. Suddenly roaming around he found a knife just near his feet. Everyone were surprised at this incident. Avdhyutji exclaimed, 'Some miracle of Ma had to be seen.' Raja Saheb happily engraved Ma's name on the trunk of the tree and kept the precious knife with himself.

Raja Saheb had made all arrangements for our stay in the Dak Bungalow at Manali. Instead of going there we first went to the Vashisht *Kund* which is 4km. from the dak bungalow. The car went very near to the *kund*. We all started walking uphill along with Ma seated on a stool. Haribabaji reached the *kund* much before us and we saw him coming down and returning to the dak bungalow. The *kund* consists of hot water and everyone bathed in it. Then we too returned back to dak bungalow. While coming down Ma walked along with us for a little distance. The natural beauty all around was enchanting and added to it walking with Ma too gave us an immense joy. In the dak bungalow immaculate arrangement was made for all of us. It was surprising indeed to find such excellent arrangements in a remote place like this. Raja Saheb and Rani Sahiba were mixing normally with everyone, having food and sitting together too. The royal couple do not have any vanity and were cautiously managing everything so that there is no complaint or fault in *sadhu seva*. In the afternoon after the *satsang* we again departed for Kulu, reaching there just before dusk.

Observing the charm of the trees alongside the road, Ma said, 'All are *rishi-muni*'s.' Avdhyutji had a feeling for Ma's words and requested Ma, 'Ma, after *Hari-naam* please tell us about the *rishi-muni*'s. Here the sky, atmosphere, trees and shrubs all are charged with the name of *Hari*.' On Avdhyutji's request Ma started *Hari-naam* in a resounding pitch. The entire atmosphere started echoing with *Hari-naam*.

One of the speciality of the trees here are that the leaves of the trees are green and they completely cover the trees. Ma laughingly said, 'Ejecting a wrapper from one's own body and wrapping with that only.'

At Kulu, Ma was lying down in the night and I was lying next to Her. Keeping Her eyes closed Ma was saying, 'Visualizing a person, very tall, the head as if touching the sky, a *sadhu*, is going along.'

(Taken from 'Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee' Vol-13, pages 148-152.)



Endeavour to go through life leaving your burdens in His hands. Some persons do not like to sit and do *japa*, it is advisable for them to purify their mind through *seva* (service of God in man).

- Ma Anandamayee

*With best compliments and humble pronams to
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Even if you are unable to concentrate your mind on *japa*, The name you will repeat has its own intrinsic power. None can foretell at what particular moment circumstances will co-operate to bring about the Great Moment for you.

— Ma Anandamayee

*With best compliments and heartiest pronaams at the Holy feet of
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