

# Ma Anandamayee

*Embodiment of India's  
Spiritual and Cultural Heritage*



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**Shree Shree Anandamaye Sangha**

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## Preface to the First Edition

At this critical juncture of human civilization, when the very future of our beautiful planet and, indeed, entire mankind is seriously jeopardised by three types of conflicts and strifes - conflicts between man and man, between man and nature and between man's higher, divine self and his baser instincts, the relevance of India's ancient spiritual and cultural heritage becomes obvious. Many people in India, and in other countries of the world, are now seeking inspiration, peace and solace from that great source of wisdom...**Ma**.

The life of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee is a "fragrant chronology of spiritual power and love." She was a living commentary on the spiritual message and truth of our scriptures and heritage. Ma taught us that the most important step in human life is to become conscious of our inner "seat of truth", to concentrate on its presence and to make it a living fact. Ma Anandamayee was reputed for the irresistible attraction of Her ever radiant, blissful personality; for Her boundless compassion and Her Outstanding universality.

"Be a seeker of your full identity" Ma advised everyone who came to Her seeking help and solace.

In this volume, made possible with a generous donation from our Sangh's ascetic member, Swami Nirgunananda, we have assembled together the lectures and papers presented by a galaxy of distinguished scholar and Ma's devotees at the National Seminar on "Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee's contribution to the spiritual and cultural heritage of India

for the benefit of mankind" held at Mahajati Sadan, Kolkata in December, 1997, on the occasion of celebrations of Her Birth Centenary ; as well as a number of other papers published earlier. We are sure that the articles of this volume will be found illuminating by readers every where who are curious to know about Ma and are looking for a reliable source to draw spiritual inspiration from. We are much beholden to our revered Swami Nirgunananda for his constant encouragement and support in the Central Publication Committee's work, and his generous donation. We avail of this opportunity also to thank the Department of Human Resources and Culture , Ministry of Education, Government of India, for their handsome grant to help organise the Kolkata Seminar in December 1997 as the grand and final event of the year - long centenary celebrations.

We hope that Ma's innumerable devotees in India and abroad will support us not only by buying copies of this new volume but also by publicizing the book among other interested people.



**Sunil Guha**

Convenor

Central Publication Committee

Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

Kankhal, Hardwar

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## About the Authors

**Shri Dilip Kumar Roy** : Disciple of Shri Aurobindo, spiritual Sadhak and well-known singer; was also drawn to Shree Shree Ma and much influenced by her divine personality and leelas.

**Swami Paramananda** : The Late Swamiji was a prominent ascetic member of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, a close confidant of Shree Shree Ma and General Secretary of the Sangha for a long time.

**Swami Virajananda Maharaj** : The Senior-most Sadhu of the Sangha, has been Shree Shree Ma's close associate and confidant for a long time; has played the critical and important role of Sadhu Pramukh and Vice President of the Sangha in a difficult period of the Sangha's history. His contribution as author and recordist of Amrit Vanis directly from Ma and later published through the several volumes of the book "Swakriya Swarasamrita" will be ever remembered by the spiritual fraternity of the world with the same admiration as Shri Mo's (Mahendra Gupta) record of Thakur Shri Ramakrishna's leelas and Vanis in the five volumes of "Kathamrita".

**Arnaud Desjardins** : Well-known author of spiritual books and French producer of Spiritual films, Mr. Desjardins was deeply impressed by Shree Shree Ma, visited her continuously for five years and claims Ma changed his life radically.

**Dr. M. Hafiz Sayed** : He was Professor of Sufism and Hindu spiritualism and culture at Allahabad Univeristy;

became a great devotee of Shree Shree Ma in the 1950's-1960's.

**Swami Vijayananda** : Coming to India from France over half a Century ago in search of a Guru, Dr. Adolphe Weintrob met Shree Shree Ma at Varanasi Ashram and instantly recognized that "she" was indeed the Guru he was looking for. A great devotee of Ma, he is now an ascetic member of the Sangha's Governing Body and President of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Kankhal, Hardwar.

**Shri Govind Narain** : President of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha and previously Vice President. He and his family have been closely associated with Shree Shree Ma for a long time. A very distinguished, retired, member of the Indian Civil Service, Shri Govind Narainji has held many senior positions in Government of India including Secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Planning and was also Governor of Karnataka State,

**Professor Siddheswar Prasad** : Former Governor of Tripura; met Shree Shree "Ma" several times in Tripura and became a great "Ma" devotee,

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**Swami Bhaskarnand Maharaj** : The General Secretary and Mukhya Sadhu Sanchalak of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha; a long time close associate and devotee whom Shree Shree Ma entrusted with the privilege and responsibility of giving Matri Diksha to her devotees.

**Shri J.N. Dhamija :** A masters graduate in English Literature from Cambridge University, Shri Dhamija was called to the Bar from Lincoln's Inn in 1940 and belonged to the former Indian Political Service. He joined the Indian Foreign Service after Independence and served as Ambassador in various countries. After retirement, he served as Chairman of International Control Commission in Laos. A long time devotee of Shree Shree Ma, he was instrumental in building the 'Ma Anandamayee International Hostel' attached to the Kankhal Ashram.

**Swami Swarupanandji Maharaj :** The former General Secretary and ascetic member of the Governing Body of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Swami Swarupananda joined Shree Shree Ma early in life, enjoyed Ma's confidence and trust and was instrumental in building many of the Ashrams and other important edifices including "The Anand Jyoti Peetham" and "Matri Smriti Museum".

**Dr Vidya Niwas Mishra :** A great Sanskrit scholar, former Vice Chancellor of Kashi Vidyapeeth and Shri Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi and a long-time devotee and follower of Ma!

**Dr. Bireshwar Ganguly :** Dr. Ganguly D Litt. is a well-known scholar of India's spiritual and cultural heritage and Director of Vedanta Research Centre, Ranchi. He has been a long-time Ma devotee and widely respected interpreter of Ma's *Maha Bhav or Khyala and Leela*.

**Shri H.M. Joshi :** Son of great Ma devotee, the late Shri Hari Ram Joshi, an ardent 'Ma' devotee and a truly devoted exponent and dedicated singer of devotional songs.

**Dr. Bithika Mukherjee** : Formerly, Reader of Indian Philosophy at Benaras Hindu University, President of the Management Committee, Kanyapeeth, Shree Shree Anandamayee Ashram, Benaras; and member, Board of Editors, Amrit Varta. She has been a long-time devotee of Shree Shree Ma.

**Justice Amitava Banerji** : Former Chief Justice of Uttar Pradesh and Ex-Chairman of Central Administrative Tribunal, Justice Banerjee and his family have been associated with Shree Ma for a long-time. He was a regular invitee to the meetings of the Governing Body of the Sangha.

**Prof. Debipada Bhattacharya** : Prof. Bhattacharya was Professor of Bengali at the Presidency College, Kolkata and invitee lecturer at the Post-Graduate Department of Bengalee at Kolkata University ; an eminent writer and devotee of Ma Anandamayee.

**Dr. Indu Tikekar** : Prof. of Indian Philosophy, Poona University and a long time devotee of Shree Shree Ma.

**Dr. Debabrata Sen Sharma** : Hails from Banaras; served as Head of Sanskrit Department of Kurukshetra University, Haryana. Has been a devotee of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee for a long time.

**Dr. Prafulla Chandra Dutta** : Former Professor of Botany; Science College, Kolkata; a great devotee of Shree Shree 'Ma' for a long-time and has donated his residential house at Chandernagar, West Bengal, for the Sangha's Sewa.

**Shri Sunil Guha** : Eminent economist and distinguished International Civil Servant, has served the United Nation's first specialized Agency, the ILO, for well over two decades

in Syria, Iran, India and at ILO's Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland in various Senior positions. A devotee of Ma for a long time, received initiation from Swami Bhaskaranandji at Kankhal; currently member of the Governing Body and Executive Council of Sree Sree Anandamayee Sangha, Advisor (Publications) to the General Secretary and Convener, Central Publication Committee. Also a writer and trained singer of devotional songs.

**Dr. Debaprasad Mukhopadhyay :** Presently Additional General Secretary and Member of the Governing Body, Executive Council and Board of Trustee and couple of other Committees of the Sangha. Professionally, an Agricultural Scientist, former official of ICI (India) and Expert of Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. A long-time devotee and close associate of Shree Shree Ma and author of "Matri Leela Darshan (Bengali).

**Kumari Aruna Pandya :** A long time 'Ma' devotee residing permanently at Kankhal Ashram, a keen researcher of India's ancient spiritual history and culture, currently engaged in building an archive on Ma's spiritual activities.

**Kumari Chitra Ghosh :** A brilliant student and scholar, left her studies in the USA at the call of Ma and served Ma, always remaining by her side for a long time, occasionally playing the role of Her Secretary, recording and communicating Her Vanis and messages to devotees.

**Dr. Govindgopal Mukhopadhyay :** Renowned Sanskrit Scholar, a former Research fellow of Sanskrit at Benaras Hindu University and Professor of Burdwan University; a long time admirer and devotee of Shree Shree

Ma; and a learned exponent of devotional songs and a brilliant singer of Kirtan.

**Shri Amal Kumar Roy** : An electrical engineer by profession and a former employee of West Bengal State Electricity Board, Shri Roy has been a very close associate and devotee of Swami Onkarananda; has been equally influenced by Shree Shree Ma and has lectured on both spiritual gurus. Now known as Kinkar Krishnanda, his recently published Bengali book "Taddure, Tadd Anti Ke" is the result of an intimate one-to-one meeting with Swami Onkaranandji.

**Shri Shyamal Kumar Bose** : A Scientist and researcher. A long-time Ma devotee who has been witness to many of Ma's leela's and has written on these experiences; also an accomplished singer who is among the few to still sing Ma's own favourite Bhajans.

# Mother Anandamayee

Sri Dilip Kumar Roy

Those whom Thou once hast touched with Thy fair eyes  
Have known what is the loan of Heaven's Light,  
A bounty none could ever here surmise  
In an earth-born woman's gaze which silvered Night.

Earthly yet not of earth; in life's dark drift  
When storms tear through and wilts our faith in day,  
A prey to clouds-the pall could only lift  
If the eyes revealed a love-lit soul in play.

For thee all, all is play: thou art a child  
Of the Mother Still, and yet who'll dare deny  
The Child's the Mother of mothers? So Thou art styled  
Ananda's Daughter-a gift of the blue sky.

A dowry of Dream to din! Thy message rings  
To our harassed ears like some melody!  
For when Thou speakest the earth-bound float on wings  
Of hope and love, then learn to soar on high.

Old scriptures are life's finger-posts, we heard;  
We pored and pored and felt old, satiate  
Until we saw a Face upturned, Godward,  
Not ears 'tis eyes that lead, intoxicate.

O Lotus-Grace blown on our graceless earth!  
How shall we pay Thee homage-We never trod  
An alley to Worship! Pent, alas, from birth

In the sty of worldly wisdom, we shed our blood.  
Only for things that break their troths for ever  
Or deep fulfillment; science, art and passions  
Still urge us on in life's dismal endeavour;  
'Tis half-lights are adored today of nations.

So thou comst with Thy mystic laughter moods  
And ruleless ways of wind and willfulness.  
Our life is blind; Thy aerial radiance floods  
Our age-long droughts of vision to sow Thy Grace.

From infancy we heard of Mother Ind's  
Long dynasties of sages high and hoary;  
Yet in our Pantheons one seldom finds  
A saintly woman's form hallowed with glory.

We sing of the Gopies' Krishna-love sky-vast,  
In the Vedas women wrote great hymns, we claim;  
But when a woman harks back to the past,  
We are vexed and never can find for it a name!

So Thou art born to us, O Damsel deep!  
With wisdom and love divine, and with Thy sure  
Answers and raptures make even stalwarts weep  
And pundits laugh-one knows not with what lure!

O mystic Minstrel holding the Wizard's Wand!  
O Envoy of the Ethereal to Clay!  
Teach us until our minds can understand  
Thy gospel of Anandā, and come to stay!

# Mother and Her Strange Ways

Swami Paramananda Maharaj

There are some remarkable features and aspects of Mother's personality. What strikes us most in the first place is the complete absence in Her of the various passions and qualities natural to all living creatures (Jiva) such as anger, greed, envy, hatred, desire, aversion, hypocrisy, falsehood etc. These have never been observed in Her either by ourselves or by those who have been in Her company for a long time. Even under the gravest provocation She is always the same—serene, unperturbed, firmly poised like the Himalayas. Mother's patience, endurance, simplicity, Her benign appearance, and Her care-free, cheerful face lit up with charming smile; and Her nature ever free from dualities such as happiness and misery, likes and dislikes, is indeed unique. When we see Her we feel that she does not belong to this body nor does She live in this world of ours.

Equally remarkable and worthy of note is, in our opinion, Her universal tolerance and love. Mother keeps Her door wide open for all, be they mad, stupid, absolutely unprincipled or worthless persons whom everybody avoids. Knowing very well their real character, for nothing is hidden from Her, She welcomes them all with the same smile and pours Her healing compassion and grace upon them all. If we object to Her giving shelter to such people, She says, "Where will they go? This body does not call anybody deliberately. When they come, serve them as much as you can. Every one is His form or image. Knowing them so, try to serve them. He reveals Himself in diverse forms." Such an all-embracing love and mercy as mother's, which denies itself to none, is indeed rarely to be found. Almost everybody offers shelter and protection, but only after considering a

person's worth or fitness. But Mother extends Her protection and mercy to all who seek them, regardless of all considerations of fitness and qualities. Mother is above all sectarianism and tolerates every shade of opinion, variety of religious doctrine or creed. She had no Guru of Her own and had no disciple except Bholanath and makes none now. When requested to initiate somebody She says, "Nothing deliberate or intentional can be done by this body. In the case of Bholanath, "Kheyal", (an urge) came spontaneously. Even now if there arises a Kheyal it may happen again. No such Vow has been taken by this body that it will or will not initiate anybody. Whatever comes off, comes of its own accord." Having no Guru of Her own, Mother belongs to no particular sect (Sampradaya). When asked about it, She says, "Leave aside the question of this body. It is but a little child of yours. This body is what each of you thinks it to be. Further, there is but one sect in reality. Everyone is seeking Him. And this body says whatever has been said or is being said about Him is right. For He is infinite; He is one. So whatever anybody says is correct, no matter what sect that person belongs to. What matters is that he should think of Him. All thoughts, except those about Him, are fruitless and painful." Again She says-"It is He alone who exists in all forms and He also resides in the formless. So what is needed is that you should think of Him, in any way you choose, whether as one with a form or without it. For He is indeed everything; therefore all who think of Him or seek Him belong to the same sect. Everyone should reason thus that since there is no end or limit to Him, so in whatever manner or with whatever notion, people seek Him, they all belong to the same sect; for after all they are seeking Him alone."

Mother says further, - "Some teaching or doctrine is inferior and some superior, or some paths are more truthful

and some less; this body has nothing to do with such controversies and conflicts. Whatever anybody says is right from his standpoint. Each person realizes in his own way, the Infinite and the Supreme Reality. So it is but natural, that there must be diversity or variety in men's attempt to express or reveal Him. In that Infinite Reality is to be found the unity and harmony that subsists even in the midst of conflicting and divergent doctrines and opinions. Nothing is outside the Infinite Totality or the Whole, not even the "non-existent."

As all sects and doctrines are equal to mother, followers and aspirants of every sect come to Her and obtain peace and joy from Her.

Whatever be the path one follows, whatever be one's "Bhava" (attitude or sentiment), everyone feels blessed by receiving favour and grace from Mother, each according to his Sansakaras (tendencies and dispositions). We have heard from many people belonging to the different Asramas and orders of Hindu life such as Brahmacharis, Grihasthas, Sannyasis that the recollection or contemplation of the 'Ista' (the chosen deity) of each is stimulated or is induced in them when they sit near Mother. Mother too, says that whatever the Guru has instructed is right. His instructions should be followed. One can find peace only by doing so. For this reason people of every sect and order of life find peace when they come to Her: Almost everybody feels that Mother loves him the most and so is extremely kind to him and favours him and holds the same doctrine as his.

Let us now say some thing about the word 'Kheyal' which mother frequently uses. If anyone wants to know something from Mother or requests Her to do something saying,

“Mother, you know everything and can do everything”. She never says, “I cannot do it, or I do not know it or I have no power to do it.” Such expressions as “I cannot do it, or I do not know it or I have no power to do it.” Such expressions as “I do not know or cannot do,” have never been heard from Mother. Her usual reply in such cases is, “There is no Kheyal now; if circumstances allow, ask again.” As far as we have understood, Mother has none of these, - mind, intellect, egoism, found in us nor the three states, waking, dreaming, or sleep. **In Mother there is only this state of one-ness with the Infinite or She is Infinity itself.** So in Her there is none of the conflicts between desire and aversion, mind and intellect etc., yet in a sense everything is there. Mother says, “Here (inside Her) it is all swept and rubbed clean; there is no thought of any kind. As you will play on it so you will hear.” Mother’s movements arise directly from the Ultimate Reality or the Supreme Will, then they are fulfilled. That Supreme Will manifesting itself to us according to our Sanskaras, is probably, the “Kheyal” of Mother.

As Mother is absolutely devoid of the gross, narrow ‘ego’, so the expressions of this ego, as “I shall or I know, I can, I do etc.” and their negatives are never heard from Her. Generally Her remarks are liberally sprinkled with a few “ifs” or qualifying expressions such as “if circumstances are favourable,” “if there is no obstacle,” “one cannot be certain of a single breath,” “let whatever happens happen.” Not that She deliberately avoids one kind of language or uses the other, but such words come spontaneously from Her.

There is no end to the extraordinary aspects of Mother’s Personality. In fact, everything about Her - Her laughter, weeping, singing are all supernormal and extraordinary, as those who have the good fortune to witness and hear them, will testify.

It is almost impossible to convey their special quality through words only. A few more interesting details may be added. **Mother sees disembodied souls of saints, sadhus etc. She says, "they are sitting here around this body just as you are. Only you cannot see them."** Once She said, "There are so many of those saints and others sitting inside the room, that there is hardly any space available." She sees also the forms of diseases and often describes them. She says, "Every disease has its own peculiar form, when such forms come before this body, they are not forbidden or opposed, just as you are not prevented from coming. Occasionally, however, they may be opposed or have their destination changed,- for example, they might be coming in this direction but they are deflected in a different way."

It is impossible to understand the strange, extraordinary personality of Mother unless She of Her own accord reveals Herself to us. Mother's teachings are universal, simple and touching to the heart. She never preaches or issues instruction with any definite purpose. She also says, "One gets as much as one is destined to get from this body in the light of his Bhava."

The Guru actually emerges from within. When genuine search takes effect, his genuine manifestation is bound to occur; it cannot possibly be otherwise. The One, assuming Himself the shape of the Guru, of His own accord brings about His manifestation or becomes manifested.

# Ma's Svarupa

Swami Virajanandji Maharaj

Bhagvan, the Supreme Ultimate Svarupa, is manifest-unmanifest. The Kriya in the manifest form, which is called lila-this is He Himself in the form of this Kriya. And this, indeed, is his Svakriya. The ecstatic joy of lila, this rasa itself is He Himself-Svarasa. Again, who is manifest, He Himself is unmanifest amrita "Tripadashamritany divi," i.e. three quarters amrita which is (Sva) amrita (amrita itself).

In other words, He Himself is in the form of lila in the context of his birth and kriya as action etc. He Himself is eternally unmanifest, where the question of manifest-unmanifest has no place—"THAT" alone. This is the Svarupa of Ma. This has been revealed in the book-"Svakriya Svarasamrita" series. In Ma's words, "Where you utter the word Bhagaban, the aksara that is immutable, there all vigrahas in entirety are full reality. Himself, He alone. "Avangmanoshogochar "(beyond mind and speech )-this word from where does it originate." That Parabramhan-the word Bramhan from where does it originate, do you know? The moment one is established in Bramhan, that very moment there has to take place, by itself, the utterance of the word Bramhan in the form of sound. But where Kriya pertaining to Svamool is concerned, this hearing takes place in the form of sound in identity with the self. Therefore, only that much is there as it is in manifest, in unmanifest where these can be sound—what are you going to say?"

## Ma's birth-the same then as it is now

In the context of some topic, Ma was once saying, while smiling with a strange bhava, "Just as at present too, this

body grown up, with clothes on, meet people, talks, has dealings with them etc., exactly in the very same way, this body is that small-one, nude too-every thing perceived in the bhava only, including these diverse forms too. This what it is, and what was observed-indeed the same one, is ever there definitely. New, old-whatever you say-is from your point of view. This body, as you see, speaking to you, it was in that form at that time, through your observations only. Your observation and (pointing Herself) this are they different?—The same one surely. Nothing is exclude—the One is in two, that two is in One. Of course, what is abadh (unrestricted, unlimited, innate freedom) it is ever there (in the case of Ma).

What is beyond time appears in the form of birth, accepting the limitations of time. But time supporting the timeless, expands in its span. The continuous flow appearing in sequence in the play of time portrays the dancing waves of the timeless. Therefore, “this what it is and that what was observed-indeed the same is ever there definitely.” In the form of time, it is this time, that time. But “in the case of this body, what it was then now too the same it is,” “where every thing is possible.”

### **What is in Mool (Source), the same is in Sthula (gross form)**

The physical body of Ma which one can observe like any common body of flesh and blood—What is its ‘Svarupa?’ In Ma’s reply—“What is in mool, the same is in Sthula.” The supreme ultimate Svarupa is manifest-unmanifest and no question of beyond, not beyond manifest and unmanifest. That is who is in manifest form, He Himself it is unmanifest form too. That is why what is in mool, the same indeed is in Sthula. Again, there is no question of beyond, not beyond, manifest and unmanifest—THAT alone.

In Ma's words,—“What is in mool in the context of a particular place, how will you realize yourself the same in Sthula-the dealings, absence of dealings, in the context of particular states in appropriate places in you? What exists, does no exist in entire Visva, beyond Visva, beyond Jagat, that can reveal cannot reveal-unless the perfect tattwa, the Svarupa Himself pertaining to this revelation, unrevelation is revealed, how can there be a complete solution beyond solution?”

### **Svarupa of Ma's action-taking place by itself**

From the time of appearance as child, all in enterity took place by itself according to what was appropriate in the context of any particular situation. The particular course of **bhava** where it is concerned within all Kriyas, in the inner world, in the external world, in the Kheyal of Sadhana-in fact, within all, if any one takes notice-is taking place by itself, even openly. This fact of taking place by itself THAT only. By this (syllable) THAT, the Svarupa of Ma is expressed through indications only. Since this **Svarupa** is beyond language and speech, whatever little of it can be expressed is through indications only.

Ma's movements, in fact all kriyas are by themselves—the self only. No question of subjection to any separate unknown powers arises at all. By the expression “by itself” what is understood? Where the doer of kriya, the kriya and the object of kriya are the Self Himself with Himself, who is there to discriminate between one kriya and another under different definitions of Kriya? Here in infinite forms, only the self exists, I exist. Yes, for this reason, indeed why not grasp (the significance of) the expression the “Self Himself”.

Ma was asked : "Ma everything is according to your Kheyala, and yet you say by itself." What is then the import of taking place by itself?

Ma: "The Self Himself in that form (Kheyal) too. The One alone Himself—that indeed, of course who else, O you babal!"

### **Ma's Kriya is Ma Alone—Svakriya**

This, which is undifferentiated actor—action, object of action—this indeed, is Ma's **Svakriya**, She Herself alone, the act of **Kriya**. As cause and effect, Ma alone is in this form. Her own free movement—Herself in Herself with Herself. In this Kriya, She alone is in infinite forms—Herself only. In this kriya, Bhagavan is entirely eternal, transformation of the Self the immutable Himself in Himself is in action as lila".

In Ma's kriya is Ma alone, Herself only—no question of bondage and absence of bondage. This is Ma's Svakriya. In the course of **Jiva Sadhana**, if there is ever a touch of this Svakriya, then only the distinction between actor and action dissolves and the Jiva is on the march aiming at his Svarupa.

### **The Svarupa of Ma's play of Sadhana—in THAT only**

In the reality, where there is identity of mool-sthula, there He who is as being all, without being too, it is He only. Therefore, the distinction of manifest—unmanifest is from the point of view of Jiva only. He who is manifest, it is He only who is un-manifest. Again, He who is un-manifest it is He only is manifest. In this light, what is the Svarupa of Ma's play of Sadhana? **Ma calls here Sadhana a play. How can Sadhana be a play? Where the Sadhaka,**

## **Sadhana and object of Sadhana is same one, there, what else is Sadhana but a play?**

Then in this play, what is the object of attainment? "Through Her own Kheyal, She is in Her own play with Herself. Just as all Kriyas are in the context of simple observation for perceptible body-from movement, seeing, hearing, sitting etc., that is, all Kriyas in entirety so also in the play of Sadhana, explanations of Tattwa etc. in THAT only."

### **Who is MA? MA, MA, Alone**

Repeatedly the question was put to Ma, "Ma who are you? What is the way as well to comprehend you"? In reply Ma said—"This, that is 'I' 'mine' 'you' 'yours' I am this, 'you are that—all these are limited by definitions. The body is, however elomelo, exclude it. Try to comprehend your own self. You, I, beyond you, I—this that is infinite and the only one- THAT, THAT, THAT, it is that only whatever you say."

The term 'you', 'I' convey the sense of separateness. Transcending this same of you, 'I' where there can be no question of separation or absence of separation too, there, He who is infinite, inspite of being infinite, all alone too. Transcending mind and speech, this is, indeed, the Svarup Tattwa of Ma, That is why it is expressed by indication as THAT, THAT, THAT. Whatever you say, it is that—eternal, ephemeral, manifest, unmanifest with form, without form what it is and what it is not. What He is being all, the same, indeed, He is being none.

So, it repeatedly occurs in mind that the great Kaviraj Mahasaya, (Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj,

Padma Vibhusan, M.A. D. Lit., the peerless genius, an authority on Philosophy and India's spiritual heritage), while investigating into the Svarupa of Ma, has considered that it did not belong only to that of Mahatmas who had attained exalted states—knower of Shastra, yogi, rishi, seer of Mantras, muni. On further examination regarding the state of the eternally liberated and the state of Iswara too, Kaviraj had found that it was not the Svarupa of even these classes. Is that the reason why Bhagavan is addressed as mother, father, friend, close associate and master? In the words of Kaviraj Gopinath what we got in his conclusion—"Ma, Ma, alone."

### **Mahapurana—Akhanda ... the super Perfect indivisible whole**

"Without form, there is that Parabramhan, Paramatma' whom you call 'Shree Bhagavan' with form too-THAT only indeed,—It is He alone as well abiding in all. There is that Lilamaya (all lila) Hari.....He who is that self, certainly it (Hari) refers to Him-Saguna (with attributes) Brahman where there are name and form, there He Himself is the attribute itself. The Nirguna (attributeless) Bramhan without form, the unmanifest does not arise.....in fact, in whatever form, etc. you attain him being self revelation of the self in the self—in all those particular form it is He Himself

**From these words of Ma , indicative of Her own reality, we can conclude the supreme ultimate as the indivisible sustaining principle in all, abiding in all.** Therefore, in any form, without form, it is He Himself in His unrestricted, unlimited innate freedom (Abadh), to that revelation, there is no question of stage, or absence of stage,

inclination or no inclination towards any aspect, predominance of any sampradaya, or no sampradaya, and yet what are mentioned as non-existing, negation of existence, negation of non-existence co-exist, there this language of expression can never be perfect. In whatever name and whatever action it is expressed, in all these; it is He alone, the self—**THAT** only. Consequently in whatever manner this revelation may be expressed—One Brahman without a second, Parabrahman Paramatman, Shree Bhagwan—All refers to is **THAT**.

Regarding the various Svarupa pertaining to different lines of Sadhana, each of those Svarupa is He Himself. While describing in course of discussion —That only Svarupa of **Avatar Vighraha**. Svarupa of **Mahabhava, Atmasta and Bramhithiti, Saguna Sakara** (with attribution and with form), incomprehensible dual, Nonduality, Qualified Nonduality, Shunnya (void) etc. Ma had revealed Her own Svarupa by indications.

### **Maha Yoga.**

Ma says that the revelation of Mahapurna Akhanda is the great revelation which she terms as 'Mahayoga', A comprehensive explanation of this Maha Akhanda in Mahayoga in Ma's own words is as follows —**"Know the Mahapurna Akhanda is indeed the great revealaton. It is the Mahayoga, where the question of Yoga (Union) or Viyoga (absence of Union) has no place.** The relatives too have place, no place, and yet no question about them arises. What is supreme Ultimate (there all these relatives exists) beyond negation and affirmation as well negation also, affirmation too—say what you may. There are these Sampradaya, no Sampradaya as in entirety with all their

ways of contradiction, no contradiction, staying intact, not intact, the particular place where there is maintained the way, no way, of dispute, absence of dispute a particular line, no line, of Sadhana whatever as you may contend. In the line of Sadhana, there is absence of line Sadhana in their appropriate places,—everywhere He Himself is there as self revealed. All those, indeed, eternal ephemeral aspect, absence of aspect, with question beyond question, relative absolute are included) in their entirety. What is the language, what is the syllable which can express it?

**And where surely everything is Brahman—one Brahman without a second—there is the one Maha Advaita (great Non-duality), call it Maha Advaita or whatever you may say, provided it is that Maha Sthiti with the touch of Maha Akhanda.**

So this Maha Yoga, where takes place the great revelation of **Mahapurna Akhanda—Supreme ultimate**—which, in fact, is the **Svarupa of Ma**, since it is not possible to express it in language, Ma refers to it by indication—**THAT** only. At any state or stage of any line of Sadhana and even on its completion, if there be touch of Mahapurna Akhanda, and only then can there be no barrier for that great revelation. So Ma is saying, "Although one's Svrupa with form or formless may have separate entities, in all of them underline definitely an eternal sustaining principle—even with the existence of their completely separate entities."

Therefore, "There what is called **Maha Akhanda**, know it is all indeed—where the question of exclusion, non-existence as well has no place. There each action too is sustained in Akhanda."

In each Khanda (part) is Akhanda and Akhanda is That only-manifest, beyond, not beyond, all these have to be taken into account.

**Consequently, in the context of Ma's birth, action, play of Sadhana, etc. in fact in all phases—there is that Akhanda Purna only. The Sadhan kriya of Jiva should be undertaken aiming at the touch of that Mahayoga. On the completion of this kriya, all Kriyas, indeed, reveal as the form of the self. This is Svakriya and when this reveals, then only, one may have the touch of the reality of Ma's birth, action, Sadhana and all other Kriyas. But after all who can comprehend Her unless She allows Herself to be comprehended?**

# Teaching without Words

Arnaud Desjardins

From the first day that I met Ma Anandamayee, I have had the conviction I was not in the presence of a human being, but of a Being of an altogether different order. This realisation dawned upon me in September, 1959. Since then I have stayed with Ma in 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964 and 65 and every time I have had this feeling... How is one to describe this stupendous impression? 'Divine'? 'Supernatural'? But I falter before the mystery which these terms represent and therefore not dare use them!

I am an European with a Christian upbringing engaged in my profession and family life. Apart from a few colloquial words, I do not understand either Hindi or Bengali and Mataji does not speak English. With the exception of about one hour in all of conversations with her that I was granted with the help of interpreters, I have thus never understood what she said or replied to questions. And yet have I for her sake undertaken six journeys to India and spent eight months close to her, sometimes under rather difficult conditions. This proves the power of her influence even over one to whom the Hindu tradition, in which she is rooted is foreign.

For years the photos of Sri Ramana Maharshi have—for me as well as for many others in Paris—been a real teaching. A few minutes of attentive silence in front of his picture—and his sublime look would teach me more than the reading of the best book. (I am speaking of the only real knowledge, the one which transforms those who acquire it.) I have never missed the opportunity of meeting a Frenchman who has had his darsana. It is through these living witnesses that I

conceived the overwhelming desire—more powerful than all other desires—to meet a Sage, a liberated Being, one who has realized his Self, a Jivanmukta.

I expected infinitely much during my travels in India; and this meeting and the discovery of Mataji has certainly not disappointed me. Since then I traveled to Kanhangad to be with Swami Ramdas and Krishnabai. Those also were luminous days of intense living. The rajasic and tamasic impressions of Paris have not been able to wipe out the cherished memory of those days. But Swami Ramdas spoke English and his replies, his parables and remarks, so full of humour, would give to the ever insatiable mind the only valuable sustenance. The part that Swami Ramdas played in the lives of so many in the west can be explained even to our modern mentality, enslaved though it be by rational logic.

**What, on the other hand, appears to me most amazing is the function of a Master, of a spiritual preceptor that Ma has taken on towards a French visitor who has been and truly remains her pupil. Above all I should say she has gradually made me understand the meaning of the Gospels and of the message of Christ. Thanks to Ma, the word of Jesus has now for me become a word of life. And she also has opened for me the door to that universal treasure—house called 'Bhagavad Gita' and has made me discover Sri Krisna.**

Nothing can be further removed from the life at Paris which I lead, working for the cinema and the television, than the atmosphere of Mataji's Ashrams. The Hindu orthodoxy, the observance of caste rules, the importance attached to rites and ceremonies may seem to have nothing whatsoever

is common with the problems that confront modern man in the worldly and materialistic life of a European metropolis. Nevertheless, I can bear witness to the fact that the teaching of Ma, even though it has been communicated without words, has completely transformed my life in Paris. Intellectually, she has given me the conviction that a metaphysical perspective exists that is unique and universal, a 'Philosophia Perennis' that teaches us that all our problems have already been solved although we are not aware of it: "He is all in all, He alone is." But she also teaches us that Realization must be all embracing, However far away, I may feel from her ashrams, from the purity of those white robes, from the beauty of the kirtans, amidst the violence, the contradictions and disturbances of professional life in Paris, Mataji or at least what she stands for is always with me, within me. And I remember the famous words: "Kurukshetra dharmakshetra..." and also: "Act is the play of the world" (Yoga Vasista) and I know who is the doer and who is not.

It seems to me that for foreigners the relationship between the master and his disciple is the most interesting feature of Hinduism at the present time. That some people think that the entire significance of their lives has changed because they have had the darsana of Ramana Maharshi, Ramdas or Ma Anandmayi is a certainty which can neither be proved nor contradicted. One may verify the recounting of a miracle, one may—in the name of Christian orthodoxy—be surprised to hear Beings other than Christ say 'The Father and I are one'; one may be flabbergasted at the social phenomenon which the glory of a woman represents who

does nothing else, but teach us to seek God. But the shock of her gaze and the meaning of the slightest of her gestures is a personal experience. Those who have seen have believed. And those who have understood the words of Life Eternal have taken to the Path.

What ally does Ma's Realization find in us that vibrates in tune with her? At what depth of our being are we touched? All those whose experiences I have compared with mine have had the same impression of certainty. That is how it is nothing is to be added. All the rest has always been conditioned by 'buts' and 'ifs', by moreover and 'thens'. **Face to face with the Master there is only certainty and clarity and that extraordinary experience of life beyond time, which liberates from all fear.** Nevertheless it is not easy to be with Mataji. None of our old tricks works and we are all the time exposed and denuded. **Never before have I been so divinely happy as in the presence of Ma Ananadamayee, yet also have I never before been so ill at ease and so utterly shattered.** I knew that a painful transformation had to be brought within me : I had come for that purpose and I knew that this transformation had to be accomplished with my consent and active co-operation. It is not enough to remain passive in the presence of a sage : one has to lend, to deliver oneself voluntarily to his influence.

"For none is it easier than for the flies to follow this body wherever it may go" Mataji has said, referring to herself, "but that does not enlighten them." Mataji asks us to work unceasingly and to make tremendous and sustained efforts, so that these very efforts may one day be transcended—and then comes effortless being, the spontaneity of one who has in the very midst of the 'battle field' attained to inner freedom beyond action and reaction.

For years before my first journey to India I asked myself the question: "And if it were true?" How can one help posing this question with a trembling hope, when one hears about the great Sages in India who "by a single look can change a whole life." When one reads accounts, describing their supernatural presence that is a living witness to a world quite different from the one in which we believe ourselves imprisoned? The reply, the certainty: "Yes, it is true!" I found in the darsana of Ma Anandamayee. At times her eyes gaze into the far distance and her expression is of a supernatural beauty which defies all description. What does she see at such moments? What is the significance of the presence among us of a Being so totally different? Her face is so powerful that, week after week, lost in the crowd, I was unable to detach myself from it: so irresistible was the impression of intensity and fullness that I felt with my whole being. In the presence of Ma, at last something actually was happening in my life. And I have gained the certainty that everything is possible for her.

But one has to admit that the almost miraculous aspect of Ma, the attraction she exercises over thousands and thousands of people misleads certain persons who have observed this to see in it more a manifestation of the abnormal than of the supernormal. **My gratitude to Ma is even greater for what I feel I receive from Her in Paris, than for the extraordinary moments experienced in India. I do not seek any explanation: The oneness of the Self, the awakening of the inner Guru are enough.** But the fact remains: after returning to Europe from my first trip to India my relationship to my own surroundings of which I had suffered for so long changed radically. **I have understood that our being conditions our life. I know that by the grace of Ma Anandamayee and Swami**

**Ramdas something has been transformed in my being.** Of course, I have kept on the mantelpiece of the room in which I spend most of my time the photo of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the first picture of a sage I possessed and that I looked at so much for years together. It was this photo that made the desire to visit India grow in me. **And at times I have the feeling that it is Ramana Maharshi who has guided me to Ma Anandamayee.**

Near her I have found the Life that is beyond all created things, yet is also in all of them and against which no power in the world, no difficulty, no tribulation or anxiety can prevail. Since my first visit to Ma at Varanasi, I have discovered the Life in myself. I can understand that certain people negate the existence of God or of the Atma. But Life? Who can object to opening himself to Life and to letting himself be transformed by It? Christ said : "I am the Life. I shall give Life to all who come to me." I know that Ma is Life and that she gives Life to those who come to her. Why then should it be difficult to call her 'Mother', to call her 'Ma'? For not only does a mother protect and guide, scold and comfort, a mother is first and foremost she who gives birth, who brings you to life. And I know—and there has not been a week during these five years that has not brought confirmation of this fact—the fact that my life actually started in September, 1959 in Varanasi. A life into which I have no doubt been born with the samskaras of existence before that time and which is wrapped up in impurities, fears and contradictions, but which has revealed itself—once for all—as being in truth beyond those limitations.

How many times in France has one not put me the question: "What have you received from this woman saint?" One expects a reply, I know, that will conform to what one

reads in books about the chakras, kundalini, or nirvikalpa samadhi. But the answer is much simpler and for myself at least, much more significant. **“What I have received from this woman saint is myself. I was dead and I have come back to Life. I was born of the flesh and I am born of the Spirit.”** Whatever may be my sin and my impurity, now and for ever, Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee you are my mother and I am your son. Jai Guru, Jai Ma.

# Reflections on Mata Anandamayee

Dr. M.Hafiz Sayed

It will not be unreasonable to suppose that this outer solid seeming world has not been created or has emanated without any definite purpose. The all-powerful, the all-wise, the all-compassionate Ishwara must have had some definite reason and objective in manifesting this world. It may appear Mayic (illusory), because it is constantly changing, but it has an underlying Divine Life immanent in it. The real purpose of this manifestation may be rightly said to be known only to Him who is the Source of our being. Many guesses have been made and many explanations have been offered as the Why and the Wherefor of this universe. But no one has yet given a satisfactory and convincing answer. It is rightly said that unless one becomes one with the Reality, one cannot possibly understand the real purpose of this outer world. Suffice it to assume that as it has sprung from a wise source it must have some definite objective.

**According to ancient Hindu thought, there are two paths for man to tread: the Pravritti and Nivritti marg, the former for the spiritually backward and the latter for the spiritually advanced.**

In response to recurring spiritual need of mankind various teachers of spiritual eminence have come and gone. They come from age to age to elevate mankind and to destroy the evils that may have crept in the society.

Only such beings are called Siddha Purushas (Perfect beings) who by virtue of their strenuous "Sadhana" and intense moral purification and spiritual realization attain a

state of being which awakens in them cosmic consciousness. They have no separate will of their own. They merge their individuality in the supreme Reality and are more guided by it than by their own "Sankalpa". They are also called Nitya Siddha. There is no limit to the spiritual height. They become not only Ishwara in course of their spiritual evolution but Maheshwara and Parameshwara also.

None but a spiritually evolved soul can understand or fathom their spiritual depth. To an ordinary soul the life and activities of such beings appear no better than a mystery. They are capable of doing things which appear impossible to others. Their desire is calmed, their passion eliminated. They are not repelled by anything repellent nor attracted by the attractive. They come to this world with a pure motive of service of humanity.

If we examine Anandamayee Mata's everyday life and her activities in various spheres in the light of this fact, we find that she comes up to the highest standard of these ideals. No one has yet been able to gauge her spiritual depth or measure her spiritual height. **She has been a puzzle and enigma to so many of us.** Even her devotees failed to understand her. Only a spiritually realized soul can understand what she is in reality. Those **who think that she is an incarnation of the Divine, and has come down to earth to relieve its sufferings, are not wrong.** Perhaps those who identify her with Sukadeva or with Shri Krishna, are right because she appears to tread in the foot-steps of the Lord whom we call by various names. Although Lord Shri Krishna was the fullest manifestation of Mahavishnu, he lived his life like a normal natural being without asserting His divinity and all that it

connotes. He played with children and frolicked with his eternal companions and devotees, the much misunderstanding Gopis. When statesmen and men of learning assembled, in their midst he played the role of a mediator. When the time came for waging a war, he first did his best to persuade the warring parties to desist from the internecine course, but finding them adamant and heedless to His advice, he served as a charioteer of Arjuna and took part in the mighty war of Mahabharat in all seriousness. He was ever considerate and helpful to his old friends and playmates. **Similarly, Shri Anandamayee Mata plays every role in her life as a wife, as a daughter and as the Sakhi as carefully as Lord Shri Krishna played His own part in different spheres of life. She observes the Varna and Ashram Dharma scrupulously and yet she treats an Indian and a foreigner alike. She is kind and compassionate to the young and the old alike. Her Grace flows out to everybody of whatever social status he or she may be.**

It is clear to an observant eye that the purpose of Her emergence on this earth, is deliverance of the people from the miseries of the world.

**There are four kinds of Karmas : Sakam, Nishkam, Ishwar Arpan and Swabhavik. Her activities obviously belong to the fourth category.** Like Shri Krishna it may be said of Her that there is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Her, nor anything unattained that might have to be attained and yet She mingles in action. For if she mingled not ever in action, unwary men all around would follow Her path. She is not content to teach us by words of mouth only, but sets practical examples to us as to how to do things in right manner. Often in a Kirtan, she recites God's

name herself and so inspires us to recite it with the whole of our beings. **She is one with the supreme Reality and she sees One Life vibrant in every atom. She sees the in-dwelling self in all.** Once she is reported to have said, "Everybody's satisfaction is my satisfaction. Everybody's happiness is my happiness. Everybody's misery is my misery."

On another occasion she assured us in the following soothing words:- **"The Lord does not wait for your spiritual fitness. Like the flowing Ganges, He goes on bestowing His compassion on all. This is His nature. This is His being."**

One of the greatest proofs of her spiritual greatness is that although she has not learnt anything, any sacred scriptures of any religion, yet she is capable of answering subtle philosophical questions put to her by eminent philosophers or scholars and satisfying them completely. Let us remind ourselves in this connection what Lord Krishna taught us: "Aurvedas are as useful to an enlightened Brahmana as is a tank in a place of the invisible world and this outer world as well. While sitting in one place she is capable of knowing what is happening in other places. She knows where her presence is urgently needed and which soul is crying for her help and guidance. Outflows Her Grace to bring relief and solace to the distressed. **Most of her work is done in silence which is more eloquent than the discourses of learned men.** The best thing for us would be to surrender ourselves to Her and let her utilize us in any way she likes. We must merge our will in Her will, because she has merged hers in the Divine.

# Compassionate Mother Anandamayee

Swami Vijayananda

Miracles still happen nowadays, and sometimes the most wild dreams become true; and this is what happened to me when I met Sree Ma Ananadamayee for the first time on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1951 at Her Varanasi Ashram.

I had come to India in search of a Guru. Not just a teacher, but one of those mysterious Great Beings, who can by their mere presence awaken in us the inner power which makes real Sadhana possible.

I knew almost nothing about Sree Ma Ananadamayee. The first time her name was mentioned before me was at Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. One Canadian lady who was coming from Northern India advised me to visit the Ashram of Sree Ma Anandamayee beautifully nested on the bank of the Ganges, and to have the Darshan of Sree Ma. It did not awaken in me any interest. Nevertheless, I noted down Her name among other things worthwhile to be seen at Benaras. I had already lost any hope to find the sage I was looking for and my passage back to France was already booked on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February from Colombo.

I reached Varanasi on the first of February and got my accommodation at the Clark's Hotel near the Cantonment Station. The next day in the afternoon a young man (I had an introduction letter from his uncle) accompanied me to Bhadaini area of the town. We crossed a narrow lane, entered through a small door and found us all of a sudden in a vast majestic ashram overlooking the Ganges with a breathtaking view along the Ghats. It was the Ashram of Sree Sree Ma Anandamayee.

My first idea was to have a look and go away. But Sree Ma was just coming out from the Kanyapeeth building. My companion introduced me to Her. They were talking in Bengali. The young man told me : "Ma says you are good." She was looking at me with this strange look which is so familiar to me now. She looks at you, but also far beyond, in your past, your future, your whole destiny.

Can I recollect my first impression? Surprise, I believe. I expected to see an old lady with white hair but I found myself before a person looking fairly young with Her jet black hair falling on Her shoulders; but surprisingly, I did not notice Her beauty at that time.

But the real happening was inside of me. How to explain this? It was like somebody throwing a lighted match in gunpowder. You know that something extraordinary is going to happen, although it does not happen at the very moment. In that moment, I felt something strange which I could not define. But, indeed, a few hours later after I had gone to my hotel the explosion occurred; a feeling of unearthly joy and happiness, **I have found the Guru I was looking for. There was no shadow of doubt about in my mind.** What gave me this conviction?

People will call it "Love". **But the English word is misleading for this wonderful relationship between Guru and disciple. The Guru is not only dearer than a mother, a father or a friend. All the shades of love and veneration are contained in this relationship.** Any worldly love however pure and sublimated it may be ever ends in disillusion and sorrow. **But the love of Guru purifies the mind and liberates it from worldly attachment. It is like a flawless mirror which reflects**

our own higher Self, and leads to the discovery of the eternal source of peace and happiness which is inside ourselves.

It is through this love that one can renounce all of a sudden the comforts of a luxurious life and devote oneself entirely to the search of the supreme. **It is through this love that one gets the strength to conquer Kama ,Krodha and Lobha (Lust, anger, and greed ). This is Guru-Kripa.**

To sit at Ma's holy feet was not only a source of peace and bliss, it was also a most powerful sadhana. Her very presence purified the mind, loosening age-long fetters. Without telling a word she could open the way of the nadis, granting one in a few minutes what would have taken many years of hard strenuous Sadhana.

My relation with Ma was that with a Guru. But she was much more than this. She was doubtlessly a Divine Being. Sri Ma had told us that she had not come on earth as a result of some Prarabdha Karma and that she had no previous birth. Was she an Avatar? Or a perfect sage who had come down to help humanity? Much has been written or speculated about it. What is certain is that the lady we called **Sri Ma Anandamayee was a vehicle for an immense power of infinite Love.** Once, as I had complained to Her that She had built a boundary around Her against foreigners, She told: "There is no question of any boundary ; I and you are one; this (showing Her body) is only an appearance. I am all-pervading." She had only an elementary schooling, and had read no scripture but Her wisdom baffled the greatest of pundits. In a few words, she could resolve the most intricated philosophical problems and one was left wondering how simple it was.

There was no path of Sadhana which was unknown to Her and She would advise everyone on the path which was best suitable to him. **What struck me specially was Her extraordinary skill in opening and closing (when needed) the Nadis of Sadhakas without any effort, just playfully.**

I traveled with Ma at first 19 months without a break (except one day) for, after having found such a miraculous being, how could I leave Her! Travelling with Ma was not just travelling; it was a unique experience. One was moving in a world of miracles. By "miracle" I do not mean something which strikes imagination as a disruption of natural laws (although this too happened sometimes) but the fulfillment of a wish or a desire at the very moment one has desired it, and just the way one would have liked it. We knew that whatever might happen, "Ma will arrange", that we were under the protection of a great being for whom the word "impossible" does not exist. Of course, this was not only while travelling, but wherever Ma was and for all those who had some connection with Her. And it happened in such a simple, spontaneous way that at the moment, one was hardly aware of it.

For example, it is well known among Ma's devotees that whenever She distributed fruits or sweets, there was ever enough for all those present, whatever might have been the number of fruits and the number of persons. In this connection one instance comes to my mind when I was personally involved: It happened at Ma's Ashram at Brindavan. One day, it might have been late in the evening, may be 10 p.m. I went to Ma's room to tell Her that I would like to leave the next day for Almora and secure Her permission and her blessings. In the ground floor of Ma's

building there are two rooms; one first room fairly big which serves as a reception room, and another on the back for Ma's private residence. When I came, Ma was sitting in the front room, near the door of the second room. The room was filled to capacity by many people standing close to one another. It was not possible to enter the room or to cross the dense crowd. So I stood outside together with other people.

Ma was distributing oranges and it was why the crowd had assembled, everyone being eager to get prasad from Ma's own hands.

There was a basket of big oranges (perhaps the Nagpur type) before Ma. But whatever big the basket might have been, it could not be enough for so many people. I decided not to take an orange for myself. Anyhow, I had not come for this but for having a talk with Ma before starting for Almora and Daulchina. To be certain that she would not notice me, I hid myself behind the people; and as I knew She could feel my bhava, I made my mind completely blank.

After sometime the distribution was over and, surprisingly, everyone got his orange. Then Ma asked "Sabko mila?" (did everybody get?). All over the assembly one could hear satisfied "Yes, Yes, Yes." I kept quiet and hid myself much more behind the people. Then I heard Ma's voice telling: "Ek ko nahi mila. (One did not get). As soon as She had uttered these words, the dense crowd splitted itself in two as if by magic leaving open a way straight towards Ma, and I was sucked inside this way—almost against my will—until I came to Her, I made pranam, and She gave me a big orange with Her wonderful happy smile.

But the most striking miraculous power displayed almost

daily by Ma was Her astonishing skill to attract people through Her love, and transform unbelievers into religious people and sinners into religious men. Her power of attraction was indeed legendary. She would at once find the dominant effective feature of the individual and appear to him in the aspect which was the dearest to him. To some, she was the mother; to others a daughter or a close friend, some again would see Her as Ishta, Krishna, Durga, Shiva, etc. or their Guru. But to the great majority of people she was "our Ma" the all powerful loving mother ever ready to help and protect Her children whatever race or creed they may belong to.

I remember a Peruvian boy who had come for the first time to Ma. He did not know any English but could converse in French, and I was the only person in the Ashram to whom he could talk directly. On one occasion we were both sitting in satsang in the presence of Ma, fairly apart from each other. At one moment, he was stunned by what he had seen that he got up in the midst of the satsang and came the place where I was sitting. His face had an expression of utter amazement when he told me : "Oh. She looks just like my mother!"

Sometimes, on special occasions like Kali-Puja and Janmashtami, etc., Her features, Her behaviour, Her bhava would be so transformed as if She had become the embodiment of the deity worshipped. I had myself the good fortune of witnessing such transformation. It was Janmashthami's (the birthday of Krishna) night and the Kanyapeeth girls had dressed Sri Ma like Krishna. She was in a small room in the upper storey of the Kanyapeeth building and we were allowed to go up and have Her Darshan (usually males are not allowed in this building). I went rather reluctantly feeling a little annoyed that Ma had been dressed

in what, I thought, was a disguise. But when I entered the room, I stood in awe, before bending to make pranam. There was no question of disguise. Her features had a majestic luminous beauty almost masculine. Her attitude, Her way of sitting conjures those of a royal sage receiving us with his benign smile. She was really identified with Krishna.

When the Lord has come on earth to play with us the wonderful play of love, which leads to liberation from worldly bondage, how can one forego even for a short time his divine presence? But Ma did not encourage sole attachment for Her physical form. It was a stepping stone for discovering the all-pervading Ma and finally the Divine which is seated in our own heart, and which is our real Eternal Being. Ma used to say : "From moha (attachment) to this Body(Ma), all other moha will vanish" And also : "To know Bhagwan is to know one's Real Self and to know one's Real Self is to know Bhagwan."

With Vijayananda (as She had called me) She did indeed try to wean him away. She had a hard time but finally succeeded, and this happened in 1954. In the month of May, Ma's birthday celebrations were to be held at the Almora Ashram. I was in the Varanasi Ashram in the month of April, and came to Almora—after having received Sree Ma's permission, shortly before the celebrations. I had indeed tried to free myself from that strong attachment I was feeling for Sree Ma's presence in its physical aspect, and thought that I had succeeded. But then, it came again more intensely than before. After reaching Almora I asked for a private interview, and told Her frankly about this. She smiled and told me : "You stay three years at Almora. I was taken aback and bursted out: "Ma. This is impossible." "Then, one year only" was Her reply. How could it come out I do not know, but I agreed and

had bound myself to a dreadful promise, to stay one full year without Ma's physical darshan.

Sri Ma did not leave Almora immediately after the celebrations, but remained until the end of June. I was certain that knowing my state of mind, she could not leave me at Almora and would tell me at the last moment to accompany Her. The dreadful moment of Her departure finally came. I was standing near Her car, watching Her, but the words I expected did not come. The car started its way down to the plains and my gaze followed it as long as it was possible.

"Perhaps, I thought, She would send somebody to call me." But nobody came. Of course, I could have followed Ma to the plain, and she would have laughed it away as She had done on previous occasions. But I had given my word. And also I understood it would be beneficial for me to stay in seclusion.

During the celebrations, as the Ashram was overcrowded I had been accommodated in the small kutia, adjacent to the Patal Devi Mandir. After Ma's departure, I had to shift in one of the Ashram rooms, and was taking my belongings up the small path leading to the Ashram. My mind was in a very gloomy mood bordering despair. "Ma has gone and so many days are going to pass without Her Darshan. The bracing climate, the majestic beauty of the mountain peaks, what are they without Ma?" Thus was I thinking while looking sadly towards Kasar Devi, a height above Almora.

All of a sudden, something extraordinary happened. How can I describe a vision which is not seen with the eyes? Ma was before me, Her subtle body permeating the space. It was

a form almost melting in the formless. Her long black hair flowing along the mountain ridges and Her wonderful smile filling my heart with inexpressible peace and joy. She was outside, but also inside of me. "Why do you lament, fool," She was asking me without words, "I am ever with you, very near to you."

Two years before, a similar incident had occurred in similar conditions at Rajpur, near DehraDun, but that time, there was no form. Only a divine Presence pervading everything—including myself—with solemn peace and happiness. It was like a taste of eternity. But, although I did not see any form, there was no doubt in my mind, that it was Ma who had come in that aspect. But the vision was soon forgotten, and the intense yearning for Ma's physical presence came up again. This time, I had failed the test. But later on, I was able to stay without Sree Ma's physical presence for longer periods. Her divine Body was not there, but Her Love was forever with me.

Ma had told once: "Whoever has loved, even once, this Body (Herself) will never be able to erase it from his mind, however hard he may try." Almost six years have elapsed since She has withdrawn "this Body", who was so dear to us, from our sight. But Her love is ever present. Tears come in our eyes when we think of Her. These are not the bitter tears of sorrow, but tears of love, which keep alive the eternal link we have with Sree Sree Ma Anandamayee.

# **Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee :**

## **The Eternal Flame**

Shri Govind Narain ICS (Retd.)

Our country has had an unbroken tradition of great sages and seers from times immemorial. These great ones have preserved our wisdom and ensured the continuity of our values and culture. This has been the backbone of our unity and national integrity. Each great one has devised one's own system of conveying maximum benefit to the yearning humanity. Some spiritually realized Souls have taken birth amongst us for our salvation and their advent has been heralded by sages, who came before them. One such great soul was Shree Shree MA Anandmayee.

To say anything about Ma Anandamayee is like showing a feeble candle to the radiant sun—it is a futile attempt. Ma is everything and much more and all descriptions of Her are mere fragments of a limitless infinity. Ma's mahasamadhi is a phenomenon of the physical world. Ma is eternal. She exists as a brilliant flame within us. We need the perception to see Her. Her fragrant presence is always with us. We have to get rid of our ego and self-deception to be conscious of Her closeness. She is there - purity personified - to guide our thoughts and actions only if we are big enough to be humble and to surrender ourselves completely to Her care. To such a One, I offer my devout salutations.

### **High Spiritual Souls are on common wave length**

When my father-in-law, Dr. Panna Lall, was still a student at St. John's College, Agra, he was fortunate to come under the wings of Prof. Surya Kumar Karfarma, who was a "Grahastha," but had secured spiritual advancement through

his "Sadhna". Dr. Panna Lall learnt a lot at his feet not only in his studies but also in the path of spiritualism. The relationship continued and later Dr. Panna Lall introduced his whole family to Prof. Karfarma, whose teachings influenced them all. In 1925, Prof. Karfarma, who had retired long ago, came and visited Dr. Panna Lall in Unao, where he was posted. During some intimate conversation, Prof. Karfarma told my father-in-law that as far as he was concerned, he had imparted all the knowledge that he possessed, but a great enlightened one who was already born, would in due course, take care of him (Dr. Panna Lall) and lead him on further. Prof. Karfarma was referring to Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee. Later, when Dr. Panna Lall narrated this episode to Shree Ma, She only smiled benignly. Thus Shree Ma's coming to Earth was known to other spiritually high souls, who were on a common wave-length.

It was in 1938 that Shree Ma came to Allahabad where my father-in-law Dr. Panna Lall was posted as Commissioner. Swarnalata Jaspal (Brahmacharini Billo Ji) and her family used to visit Ma. Billoji was a class senior to my wife Chandra. Billoji told my wife that a great Saint had come and she should visit her. My wife went to have Ma's "**darshan**" with Billoji and later she took her parents along to have Shree Ma's "**darshan**". At the first meeting with Father Shree Ma laughed and told him, "Pitaji, you and many others were present at the Sanyas-taking Ceremony of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu". This observation of Shree Ma sent an electric current through Dr. Panna Lall's body which kept him charged with devotion throughout his life.

During 1941-43, I visited Shree Shree Ma at various places along with Father, but there was apparently no direct

link between Ma and myself till then. I was shy and an introvert. I remember attending Ma's 'Satsang' on the roof top of Hari Ram Joshi's house in Lucknow. There were about 25 devotees. During "Kirtans", Ma would often go into "Samadhi". Soft "Kirtan" would continue and Ma would return to the physical world after short periods. I remember having intimate sessions with Ma, again in the company of Father in Vindhyaachal, Dehra Dun and elsewhere. I was getting more and more charmed by Ma's ever present sweetness and extreme graciousness, but I must confess that the real spark had not awakened in me yet.

### **How Ma Kindled my spiritual spark**

In December 1943 - January 1944 I was posted as Magh Mela Officer in Allahabad and my wife and I with our two daughters were camping for a month at the Sangam. The whole atmosphere there looked sanctified with 'Bhajans' and 'Kirtans' starting from early morning as streams of devotees went for their holy dip in the severe cold weather. A new township had sprung up with lakhs of people - sadhus, devotees, pandas, tradesmen and others. Elaborate arrangements had to be made. One day, as we had finished our midday meal, we found Ma standing at the gate of our Camp, accompanied by only one Brahmacharini. My wife and I rushed towards Her. Ma laughed and exclaimed, "I heard Govind Narain lives here, so this body came". We were dazzled by Her charm. We didn't have anything much to offer, except two left over bananas. In her graciousness Ma blessed both of us and our daughters and then disappeared. The spark was kindled.

In 1946, Ma was celebrating Holi in Vrindaban and Father was going there. My wife and I, along with our small

daughters Chandan and Nandini also went there. The atmosphere in Ma's presence is always divine and the presence of a large number of Mahatmas and devotees added to the grandeur of the occasion. During one of her smaller sittings Ma revealed that all those who come to her have been associated with her during so many previous births and each one according to his/her Sadhna is escalating the spiritual ladder. What a magnetising impact this had on us who listened to her. The link was getting stronger and stronger. After a couple of day's bliss the had come for us to return to our work. Ma enjoined upon me to leave after taking "Prasad". I was in a hurry, as I had to attend a meeting in Hathras on way to Aligarh. So I persuaded my wife to leave early. Our small Morris car was being driven by a driver. We had travelled about 7 miles from Vrindaban when erom nowhere, an oldish woman appeared on the road, right in front of our car. The front bumper hit her and she thrown about 10 yards away, before the car stopped. We were scared. The woman was howling and was soon joined by her son. I put my family under a road side tree and took the woman and her son back to Vrindaban to a local dispensary and got her thoroughly examined. By Ma's grace there was no injury - not even a scratch but she was shocked. I got the woman admitted to the hospital for care and comfort till she decided to go. Then I went to Ma's ashram to report the whole matter to my father-in-law. Ma saw me, smiled and repeated that I should take "Prasad" and then go. So the lesson was well taught. I took the "Prasad" for the whole family and returned to Aligarh. My wife retorted "what happened to your being late for the meeting in Hathras". Ma's ways are inscrutable!

In early 1947, I was posted at the Secretariat in Lucknow and residing in 2, Olliver Road. Ma blessed us again. At half an hour's notice, She visited our home and with our modest

means we welcomed Her and paid Her our obeisance. Her divine grace was apparently preparing me for bigger responsibilities.

### **An instance of Ma's Leela**

From 1951 to 1954, we went to Nepal. I was deputed as Adviser-cum-Secretary to His Majesty King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah of Nepal. Winter used to be rather cold in Kathmandu and my wife would stay with her father for a few months. In 1953, she went with her father Dr. Panna Lall to Vrindaban to Ma's ashram. Ma had arranged the "Sthapana" of "Shivalingas" there. On the day fixed, my wife was expressing her concern to her father that she had no flower garlands for the "Shivalingas". Soon thereafter an oldish man appeared at the rest house asking if she needed any flower garlands. My wife was overjoyed and bought the two big and beautiful garlands that he had. With this confidence my wife went with her father to the ceremony in the Ashram. On reaching, she found that there were three "Shivalingas" but she had only two garlands. She shared her worry with her father who advised her to watch quietly and keep the garlands hidden. Ma was examining all the articles that had been arranged for the "Pooja". When she saw the garlands that had been brought by the ashram, she did not approve of them and wanted better and bigger garlands. Dr. Panna Lall again asked my wife to keep quiet as there were only two garlands while there were three "Shivalingas". On her own accord Ma explained that one "Shivalinga" had been established earlier and the Pooja had been done. So that day, only two "Shivalingas" had to be worshipped. Father and my wife exchanged happy smiles and they offered the two garlands to Ma. Ma was very pleased and said those were the garlands befitting the occasion. Was this all a mere coincidence ? I wonder ! It was Ma's 'lila'.

## They trampled over each other Ma felt the weight of the tragedy !

In the 1954 Kumbh, at Allahabad, my Father, my wife, our children and other members of our family were in Ma's ashram at the 'Sangam'. Ma took them all for a dip in the 'Sangam' and returned to her camp. After some time Ma looked very restless and exclaimed that so many people were trampling over her body. Later, it was learnt that a big tragedy - a stampede - killing several hundred pilgrims occurred on the slippery slopes of the Bund. I was in Kathmandu and naturally got panicky on hearing about the tragedy being broadcast on the radio. Ma's immediate flock was safe but Ma remained concerned about the bigger human family.

Once my wife and I went to the Varanasi Ashram with Father on the occasion of **Shivaratri**. During the day, Father was sitting in the courtyard and Ma emerged from her bathroom with a wet towel. Father, as usual, said something witty. Ma laughed and squeezed her wet towel over his head. Father felt thrilled and prostrated before Ma for the extreme kindness and blessings. Those who are familiar with the theory of "Shaktipat" or of awakening the "Kundalini", will easily appreciate the significance of this "Lila".

Ma's arrangements for **Shivaratri** Puja were always made with meticulous care, under her instructions and supervision. All participants in the holy worship were required to observe complete fast since the early morning and not even a drop of water was permissible.

### **Kripa-Sagari Ma**

I remember, once in Delhi, **Shivaratri** Puja was being organised in the Kalkaji Ashram and Smt. M. S. Subhaluxmi

had also come to join us. I was not too well as I had just got up from an illness. I asked Ma if I could take milk. Ma did not say 'NO' but smilingly She said in that case I might watch the puja from outside the hall. The message was firm and clear. I was on **Nirjala** fast and thought I might sit for one Prahar Puja only. My wife and daughters were also there. After one Prahar we exchanged glances and I conveyed to them that I would sit for another Prahar. M. S. Subhaluxmi was regaling us with her Bhajan in between the puja and Ma was going around and talking to the worshippers. After the second Prahar I felt strong enough to sit for third prahar and then the fourth. And so with Ma's grace the whole puja was complete. I marvel how this became possible in my poor state of health. There are no limits to Ma's Kripa, only if one would only follow Her instructions.

### **Another of Ma's mysterious Leela**

While in Nepal we had procured two 'Chaur's' with silver handles. These are used in religious worship of the deities. Father, Dr. Panna Lall, had donated two idols of **Ashtadhatu**, Mahaprabhu's and Nityanand's to be installed in the Vrindaban Ashram. Ma had very kindly arranged for the proper installation with all traditional worship. We all assembled in Vrindaban. The idols were beautiful and with great love and feeling, Ma described the whole procedure of their installation in order to prepare us for the ceremony lasting a few hours. When, on the previous evening, Ma was doing the stocktaking of all the arrangements and all the articles that were required, various Ashramites in-charge were reporting the progress to Her. It was revealed that while everything was collected, there was no "Chaur". As it happened, my wife had packed one of the "Chaur's" with her baggage but Father asked her to keep quiet for a while. He

wanted to see Ma's leela. Ma was talking about the "Chaur" and showing Her concern. Then She stated that the Lord Himself made all His arrangements and no one need worry. Something will turn up. At this stage Father quietly asked my wife to bring the "Chaur" and present it to Ma. My wife did this. Ma laughed and was happy and remarked "Didn't I say that the Lord made all His arrangements Himself." We were amazed how Ma, the All-knower, staged this leela to carry conviction to the whole gathering.

When one begins to talk of Ma, one loses the sense of time and space. There is so much to say about One who is all pervading, limitless and all knowing. But I have to restrain myself for the present. May Ma's grace extend to one and all. Jai Ma.

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# **Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma's contribution to the cultural and spiritual Heritage of India for the Benefit of Mankind**

Prof. Siddheswar Prasad

Cultural heritage of India is rich and has many dimensions and facets. Basically, the approach of the Indian tradition has been ethico-spiritual. **Since the time of the Vedas it had holistic and integral approach. The one word which embodies and symbolizes the spirit of the spiritual heritage is 'Purusharth' which includes 'Dharma', 'Artha', 'Kama' and 'Moksha'.** It has been all along positive and optimistic. Some Western writers have wrongly termed it negative and pessimistic because they either lack proper knowledge of Sanskrit or had little time to study the vast literature in depth.

Since the days of the Vedas in her long history, India has always produced ethico-spiritual leaders, to use the Indian term **'Sadhakas'**, of exceptional merit. Some of them were Sages and Seers, some were great scholars, thinkers and philosophers, some were kings and emperors, some were men of ordinary means some were rich, some were poor, some men, some women and some belonged to upper caste and some to lower caste. The **'Sadhakas'** from different parts of this great country spoke different languages, led different styles of life, but their aim and objective was the same—**realisation of the 'Self' and service of the people. In the words of Gita, it was Loksangraha which was Karmayoga.**

Modern India had such great Sadhakas to inspire—

**Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishnadeva, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, Swami Ramtirtha, Maharshi Ramana, Sri Aurobindo, Lokmanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi. In these galaxy of men there was one outstanding woman, Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma.**

We cannot look at the sun—the rays are too strong and dazzling for ordinary eyes. But we endeavour to assess and measure the gifts of the sun from the light and warmth we get from it.

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee is a celebrated spiritual figure. A personality like her takes birth rarely in hundreds and thousands of years to give light to the world. **Anadamayee Ma was an embodiment of 'Tapasya'. A glimpse of her face gave deep satisfaction and immense solace.**

**Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee preached the Message of Self realization through love, compassion and tolerance and emphasized the unity of religions and the Brotherhood of Mankind.**

The whole world is passing through a crisis of values. Materialism has reached a point of madness. The teachings of the Mother have eternal relevance but more so in the present situation.

**Ma Anandamayee personified the essence of India with its spiritual values, sacrifice and tolerance. Her appeal has cut across barriers of caste, creed or religion and drawn people from all sections of the**

society. The aura surrounding her presence, and her words of advice and comfort, were one of compassion, love and understanding.

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee laid great emphasis on self-discipline in one's thought, speech and action. She firmly upheld the traditional Indian values and the spiritual injunctions, leading to the path of self-knowledge. We are really fortunate to have spiritual personalities like her. It is for us now to follow the footprints and values cherished by her.

I conclude by quoting a poem on the Divine Mother—

“When Ma is enthroned in the

Heart of hearts

All emotions and attachments

Flee from the self

The self remains awakened

With that divine love

Whose absence made the heart run

Hither and thither

Seeking and searching the love of

The mortals

Crossing the mountains and ocean

In futile search

Not knowing that true bliss

Rests dormant within

Who is it that awakens from

The deep slumber?

When lost in the wilderness

Shows the path guiding

With her untouchable fragrance

Her blissful aura

Capturing with her enchanting supremacy

Her divine love

Leaveth naught her child till the bliss

Of beatitude is found."

# Mata Anandamayee's Contribution to Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of India

Prof. Koshelya Walli

A human being is the crown of creation. One, he or she, who is possessed with the power of discrimination and will power. Man is not satisfied with mere eating, sleeping and creating progeny. He craves for something more than the material facilities. Despite having all the amenities of the so called modern life, there are moments in a person's life when he feels vacuum in the heart of his heart, pines for something for his/her self-fulfillment. Herein Mother Anandamayee's association through Her words comes to his/her rescue. The individual concerned, definitely a fortunate one, gets what we call inner peace.

Usually, we all say we believe in God but practically we lack true faith in Almighty, Ma's words serve as Guide in the development of true faith in ourselves and in God or Truth or Cosmic Energy, She makes us understand since everything belongs to Him, there is no other alternative but to surrender to Him. If at all we are to be anxious, we should be anxious for Him alone.<sup>1</sup>

Intellectually, we might have read Ma's **Vak** (utterances) a number of times but like the flow of water on a stone, that lip reading does not help us except that Ma's Grace helps us in understanding Her words and we try to sustain the flow of His name in every breather so as not to be without Him. According to Ma, without Him, we can't have the peace of mind.<sup>2</sup>

Mother is the Source of making us walk on the right

track of God-Consciousness. The words uttered by Her have Her Vibrations. We may not be able to see Her with our gross eyes, but if we really love Her, She definitely cleanses us of our blemishes, black spots and negative attitudes in our day to day life, and takes us into Her Arms. Only we need be receptive. Let us throw our faults and merits if any into Ma's lap only and request Her to make us an object of Her Grace to make us worthy of pure love, pure understanding, firm faith in ourselves to have true faith in that Omnipresence, so that Omniscient works in us to have inward and outward awakening, to be established in our true nature.

**Revered Maharaj Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj, when asked—What is Ma? Who is Ma? Replied—Ma is SHAKTI Herself-Durga. Such an embodied Emancipated Soul comes very rarely on this earth for the benefit of mankind.**

Ma is Dynamic Energy for the benefit of mankind. We find Ma's Ashramas in Delhi, Varanasi, Calcutta, Agartala, Vindiyachal, Haridwara, Bombay, Kankhal, Almora, Bhopal, Dehradun, Jamshedpur, Kedarnath, Naimisharanya, Pune, Puri, Rajgir, Ranchi, Uttarkashi and in Bangladesh Dhaka and Kheora. Due to the Grace of Venarable Gurujee (Maharaj Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj) and Ma Herself, I have been having opportunities to visit Varanasi Ashram in Bhadaini. This Ashram located on the bank of Ma Ganga(Ganges), has an arrangement for Ma's devotees to reside, runs Kanyapeeth—a residential educational institute for Brahmacharinis, Kumaries. In this Educational Institution education is imparted to girl students residing in Kanyapeeth from the beginning to University level. **In these times when the national policy of India in a way has bid farewell to teaching of Sanskrit from primary level. Ma's**

**Ashramas are nourishing and nurturing the tree of Sanskrit—The backbone of Indian culture, thereby preserving the source of Indian culture.**

Ma's Vedic Path to live a true Sattvic meaningful life is a direction to a traveller of his birth to a right destination. Ethical values, observance of yamas and Niyamas in one's daily life make one fearless, truthful and self-dependant. One develops soul force to face the buffets in life with fortitude, bearance and forbearance.

These days social service has become phobia, fashion, a means of gaining popularity, name, fame, awards and chakras, citations and what not? I am reminded of Revered Gururji's—Venerable Pt. Gopinath Kaviraja's words. Once he quoted a Sanskrit verse, which in essence meant : 'The duty of service is very very difficult to be understood. Even Yogis are not able to understand it. **Seva means selfless service—service for the sake of service. Those of us who really own an innate desire to be of service to humanity, have to be worth of being of any service to humanity. Such a soul has to be of God.** One can be of God if one thinks of God in every breath of one's life. According to Ma, we should think seriously how long we were without the thought of God? What did we do throughout the day today? One who thinks in this manner, is blessed by God, otherwise death is the fate. Happiness, unhappiness, sorrow will have to be forgotten. One, treading this path of God, path of self introspection and correcting oneself side by side to be worthy of God's grace, is eligible to render what is known as "Social Service."

It is said that mind is faster than air. **According to Ma, mind is controlled by engaging it in the thought of**

**God—thinking of God always—while sleeping, eating, talking, walking, working and the like.**

**‘Satsanga’—Association with the good** is the royal road to the destination of identifying our true self that is part and parcel of the whole. Ma says that true faith in God comes when He is remembered in every breath.

Man visualizes the world from his own view-point according to his own self-development. The sages and seers see the mantras. According to Ma, when a person's state of development is such that his/her wave length is at par with that of the Seers, he/she utters the speech like the seer—speech what we call in Sanskrit "**Vak**". A seer of mantras is in possession of the ultimate knowledge. When one is established in real **Swatvaba**, one is able to do whatever is in fitness of things to be done, one is not to make effort. In ignorance and veiling, efforts are required and advice is sought.

That this world should be a better place to live in is the innate desire of every constructive human being, but mere wish wont help. We have to contribute to attain this goal. We have to engage our lives in Japa and thereby communion with God. The more we try to contemplate on Him, serve Him through selfless service of the needy, the downtrodden, the weak, the more He will be revealed to us. If each one of us makes sincere effort to utilize our talents and do our duty in the name of God and Truth, we surely help ourselves, our neighbourhood, and thereby the creation.

To have an urge for better world, better circumstances and better environment is not enough, one has to contribute towards this attainment by doing oneself what one wants others to do to achieve the goal. Here, a reference to a girl-

child and her father would not be out of a context. An I.A.S. Officer, very much busy with his official life was very much attached to his only little daughter. The child seeing her father would surround him and not let him attend to his files at home. Father saw a world map lying nearby, cut it into pieces and asked his child to set these pieces right and make these as one map as it was before. The girl sitting in the corner of her father's room looked into different pieces turning the same and looking on the both sides. She was amused to see legs, hands, head etc. on the other sides of the pieces. She started joining these different parts of the body and found that this way she shaped a human being on the other side of the map. She at once, went to her father and said—"Papa! Papa! I have prepared the map." Father looked at the map and got wonder-struck, asked his dear child-"How did you prepare it?" The little girl smilingly and happily replied - 'Father! I set the man right and the world itself was set right". Herein has a message for us all. We have to set right our own self the world itself will be set right. **Our Ma's whole Life Play in this playground of world is a living example of this Truth. Mother's first sight would calm down the storm in minds of Her visitors.** Tears would trickle down from their eyes knowing not how and why? Ma would be ever ready to help each and everyone of this Universe to take resort to right path to reach the final goal of self realization. We lacked receptivity and Ma observed—the activity of the mind that detracts man and takes him away from the remembrance of God is called wrong thinking . A doubtful mind goes to destruction from faith in ourselves, in God. Right association with right persons, good looks and the like help us to live a life of communion with God.

**The path of God is the edge of the sword. The**

**infinite variety of appearances and manifestations of modes of becoming and state of being, of species and types, all the numberless distinctions as well as all identity are but He Himself**—says Ma. That is why the father of the nation **Mahatma Gandhi would quite often say that we have to hate sin and not the sinner.**

To have enough innate strength, we have to implement the words of Ma. She says—“Never relax your efforts until there is enlightenment. Let no gaps interrupt your attempt, for a gap will produce an eddy whereas your striving must be continuous like the flowing of oil it must be sustained, constant and unbroken stream.”

According to Ma, we should reserve some specific time for God—to remember Him, to engage ourselves in Japa of a particular name and mantra while sitting in special posture and gradually add to the time and the number of repetitions.

**To conclude, Ma Anandamayee is Herself A Source of Indian culture and spirituality. I deliberately use the present tense, for, She despite having left Her physical body, is still present, in subtlety. Only we need to be receptive, have faith and positive attitude.** Usually, we have tremendous time to do every other work wanted or unwanted, desired or undesired, but when it comes to God, we lament and mourn—“O I do not have time. I am to attend this work and that work!” The basic truth is that we are literates and not educated. We have wholly identified ourselves with our body, mind and intellect. We swear by our cultural heritage day in and day out, but we are not in know of even the basic tenets of our culture and spirit.

If we really love and revere our Ma Anandamayee, the

fittest tribute in this seminar would be to earmark a specific point of time in Her name and remember Her with love, gratitude and dedication. Ma is the living embodiment of Indian culture and spirituality.

To remember Ma means to remember Cosmic Energy or Truth, or any other name and likes in the name of God.

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# A Living Embodiment of Spiritual And Cultural Heritage of India

Swami Bhaskarananda Maharaj

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम् पूर्णत पूर्णमुदच्यते ।  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।

Shree Shree Ma was perfect in all respects. To strive to write anything about such Highest Spiritual being is beyond any human being . Life and teachings of such a perfect being made immense impact on day to day lives of people from various parts of the globe who either came in contact with Her or even heard about Her.

In Bhagabat Gita Shree Krishna says in Canto Third verse twenty one—

यद् यद् अचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तद्वेतरो जनः  
स यन्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

“Whatever a great man does, that is imitated by all others,

what he demonstrates by his action, that alone people follow”

Details of the life style of such a great Man becomes example of the people to follow. Shree Shree Ma’s words of wisdom and deed match comprehensively with what Bhagawan Shree Krishna intended.

Shree Shree Ma is the emblem of attributes of forgiveness, truthfulness, calmness, contentment, love, respect, devotion

which get reflected in the course of dealing with people.

Whenever the sun shines it radiates light and heat to one and all irrespective of merits of the recipients. Likewise Shree Shree Ma's towering spiritual personality has generated such aura, with or without speech which has transcended barriers erected by human beings and influenced one and all.

Like songs of Geeta by Sri Krishna, teachings of Buddha, Shankar or Christ, Shree Shree Ma's utterances are of great importance not only for the present but for generations to come. The words and deeds of Shree Shree Ma are Divine. These can transform those who are sincere and open to the Absolute and wherever they may be in terms of physical presence. The whole mankind will be benefitted by adherence to Shree Shree Ma's ideals. Shree Shree Ma has not propagated any new philosophy but have shown the spiritual path to be treaded by one and all which would ultimately lead to Salvation. **Time and again She would ask us for respect towards scripture, honour Saints and Sadhus of all sects, welfare and benefit for all and selflessness in serving others.** Her compassion for mankind in general without any distinction is very appropriate to the Mother Form in which God has manifested in this world of ours.

Ma was in tune with the creation. Once a devotee asked Shree Shree Ma, "What difference do you find when you compare your own body (Swarup bodh) with other mortals?" Ma immediately replied, "No difference at all—"i.e. same Swarup bodh with all.

Ma's life and actions and Her leelas are inscrutable and beyond human comprehension. Shree Shree Ma is the epitome of perfection. She is the embodiment of the spiritual and cultural heritage of mankind.

Jai Ma

# A Perfect embodiment of Sat-Chit-Anand

Shri J.N. Dhamija

The impact and impression of Maa are too deep and profound for the understanding of an ordinary man: and to justly record those impressions are even more difficult. My association and encounters with Ma span over a period of three decades. Consequently memories crowd.

I do not know how to begin and from where to begin. My Quest of the Eternal started at the age of 18. To many a place of sanctity I travelled and many Ashrams and shrines I visited in search of my Goal. With age came some kind of knowledge and perhaps some wisdom. But it also brought sophistication and selectiveness which made my goal recede further.

How and Where to find the Perfect One—an embodiment of knowledge and wisdom and Divine Grace which could take me across the turbulent ocean of existence dispelling the surrounding darkness with which one gets conditioned till some kind of shock or an incident awakens you to an awareness of new life.

My search continued. I had heard about Ma. But it was in late 1952 when I returned from my first diplomatic assignment in Australia that I had the good fortune to meet Her in person. I was then in my late thirties. At that time, the temple complex with hall and new buildings had not come up at the Delhi Ashram and Ma was staying in the house of Shri Sen (father of Dr. Sen) at Hanuman Road. Both my wife and I went over to have Her darshan. Ma looked at me for some time. I was

simply struck by Her presence and stood speechless.

Was it a vision or waking dream! I wondered. Her Beauty and Her Divine Grace engulfed my being with an overpowering Love.

I knew the great moment of my life had arrived and that I had found the one whom I have been seeking for years. In my heart of hearts I then knew that I may become "Godless but Guruless never. For me God and Guru had become one.

It was a tryst with my destiny. After meeting Her an altogether new chapter started in my life. Intense longings, a deep desire and yearning welled up within me. I simply could not live without Her. Whenever I heard that Ma was near about Delhi in Vrindaban, in Dehradun or Kankhal, I would drive down during the week ends to these places to have Her darshan. I remember that once in 1957 Ma had come on a visit to Modinagar for about a week or so. Modinagar is some 50 kms away from Delhi. Every day soon after office hours, I would drive down all the way to Modinagar and back. This restlessness and obsession, somewhat akin to madness, continued for years I could not help seeing Her at regular intervals. But years later, by Grace Divine, this restlessness ceased. I felt that Ma was always with me and around me. Wherever I was, I could speak to her and seek Her guidance. This experience still continues, and although Ma left Her body in August, 1982, I can feel Her presence intensely whenever I call upon Her. She simply directs, controls and guides me. In fact, my whole life revolves round Her. She is the motivation which keeps me going with my deep and intense living at my age. She is my anchor. She is my Destiny and I know that She alone will complete and fulfil my life.

## The Splendour of Asia

Ma did not give any discourses, talks or lectures. She communicated by Her mere presence. Her silence spoke to us. It was uplifting and ennobling. Sometimes a word, sometimes a touch, turn of Her eye, a gesture, a movement of Her finger (usually Her left index finger) was enough to convey Her thoughts and wishes which served as a command and which like the Divine will had to be obeyed.

She seemed to be repository of all knowledge and wisdom. Though She called Herself an 'illiterate and child,' She could in her own way win over the great Mahamandleshwars who sought Her presence.

Ma reacted according to one's approach and intelligence. "The way you play the instrument so will you hear," She used to say. Accordingly, at times, words of profound wisdom flowed from Her touching the sublime heights of Vedanta. At such times She spoke pure poetry. Here is a vignette of Her inspiring words :

"Standing on the sea shore of Eternity, one can watch, wave after wave dashing against the rocks and break, merging into infinity. How many myriads of beings are born and die at every moment and where they go disappearing into the Unknown—into infinity. This constant flux in Nature is indicative of the fact that the births and deaths do not exist. There is only one Supreme being within us, manifesting itself into infinite forms and from which all emanate and into which all dissolve."

In Her own way Ma developed in us the best of liberal traditions. She taught us that Humanity is one—there being no difference between man and man.

Her approach was always constructive. She always saw unity in diversity. She never, ever uttered an unpleasant word about any person, Institution or religion. According to Her, the aim and object of all religions of any race and creed, of any denomination is to take one across the turbulent ocean of existence and bring him to the Haven of peace and bliss, and freedom and light. In other words the exercise of all spiritual endeavors, howsoever diverse, is ultimately to take one to the threshold of the Eternal.

Once Ma was asked about the Hindu view of Christianity. She replied, "If Christianity claims a special position for itself and places itself apart, it thereby breaks up all other religions. We recognize Jesus Christ, but within the unity of all other religions. He himself stands above this exclusiveness".

Ma is one of the greatest symbols of India—A country "most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow" a country of great ancient culture, of tolerance and harmony of religions, a county where human mind developed the highest truths and thought out some of the greatest thoughts in the world. In the words of Dr. A. Weintrob (Swami Vijayanand), "no one in the world has ever expressed the highest truths in such clear and sublime language as the seers of India". And Ma was the Greatest among the great.

**Whether Ma was an Avatara, Vilasa, a Siddha, a Sakta or a great Bhakta or the Divine in its Svayau Rupa—such dialects continue and will continue. I for one only know that for me Ma is—Perfection Incarnate, Pure Consciousness, an embodiment of Sat-Chit-Anand.**

Ma's contribution to the great cultural heritage of India is immense. At present we are too near to have a correct historical perspective of Her image and impact.

But in ages to come posterity will hear about Her and wonder if such a being walked this earth. Like Lord Buddha, She will ever continue to shine with sparkling brilliance as one of the brightest stars in the firmament and after thousands of years men will look at it as the **Splendour of Asia** and continue to draw inspiration with devotional wonder and awe.

# Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee

Swami Swarupanandaji Maharaj

It is a difficult task to express about or make an appraisal of Shree Shree Ma's personality, Her Virtues and Leelas. Shree Shree Ma is the epitome of perfection. I consider Her as Mother par excellence, a Supreme teacher and philosopher. There is no dearth of instance where She showered transcendental bliss on people coming in contact with Her and left lasting imprint on their minds and help them prepare for a new, beautiful life.

I came to Shree Shree Ma about fifty years ago. When I spoke to Her privately, She instructed me about spiritual life and advised me that I should approach Brahmachari Kamala Kantji for further guidance. Great importance was laid on full and firm faith, building of moral character and unflinching attention to Her which will lead to progress in gaining knowledge and attainment of peace. Shree Shree Ma also desired that I should know about Bhajji (Jyotish Chndra Ray) through Kamala Kantji who had long association with him. Bhajji was the first amongst Her devotees to whom Shree Shree Ma revealed Herself as "Dashbhuj". He introduced Her as "Anandamayee" to the world. Bhajji had composed "Shree Shree Matrika Dhyan, Sandhya Kirtan and Pronam-Mantra" which continue to be sung by devotees all over during morning and evening prayers. In his "Twelve Precepts" Bhajji brought out that Shree Shree Ma is an emblem of Divine Manifestation. If anyone of these Precepts is strictly followed in life, there is no doubt about achievement of one's object of life.

A few years later after my association with Shree Shree Ma, I had asked Swami Paramanandji as to why he was

with Her. Swamiji's reply was spontaneous. He told me "Surely you must have read about attributes of 'Sthhita-Pragya' in Gita. I have experienced the presence of those in Shree Shree Ma. If one is to attain the aims and objects of spiritual life one must constantly endeavour to acquire them." He further said that one should not doubt the contents in instructions give by Shree Shree Ma.

After the second world war in 1951, one European doctor started for India in search of spiritual experience. On the way when the ship entered the Arabian sea, he had a vision of one woman figure clad in white standing on the sea. Her stature almost touched the sky. He took it as a forerunner of experience in the days to come not without implication! On reaching Bombay he enquired about his vision. Hailing from France, he only knew French. Someone, who was aware of the presence of the Mother (finding similarity in the description) of Pondicherry, asked him to go there. He went and saw the Mother but resemblance with figure was not perceived . On further enquiry he was advised to go to Varanasi, he saw Shree Shree Ma and immediately recognized the similarity between Her and the Woman figure on the sea. This is an example of Shree Shree Ma's "Ahaituki Kreepa." Such grace continuously emanated from her towards worthy recipients.

Way back in 1949, I was in Dehradun along with Shree Shree Ma. One day 'Prasad' was being distributed in the Ashram premises. Suddenly, I wondered whether what was being served had any authenticity of being the real 'Prasad'. Just then it was announced that some special 'Prasad' was on its way and we were asked to wait for sometime before eating the already distributed 'Prasad'. As it turned out, a mango was brought for me by Swami Shivananda with specific instruction that the slice in the middle was for me

and the other two slices were for Swami Shivananda. To my utter surprise and tearful eyes I discovered that the slice meant for me was slightly bitten. This was Shree Shree Ma's omniscient way of removing doubt from the minds of Her devotees who were in the path of Sadhana. It also shows Her spontaneous response, to earnest prayers from pure heart of devotees. With sincere desire we should try to prove ourselves worthy of Shree Shree Ma's Blissful association by complete surrender to Her and by furthering Her messages in our daily life. I reproduce below some of **Shree Shree Ma's Precepts or Vanis for the inspiration of reader:**

\*When you First began to learn to read and write, you surely did not examine the reasons for and against doing so, did you? You accepted what you were told. Even if all sorts of critical thoughts arise, convince your mind that they are only due to your lack of understanding. They are certainly not the outcome of pure wisdom. Try to accept as much as you can as is appropriate to the occasion. Discard laziness and exert yourself. It is natural that the mind should find all sorts of reasons for doing sadhana; yet your aim should be to persevere.

\*Will Supreme, Thy shall prevail. The fountain of goodness accomplishes everything when the time is ripe. To aspire to that which is Eternal Truth is right for everyone; these alone must be the spoken word. All else is but futility and pain.

\*Truth itself will assist him in every way who has gone forth in search of Truth.

\*Whether it pleases you or not you will have to make the Eternal your constant companion; just like a remedy that has got to be taken. Without loving God you will not get anywhere. Remember this at all time.

**In the sylvan serenity  
of Vindhyachal Ashram with  
Maa : The spiritual essence incarnate**

Dr. Vidya Niwas Mishra

I had one good fortune of being staying in Maa Anandamayee's Ashram in Vindhyachal during Autumnal Navaratra. This Ashram commands beautiful view of the Ganges and of the hills around and has several flowery trees which were exuding the fragrance particularly, the Parijat trees. The whole hermitage is surcharged with the Divine presence. It is not quite far off from the Astabhuji temple and its sanctity has been enhanced by the presence of Maa for sometime quite early in her life when she performed her sadhana there. There is a small temple and underground there is a small room for meditation where Maa used to sit day and night in the stage of Bliss. She was spiritual essence incarnate. In fact, she did not need perform any sadhana but she did so for the sake of educating and instructing the other people who were at the lowest rung of the ladder. She did all this not only to set an example but also to show that Sadhana is a continuous process and it should not stop and it has no other end except itself. Within the compound itself, there are remains of some old temples of which **shikhara** (top) is visible. Might be there is a temple sunk down during some natural calamity or might be there could be just ruins since no exploration has been done, nothing could be said with certainty. However, the entire atmosphere there is something which has to be felt and which cannot be described. I was granted permission to sit for some time and do Japa I started with the preliminaries of Japa sanctification of the body and of the five elements and I had feeling that this is place where preliminaries are not needed. I did not hear

any voice but there was a strong urge to start the Japa with/ any preliminaries and I yielded to it. I do not know how long I was there. I could sense a sweet fragrance filling me from all sides and going deep into my Being.

My spiritual Guru was there and was performing his nine-day Puja ritual and under his guidance I offered Parijat flowers one by one under the well known thousand names of the Mother Lalita.

This hermitage is being looked after by some Trust. The caretaker there is an humble devotee of the Mother. Without changing the sylvan serenity of the place, the whole Ashram could be renovated and maintained as a place of spiritual pilgrimage. This is one of the rare places in Vindhychal where there is no noise pollution, no air pollution and there is no mental pollution as well.

I have had the darshan of Maa several times from a very close distance but the perception of Maa which I got through each and every sense of mind, through each and every part of my existence in that hermitage was much more fulfilling than her direct darshan. I surmise that Maa was a unique phenomena and in this Century she was so unostentatious, so simple and so overpowering with her divine smile and with her sweet repetition of the name of the Lord that one's ego could melt away in almost a fragment of a second and just look at her as if she was his affectionate and forgiving own mother. I am not one of those who go for personality cult but I do believe in such presences which vibrate with Supreme Bliss and radiate a sense of meaning in human existence.

My humble obeisance to her Divine presence.

# **Jagat-Guru Ma Anandamayee: A true representative of India's Cultural and Spiritual Heritage**

Dr. Bireshwar Ganguly

Every civilization has its secular and spiritual cultures; the former consisting of literature, music, sculpture, painting etc. and the latter consisting of dharma (moral life) and moksh (method of liberation from desires). The material aspect of civilization in all the three broad phases of its evolution, viz. agricultural, industrial and electronics, is expressed through its quest for artha (economic activity) and Kama (institution of marriage). The secular culture of any civilization may or may not be influenced by Moksha—aspisation, but must be influenced by the level and content of its dharma-aspisation.

In this brief essay, I shall confine the discussion mainly to the spiritual culture of India from the Vedic period to the end of twentieth century, though some reference will be made to the secular culture from time to time, as and when it will be found that the latter is deeply inspired by the former.

In this broad canvas of the development of the spiritual culture of India, I shall mainly focus my attention on the chief contributions of some outstanding personalities or super-men like Sri-Rama, Sri Krishna, Buddhadeva, Tulsidas, Sri Shankaracharya, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Sri Anandamayee Maa. For as in the polity, great Kings and political leaders give new directions to the political history of a country, as in the economy technological inventions give rise to new modes of

productions, so in the spiritual heritage of a nation, the contribution of spiritual giants looms large in the horizon and a new dharma-chakra (cycle of spiritual and moral evolution) is ushered in by the life and teachings of the spiritual supermen of each period. And in the course of unfolding the spiritual heritage of India, we shall discover that Ma Anadamayee was the consummation of five thousand years of spiritual life of the vast majority of the Indian people.

## Ancient Indian Culture

Ancient Indian Culture had two main phases, viz. the Vedic and the Buddhistic phase. The Vedic phase from the Rig Veda to the Srimad-Bhagavad Gita was a dynamic, theistic, synthetic and integral manifestation of culture in a predominantly agricultural civilization and the Buddhistic as well as the Jaina phase, was a non-Vedic, non-theistic, static, negative manifestation of culture, inspired mainly by the other worldly norm of Nirvana, though based on the dharma of **Sheelcharan** (eight fold path of good behaviour).

Vedas are the eternal and most authentic scriptures of the Hindus. Vedas have **two** main parts, viz. **Karmakanda** (rituals based on hymns and fire worship) and **Jnana Kanda** (philosophy and mystic yoga,) known as **Vedanta**. **Out of one hundred and eight Upanishads, eleven principal Upanishads, e.g. Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aiteriya, Taittiriya, Shwetashwatara, Chandhyoga and Vrihadaranyaka, are the source books of Vedanta, and are known as Shruthi Prasthanas, as revealed to different rishis or enlightened saints, later on codified by Maharshi Veda Vyas and commented upon by Acharya Shankara. Maharshi Vedavyas also compiled the Brahma-Sutra for giving a logical codification of the important**

aphorisms of the Upanishads, which is known as Nyaya Prasthan. Practical or applied Vedanta is known as Smriti Prasthan, which is found in Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, a part of the great epic Mahabharata, compiled by Maharshi Veda Vyas.

Regarding the attempts at synthesis of Yoga (technique of self-realization) in the long spiritual history of India, Sri Aurobindo refers to the following phases:-

**The Vedic synthesis** of the psychological being of man in the highest flights and widest rangings of divine knowledge, power, joy, life and glory with the cosmic existence of the gods, pursued behind the symbols of the material universe into those superior planes which are hidden from the physical sense and the material mentality.

**The Upanishads** take up this crowning experience of the earlier seers and make it their starting point for a high and profound synthesis of spiritual knowledge.

**The Gita** starts from this Vedantic synthesis and upon the basis of its essential ideas builds another harmony of the three great means and power; **Love, knowledge and works**, through which the soul of man can directly approach and cast itself into the Eternal.

There is yet another, the **Tantric**, which though less subtle and spiritually profound, is even more bold and forceful than the synthesis of Gita—for it seizes even upon the obstacles to the spiritual life and compel them to become the means for a richer spiritual conquest.”

**The central message of Vedanta** which epitomizes the

main stream of ancient Indian spiritual culture, is found in the Ishopanishad, **Kathopanishad and Bhagavad Gita**. The first two verses of Ishopaishad declare : "Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is enveloped, controlled and owned by God, the Lord. One should therefore, enjoy life in a spirit of renunciation and sacrifice and should not covet the wealth of others, knowing well to whom they belong. One may aspire to live for one hundred years, if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that of detached work will not bind him to the law of Karma. There is no alternative to this way for the devotee."

The central thesis of **Nishkam Karmayoga** for the devotee of God is summarized in these two verses. Regarding the enlightened status of the realized soul the **Upanishad declares in the sixth verse**. "He who sees everything in relation to the supreme self, who sees all entities as His parts and parcels and who sees the supreme Lord within everything, never hates anything nor any being." Regarding the necessity of learning scientific knowledge about nature and spiritual knowledge about the self, the **eleventh verse declares**—"Only one who can learn the process of science and that of transcendental knowledge side by side, can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death and enjoy the full blessing of immortality."

**The eighth verse of the last chapter of Kathopanishad declares** : "Superior even to avyakta (undifferentiated nature) is Purusha (the supreme self or God), all pervading and entirely devoid of any indicative mark, knowing whom every creature can be emancipated and can attain immortality." This establishes the **Purushottam-Vada of Bhagavad Gita. Verse fifteen of the same chapter declares** : "when here (in this very life)

all the knots (desires) of the heart are rent asunder, then mortal man becomes immortal—**this much alone is the teaching (of all Vedanta)**”

**Commenting on this verse, Swami Ranganathananda has aptly remarked :** “This is its central message, a message which it has been conveying to man for thousands of years with a deep passion for his welfare, with a loving human concern more than that of thousand mothers and fathers put together, matripitrasahasrvebhyo api hitaisina Vedanta, as Shankar picturesquely and feelingly expresses it (commentary of Katha Upanishad, IV.15). **Swami Vivekanand**, an outstanding Vedantic teacher of the fag end of the nineteenth century **gave a concise formulation of the cultural message of Vedanta in the following words:—**

“Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion.”

**The Essence of Hindu Culture:** The framework of ancient Indian culture, later on known as Sanatanadharma or Hindu culture, is found in the Upanishads, Bhagawad Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Manu Smriti. In the words of Mahabharata : “Immortality as well as mortality are both established in the body of (everyone); by (the pursuit of) delusion, one reaches death; by (the pursuit of) truth, one attains immortality.”<sup>(4)</sup>

a) **Life was viewed by the ancient Indian Rishis (wise seers of truth) in its integral nature, evolving from**

**the lowest animal-man, governed by the vital impulses to the highest divine man, aspiring for communion with Brahamn (God).** For this type of evolution of the human soul, which is an eternal part of God,—*mamaivamso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatana*h, <sup>(5)</sup> four goals of human life were enunciated, known as the Chatur Varga or Chatur purushartha, viz., dharma, artha, Kama, and Moksha i.e., moral duty, earning and consumption of wealth, regulated sex life within the institution of marriage, and aspiration for final liberalization or realization of God. Every good citizen was expected to produce and consume wealth in a righteous manner,—*Samyakajivika* of Buddhists, and lead a normal family life in the path of moral duty to society, and ultimately make efforts for the realization of God, through liberation from the bondage of desires. It was the duty of the state or government of each period to lay down, look after and ensure infra-structure, social and political, for the achievement of the **first three goals of life, which fall within the domain of Smriti Shashtra** suitable for the period. **The fourth goal of moksha, which falls within the domain of Shruti Shashtra of Sanatana dharma (perennial philosophy)**, was meant for the most evolved souls, who are not satisfied in the mundane affairs of life alone and who aspire for the unfolding of the divine nature of man. It constitutes the spiritual culture of Hindus and it is the duty of saints, seers and enlightened acharyas (commentators of Shruti Shashtra) and Gurus (spiritual guides) to lead the aspiring souls towards the achievement of this goal. *Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, Shankara, Tulsidas, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Yogananda, and Anandamayee Ma* fall within this category of *Jagat-gurus (world teachers)*.

b) To make the realization of all the above four goals of life easy and natural, the life span of the Indian Aryan was divided by Manu, Jainavalka and other lawgivers, into four ashramas (chaturashramas) or stages of life, viz., Brahmacharya (celebrate student life), garhasthaya (dutiful life of house holders), Vanaprastha (retired life of social workers) and Sannyasa (fulltime spiritual seekers and preachers). A talented and bold soul, getting an inner call for liberation or for preaching the realized truth can, however, adopt Sannyasa at any stage of life, as in the case of Shukadeva, Buddhadeva, Shankaracharya, Sri Chaitanya or Swami Vivekananda.

c) The third most important constituent of the Hindu social system, conducive to the above two elements, devised by the Rishis and law givers, as feat of social engineering for a spiritually evolving society, was the chatur-varna system. i.e. classification of human beings into four varnas (functional castes according to guna (aptitude and nature) and Karma (profession). Lord Krishna declared : chatur vanyam maya sristam guna karma vibhagashah. "The four-fold varna system was created by Me, by the differentiation of Guna and Karma."<sup>6</sup>) These four natural varnas or classes (later on classified into castes) were called Brahmana, Kshatriaya, Vaishya and Shudra. The Brahmanas constituted the class of intellectuals, who learnt the four main subjects, e.g. (i) Anvikshiki (Logic, philosophy and Mathematics), Trayee (the three Vedas – Rik, Sam and Jajur), Varta (political economy) and Danda Niti (the science and art of administration), and performed social duties like teaching, performing vedic sacrifices and priesthood. The Kshatriyas constituted the class of soldiers and administrators. The Vaishyas constituted the

classes of agriculturists, cowherds and traders. Manual labourers hired by the other three classes were called Shudras. According to Lord Krishna, men belonging to all the four classes achieving liberation through devotion to God and social service-oriented performance of moral duties(7)

**Methods of Hindu Sadhana :** Hinduism being a universal religion, suited to the aptitudes and aspirations of all types of mumukshu jives (souls aspiring for liberation) is not confined to any single method of sadhana (technique of liberation), like that of the Buddhists, Jainas, Christians, or Muslims. It has adopted a large variety of Yoga-Sadhana.

- a) **Synthetic Yoga of Gita :** Swami Vivekananda conceived the ideal of a universal religion in terms of Yoga (union with God), which can satisfy the aptitudes and aspirations of the man of action, the man of devotion and the man of discriminative knowledge. In his words : **“The worker is called Karma-Yogi. He who seeks the union through love is called the Bhakti-Yogi. He who seeks it through mysticism is called the Raja-Yogi. And he who comprises them all.”**(8) Thus we see that what Swami Vivekananda meant by universal religion or Yoga, is actually a synthesis of Yoga, as found in Srimad Bhagavad Gita, which is universally accepted scripture of Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism or practical Vedanta. Anandamayee Ma laid the greatest emphasis on the recitation and practical application of Gita.
- b) **Vedic Panchagni Vidya :** The Vedic Karma-kanda was mainly based on fire workshop and mystic hymns(9) The Kathapanishad (I,3,I) and the Brihadranyak Upanishad (VI-2) also make references to the Panchagni Vidya. The

three year long Akhanda-Gayatri Maha Yajna was performed at Varanasi Ashrama from January, 1947 to January, 1950 and Ati Rudra Yajna in May, 1981 at Kankhal Ashrama in Ma's presence.

- c) **Upanshadic Jnana Yoga** : Ma laid great stress on Upanishadic discourses as the Upanishads are the basis of Vedantic Jnana Yoga which leads to the dawn of spiritual knowledge just by listening to the perennial mantras, spoken by enlightened souls to listeners who have self-discipline and faith.
- d) **Pancharatra Sadhana & Vaishnavism** : The Vaishnava or Bhagavat sadhna is based on the literature of the Pancarattras<sup>(10)</sup> and is closely linked to Geeta and Bhagavat. In the medieval period Ramanuja Nimbarka Madhava and Balabha in the south and Sri Chaitanya (1486-1534 A.D.) in Bengal popularized the Bhakti cult and among devotees of Ma Anandamayee this is the most popular method of Sadhana.
- e) **Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Kriya Yoga** : The classic technique of eight fold Raja Yoga is found in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra<sup>(11)</sup> and the methods of Hatha Yoga are found in Hatha Yoga Pradipika Gheranda Samhita, Shiva Samhita, Arthur Avalon's The Serpent Power and Theos Bernard's Hatha Yoga.(12). The technique of Kriya Yoga is explained as the method of Kundalini Yoga in works of Swami Yogananda (13) Ma Anandamayee, being a realized soul from Her very birth like Shukta Deva, had no external guru, but seems to have passed through all the eight stages of Raja Yoga before attaining first Nirvikalpa Samadhi and then Sahaj Samadhi in Her youth.

- f) **Tantra Sadhana and Murti Puja** : Tantra Shashtra of India, though pre-Vedic in origin, was codified and popularized much after the Vedic period.

Like Vedanta, Tantra has also many schools like monistic, dualistic and qualified monistic. **But as monistic Vedanta has ultimately stood the test of rigorous reasoning, so also monistic Tantra has finally stood the test of reasoning and time.** Out of the Divyachar, Virachar and Pashvachar schools of Tantra Sadhana, **Sri Ramakrishna got his siddhi (realization) through the Divyachar, method of Sadhana, in which murtipuja (worship of icons), mantra-japa and kundalini yoga are the chief elements.**

**Ma Anandamayee was a great advocate of Divyachar tantra sadhana** and apart from installing idols of divine deities in different Anandamayee Ashrams, she presided over innumerable annual pujas of Shiva, Durga, Kali, Krishna, and other Hindu gods and goddess in her Ashramas as well as houses of devotees. **Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, the greatest indologist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and one of the chief devotees of Ma Anandamayee has expounded the theoretical and applied aspects of Divyachar Tantra.**  
(14)

**Ma Anandamayee's Special Contribution to the Spiritual Heritage of India** : Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee emphasized not merely the synthetic sadhana or yoga of Bhagvad Gita, but went to the extent of permitting divyachari tantra sadhana, as earlier practiced and preached by Sri Ramakrishna in the nineteenth century. All the festivals of Hindus e.g. Durga Puja, Kali

Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Saraswati Puja, Shiva Ratri, Janmashtami, Jhoolan Purnima, Holi etc. as well as Bhagavat Sapath, Samyam Saptah, Rudravishek, Shata Chandi, Sahasra Chandi, Akhanda Nam Yajna etc. used to be performed in the presence of Her with due shashtric rites and zeal. Recitation of and discourses on Upanishads, Gita, Bhagavat, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Devi Bhagavat, Durga shaptashati chandi and Chitanya Chritamrita were regular features of satsanga (spiritual congregation) wherever Mother used to stay in the thirty ashramas of Anandamayee Sangha in India and Bangladesh.

Over and above this integral approach to Hindu Sadhana, **She used to receive and encourage devotees of Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism to practise their own methods of sadhana** with full faith and devotion. For to a Brahmajnani of Her stature, having the compassionate heart of a universal Mother, all methods of Yoga are different paths leading to the realization of God, or Brahman or the Supreme Self. (15) **Ma Anandamayee was the ideal sthitaprajna** (Yogi of steady wisdom of Gita), who has known Brahman in reality. The Joy-permeated Ma Anandamayee of Swami Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogy always lived in 'Sachidananda consciousness', according to Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo.

**Ma Anandamayee descended to this world from the supramental plane of Sri Aurobindo's cosmology to present to mankind the model of the best type of parabhakta, of the divine personality of Brahmaavid Varishtha, who combined in Her unique personality, the equilibrium of mind and compassion of Lord Buddha, the absolute monism of Adi Shankaracharya, the para- bhakta's ecstasy of Lord Chaitnay, the sarva**

**dharma-samanyaya of Sri Ramakrishan  
Paramahansadeva, the mahayoga of Sri Aurobindo.  
But all this integral synthesis in the divine body of  
the beautiful, ever-smiling Mother, so that Her  
children may at last discover a lovely and affectionate  
Ishta (Spiritual Goal) and a supreme Guru (world  
teacher) for emulation and worship. She is the epitome  
of Sanatana Hindu Dharma, the universal religion in  
all its aspects of Vedanta, Vaishnavism and Tantra  
Sadhana.**

# Ma—An Epitome of Indian Spiritual Heritage and Culture

Shri H.M. Joshi

To describe the life and deeds of a saint is quite an uphill task and that too of Ma Anandamayee who herself is an embodiment of absolute existence, knowledge and bliss. I know this is the most difficult undertaking which might expose me to ridicule, I therefore, invoke Ma's GRACE.

On account of some accumulated merits in my previous birth, I had a good fortune to have Ma's darshan at a young age of four, when my father late Sh. Hari Ram Joshi met Ma at Raipur, Dehradun in early 1933 through Bhaiji (Late Sh. Joytish Chandra Roy). At their very first meeting Bhaiji and my father came very close. It looks that this meeting was pre-ordained by Ma. My father remained an ardent devotee of Ma throughout his life and worshipped Her as "Goddess Durga" and that faith he carried and nurtured to the last moment of his life.

In India spirituality has been the pivot of life from time immemorial. The frequent birth of great souls possessing direct knowledge of Divine and endowed with supernatural powers made Indian people to have firm belief and faith in their extraordinary visions and manifestation of divine powers and got deeply interested in them. Thus our national life was established from very ancient times on the solid foundations of spirituality.

The most significant aspect of Indian culture is the innate divinity of human beings, and all are divine in their essential nature. From Vedic times words like rishi (seer), adhikary

one possessed of authority), prakriti-lina-purusha (a person merged in the cause of universe) have been used to reflect upon the significance of these words to show and prove that the Indian religion and culture are founded on God-vision and those rishis has acquired these unique powers as a result of the direct knowledge of the reality beyond the senses. In India from the time of Vedas and Upanishads men and women worshipped the teacher, the giver of spiritual knowledge with great reverence.

The main purpose of incarnation is to give new shape to religion or to re-establish religion when with passage of time the eternal universal religion declines and gets deluded by the inscrutable power of Maya when men spent their lives thinking that the world and its pleasures are all important. But when they at last discover that no amount of wealth and worldly enjoyments can fill the void in their hearts and are drowned in the miseries and sorrows of this world, they then cry in anguish for deliverance. It is then out of His innate compassion for humanity, God incarnates Himself to free them from bondage.

Lord Shri Krishna says in Bhagwat Gita in chapter IV, verse 7 & 8

यदा यदा ही धर्मस्य रत्नानिर्भवति भरत । अभ्युत्थानपधर्मस्य तगात्मनं सृजाम्यहम् ।  
परित्राणाय साधुनां विनाशाय त दुस्कृताम । धर्मसंस्थापनार्थस्य सम्भवामि युगे युगे ।

“Whenever there is decay of Dharma (righteousness) and an ascendancy of unrighteousness, I Manifest myself for the protection of virtuous, the destruction of vicious and for the establishment of righteousness I manifest myself in age after age.”

To carry the mission of the Lord, sages and saints who are His true representatives have appeared in this world at proper times. They serve humanity as Beacon-Light and show true path of salvation to aspirants and try to set matters in right perspective by their Godly words and deeds. In this Kali age (Kalyug) a number of renowned saints and avtar purush have appeared in this country from time to time. To name a few are Adi Shankaracharya, Lord Buddha, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sant Tulsidas, Sant Surdas, Sant Ramdas, Shri Ram Krishna Paramhans and Sai Baba of Shirdi.

Before Ma's advent in this world Didi-Ma (Ma's mother) used to have visions of gods and goddesses in the same manner as was experienced by the parents of divine personages like Sri Ram, Shri Krishna, Shri Shankara and others. Ma was born on Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1896 in a remote village of Kheora in east Bengal (now Bangladesh) just after a decade of Swami Ramkrishna Paramhans Dev entered into Mahasmadhi in Jan., 1886. Ma from her very childhood was a perfect Sidha. She had no proper schooling but had full command over the Elements. In fact she was a Glory-personified and Bliss-incarnate. Ma never exhibited or made any show of her spirituality but always feigned ignorance and use to call herself "a child". Though from worldly point of view Ma was a perfect daughter, a perfect housewife and a perfect Universal Mother, but from spiritual point of view she was "Purna Yoga Sampanna" as one could see in her a complete synthesis of Karma Yoga, Jnan Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

In the early days Ma was known only to the people of East Bengal, but after Bhaiji's meeting with her in 1924 in Dacca, MA's lilas were made available to persons outside

Dacca as well, Bhaiji himself was a sadhaka of high order and in quest of divine knowledge had studied Vedas and shastras and had met a number of sadhus and saints but no one could enlighten his soul. He then wrote a book on sadhana and through this book he came in contact with Ma. Ma's comment on the book was "always remember that you are a real Brahmin and my Bhagwat-Bhav-Rupi relation with you is from times immemorial in a very subtle manner". This was a turning point in Bhaiji's life. Bhaiji worshipped Ma as "Adya Shakti". It is on account of Bhaiji's selfless devotion and complete surrender to MA's will, Ma was made available to all of us. Bhaiji's position with Ma can well be compared with that of Hanumanji with Shri Ram. Unfortunately Bhaiji left his mortal coil on return from Kailash Mansarovar yatra, where he embraced sanyas in presence of Ma and Pitajee (Sh. Bhola Nathji—MA's husband) in August 1937 at Almora.

Ma never gave long discourses about religion and culture but through stories, parables and questions put by devotees conveyed the message of divine in the language of devotees itself. Ma always looked and cared for the welfare of her devotees and never forced Her will on anyone to follow a particular path of devotion. But she always said to remember that "Lord's name is the only way to salvation and rest is all painful."

हरि कथा कथा और सब वृक्षा व्यथा .....

Ma knew that Vedanta and Jnana could only be understood by a microscopic minority. The vast majority being only fit for Sankirtan, Bhakti, put utmost emphasis on kirtan and Nam jap. Ma asked children and ladies to do Nam Jap and Kirtan both backbones of culture and religion and that could be guarded and maintained in a better way through their devotion.

Ma through HER innumerable leelas revived the spiritual glory of our ancient past in HER most unusual manner as recorded in our Shastras. Ma through her "KHYALA" (Maha Bhav) used to convey the teachings of Vedas and Shastras, although being divine Herself. In fact Vedas are nothing but fountain head of true knowledge and that knowledge oozed out from her lips in the form of mercy and grace towards the devotees in particular and to whole world in general. She asked the people to follow strictly the rules and regulations as prescribed in their religion and try to be always in tune with God. **For the upliftment of the poor and uneducated Ma revived the ancient system of education (Gurukul shiksha padyati) by opening Vidyapeeths for girls and boys. This was done with the simple and pure motive to build up the character and personality by imbiding principles and value of our ancient culture and make them a devoted citizen of this country.**

Ma arranged performances of yagnas from time to time as prescribed in our shastras to bring home the importance of our spiritual heritage which not only purified the mind and atmosphere but also gave tremendous power for achievement in the spiritual realm. With MA's grace a number of ashrams have been constructed. The first ashram of Ma outside Dacca was constructed at Kishanpur, Dehradun in 1935-36 as per directions given to my father by Bhaiji. MA's fortieth birthday was celebrated in that ashram in May 1936. The main purpose of having ashrams was to provide a proper shelter to Sadhakas to do Sadhana, kirtan, pooja and Anusthans so that real aspirants could advance spiritually and the modern youth could learn about ancient culture and values which with the passage of time have reached its lowest ebb in the present times. Ma also

got established in Naimisharanya an institute for Puranic research for scholars and Sadhakas to enlighten themselves and propagate the message of divine as contained in our Shastras and other holy scriptures.

Ma being herself "Purna-Brahma-Sanatani" did not make any publicity of HER divinehood and always remained obscure. But a number of sadhus and mahatmas who were themselves highly evolved held Ma in high esteem and used to visit her frequently. This proves without any reservation that Ma was all powerful and in fact an embodiment of "ADYA-SHAKTI", as perceived by Bhaji in 1931 when he composed a sacred hymn as per directions of Ma in which he very lucidly described the most important phases of MA's divine Mahabhavas. The hymn is "Jai Hriday Basini, Sudha Sanatani Shri Anandamayee Ma....."

Ma entered Mahasamadhi at Kishanpur ashram, Dehradun in August 1982 (where Pitajee left his mortal coil earlier in 1938) thus fulfilling the dream of Shri Bhiji who had wished to make this particular ashram as the main center of activity for establishing and organizing MA's "Mission of universal brotherhood, peace and love."

I quote from "Matrivani" a message for all. Ma has said. "To a human being the most noble, irreproachable line of conduct should alone be acceptable. It is a matter of great rejoicing if any one strives to mould his life upon this pattern. Any line of behaviour that fails to quicken the divine in man should be eschewed no matter how enticing it might appear, but any that helps to awaken man's inherent divinity must be resolutely adopted even though it be seemingly uninviting. Man's calling is to aspire to the realization of truth, to tread the excellent path that leads to immortality.

I therefore would like to make a fervent appeal to all the devotees of Ma to undergo self introspection and resolve to follow honestly HER teachings and sermons and propagate the same to the masses so that the evils of modern society which have engulfed our country could be eradicated thus making life really meaningful. Jai Ma.

# A Harmonious Presence

Dr. Bithika Mukherjee

The twentieth century has been a crucial one for all nations of the world. Perhaps it can be said that all centuries have witnessed wars and upheavals but never before at the present traumatic rate of acceleration and wide ranging devastations. India has gone through its share of these experiences. The holocaust of the Thirties in Europe can be compared with the massacres of the Hindus in the forties in our country, the turmoil of the "Quit India" movement and its repressive aftermath affected the lives of the people everywhere. Independence for India was not a matter of jubilation but a grim facing up to the reality of divisive forces.

Sri Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta, a well-known devotee of Sri Sri Anandamayee Maa who suffered the tragedy of being uprooted from Dhaka at short notice, writes in his diary:

"Drastic changes were taking place in India. The policy of the British was to divide and rule. The implanted seed of hatred for the Hindus in the Muslims was so nurtured under the leadership of Jinnah, that it had grown into a gigantic tree which threatened to darken the horizons for ever. Man had descended to a level many degrees lower than animal. The terrifying carnage of Calcutta, Bihar, Noakhali made us come to the unhappy conclusion that in the divisive holocaust whatever is distinctive in the tradition of Bharatbarsha would perish."

In point of time we are still too close to the phenomenon of Sri Sri Anandamayee to gauge her influence not only on

the whole of India but beyond her borders as well. From the vantage point of the nineties, however, it becomes clear that Sri Ma's gracious presence during the distressful times of our country was of considerable significance. Like a sure footed gazelle she travelled legibly from one corner of India to the other, meeting the common people, the scholars who were fighting their own battles against a virulent form of intellectual colonization, the political leaders, the Princes and the Sadhu-Samaj of our country. She did not assume the role of a guru or even a Teacher of spiritual knowledge. She was more like the mirror-image of one's innermost self (antaryamin) glimpsed imperfectly but recognized immediately as such. For thousands she was a beacon light in an atmosphere of darkness. She gave direction to the keepers of our tradition when they stood at the crossroads of modernity and the ancient heritage.

Shree Ma's impact on our Sadhu-samaj was extraordinary. She who was not learned, did not belong to any sampradaya, did not have a Guru or disciples was immediately recognized as the quintessence of the spirit of the upanisadic tradition. Their unanimous acknowledgement of her central position of authority in their midst cannot be over emphasized. Every country has its own special heritage which needs to be guarded and preserved and its renewal celebrated from time to time. The message of the Vedic tradition could be summarized in the Sloka.

“uttisthata jagrata prapya

Varam nibhodhata

Ksurasya dhara nisita duratyaya

Durgam pathastak kavayob vadanti”

Our modern age is threaded through and through with visions of utopia on earth. Perhaps it is a reaction from surviving two world wars in quick succession and the constant threat of a third nuclear war. When we reflect on Sri Ma's constant reiterations of her Vani "hari kathai Katha aar sab vriha, vyatha" and its many variations, we seem to glimpse a power which can stop an avalanche, divert a torrent or dissipate a cyclone. **Shree Ma talked untiringly of dispassion (vairagya) but gave an entirely new direction to the ancient ideal of renunciation. She herself did not renounce anything or anybody. Her endorsement of her own family, which in time expanded in ever widening circles to embrace the whole of humanity, indeed knew no horizons.** She lived a life of full involvement with all matters which concerns human beings. Her compassion for the suffering, her understanding of every scale of unhappiness and anxiety, her sympathy for those who were unlucky in life, made her the true Friend, she said she belonged to everyone who came within the magic orbit of her presence. She was human with humanity and yet beyond its parameters of understanding. Unless it was her **kheyala** not the most assured of scholars could penetrate the veil of her radiant but enigmatic smile which bewitched all visitors so lightly and effortlessly she held together to seeming paradox of affirmation and denial, joyousness and dispassion. The Bliss of self-enlightenment which has been extolled in our tradition was made a reality by life of Sree Ma as the inheritance to be acquired by man here and now in this life.

She made it available for all mankind because she did not distinguish between caste, creed and sex or country. I remember a conversation with an interlocutor for Sree Ma who was lamenting the fact that "all that is divisive and

disquieting is being imported by us, and all that is unitive and beneficial is being taken away by them!" Sri Ma smiled and said, "Who do you call they? Are they" not also 'us'?"

Sree Ma spoke always of the 'one only'. We realized in time that she spoke no words of censor or condemnation or rejection. In late years she had occasion to visit a village in East Pakistan and here she was welcomed and received as a well beloved Friend as anywhere else. Sree Ma during her sojourn on our hallowed land healed many wounds, restored flagging spirit and brought about a renewal of faith in our destiny by just being herself- a self evident personification of all that is promised by the scriptures of all religions. The horizons of Bharatvarsa were again clear to enable all to see or dream of the vision of a comingling of the dimensions of immanence and transcendence. In Sree Ma we see the unmanifest becoming manifest, a perfection which is an ever-abiding source of joy for all pilgrims on the path of Truth. To engage in the quest for Truth is all that our tradition is about. Sri Ma, in this modern age of distracting perspectives, held aloft the lamp of inwardization so that man may find himself on the path towards fulfillment.

# Shree Shree Ma's contribution to the cultural and Spiritual heritage of India for the benefit of mankind.

Justice Amitava Banerji

Ma Anandamayee's contribution to the social and spiritual world is immeasurable. Any effort to encapsulate them is not likely to succeed. Ma's contribution is fathomless but all pervading. Ma was everywhere and lo, Ma is everywhere. Ma was in Bhaktas mind, thought and conscience. Ma was omnipresent, Ma is omnissien. Ma responds to the call of the Bhakta. I have personal experience in this regard. I will narrate an incident that took place in November 1994.

We were going to Kankhal by car, to attend the 'Sanyam Saptah'. We had reached Bijnor, some 700 km from Allahabad and were on our way to Kankhal. About 40 km from Hardwar, we saw a crowd assembled on the road and even from some 400 yards away, it appeared that an accident had taken place. Men with lathis were blocking the road. Vehicles coming from the Hardwar side were asked to leave the road and take the roadside land. The nearer we got to the site of the accident we saw belligerent mood of those wielding lathis. We could have turned back, taken some other road but that would mean a detour of over a hundred kilometers and perhaps another three hour. It was already past four in the afternoon. It was a semi-jungle type of area. There were not many villages and the nearest urban area was Haridwar. I could think of nothing else, so I uttered a prayer to Ma. **'Ma Raksha Karo (Ma save us)** before the car was stopped we saw a child, blood still oozing from his body, and where we stopped, there was blood all over the place. They shouted 'roko' (stop). Rather harshly. We stopped.

I asked them, 'Kahiyea' (speak). They had surrounded the car. Some of their lathis were being kept on the car. My wife and my friend's wife lowered the glass of their door and tried to see the dead child. Many pairs of eyes looked at us, our luggage and one of them, a Youngman of 20 plus, said "ladies would be put to difficulty - let them go". I do not know what transpired in their mind, but none protested and we were allowed to proceed. Some Super Power made them all think alike and let us move forward. Unbelievable it was, but I was sure that Ma was there, and Ma saved us that day. When I narrated this event later that day in Haridwar, I was told anything could have happened, for the people in such cases take law in their hands and that we had a very good fortune to escape their wrath. I knew in my heart of hearts that but for Ma's blessings we could not have got out of the situation.

Ruminating over our good fortune, I noticed that there was change of tone of the leader of the Mob in asking us to proceed. In a grim situation like the above this could only be due to some unknown and unseen power that saved us that day. That power had moulded their thinking and action. I for one never had an inkling of doubt that it was Ma's kripa, ashirwad, affection that was there. Although we do not see Ma's physical self but I see that all the time in mind. I recall the various moments in Ma's presence and rejoice that Ma is there.

Ma Anandamayee is the bliss of the Upanishads personified. **A section of contemporary Indians have claimed that Ma Anandamayee is one of the sages described in the Upanishads. Those who have come in her contact have their own view - and all agree that she was a 'mystic sage'.**

**Shri Shyamananda Banerji** in a book titled, 'A mystic sage' writes: "in fact, the Upanishad is regarded as the magnum matrix in Indian life and thought. The Upanishad means inner knowledge, that secret or esoteric knowledge which is means to the realization of the Ultimate".

Schopenhauer's eulogy reads' "In the world, there is no study so beneficial, so elevating as the study of the Upanishads: it has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."

I would quote one more passage from Shri Shyamananda Banerji's book, which will touch a core subject of the spirituality. He writes: "The Upanishads say that **Truth is the final goal and home of man.** It is absolute, and it does not change with the flux of time. **In fact, Truth of Upanishads is Brahman himself, and the light of this Truth is the end of this journey.** It is this eternal Truth which has been seeking expression through the centuries, and all our conflicts with life and the world. **In the language of the Vedas Truth is 'Yaj Jnatva na param janam'** ie, 'it is that which being known, there is nothing else required to be known'.

The knowledge of Brahman the blissful which shines forth is perceived by the wise. 'He is the light of light'. 'His radiance illumines the entire world.'

A question arises at this stage: can a human being attain such a state? Upanishad's reply is, '**it is knowable' and by knowing Him everything is known.**' This cannot be achieved by mere learning. It can be known by being one with it. A person has to strive, struggle to achieve a union

with Him. The path is a narrow one—and it involves austerity, conquest of the self, righteous action, and complete subjugation of lower senses.

**Ma Anandamayee is completely devoid of selfhood, she finds herself in stages of perfect union with the featureless Absolute. She is in stages of union with God and God is in her.** That is the impression one carries after having seen her and known her for sometime. The way she spoke, the contents thereof, the direction of her talk, the reference to her physical self as 'this body' is very significant. I for one felt, that she was no ordinary mortal ; she had attained illumined consciousness and for ordinary mortals the physical resemblance' to that what is stated to be in the Upanishads as 'Brahman'. There may be some who may not agree with me, but I venture to say that I have and unshaken belief in what I say above.

You may recall one of her savings in Varanasi, **'I am what I was, and shall remain, now and for evermore'**. Very authoritative indeed. Our heads bow at her above utterance. Coming from her lips the above words spell a magic wand to galvanize our thoughts, rekindle our consciousness (Chetna), and to seek the knowledge that eludes us. **Ma Anandamayee, is not a mere mortal. She had appeared with a physical body to guide the ordinary house holder – and steer him or her to path of austerity, selflessness, abjuration of lower senses and tread on a path of righteousness. She used to remind us mortals that the Lord (Narayana) was there in the heart of everyone.** For this everyone must treat everyone with respect and dignity. Of course, some did not believe in this – questioned the wisdom of respecting another with a sordid record of activities. The action of such a man was liable to

be condemned no doubt, but he/she could also change his/her activities. And Shree Shree Ma was often seen addressing such persons too. There was a mission and zeal in this regard. Since she was beyond the usual way of recording one's approval or disapproval, she would spread her benevolence and affection in order to change the modus operandi of such a person and induce him to think and act in a manner which would have the approbation of all concerned. We saw such an aura of her power of love, of understanding, her benevolence and above all of her righteousness, the ineffaceable smile summed her spirit – the spirit of her all pervading protection and consideration for such a person. Almost always such a person changed his attitude, and sometime even after the very first meeting. This was Ma Anandamayee's mission but not the only one. Her '**anand-swaryo**' murti was non-parallel. This was the manifestation of the 'Brahman'.

Ma Anandamayee, the name itself, gives me sheer delight, conjures up a picture of an immaculate personality, an apostle of love and piety, of kindness and compassion, whose abiding faith and trust in Truth, poured nectar of sweet blessings and created a bliss for those who were present there. I have nothing but deep faith and belief that Ma is omnipresent, omniscient and responds to a call full of ardour from any of her devotee. I have noticed this more than once. I have had the good fortune to come in her presence from 1955, at the house of Late Shri Gopal Swarupji Pathak, the eminent legal luminary of India and subsequently Vice President of India. I could feel the presence of an ethereal form, and felt that her eyes had seen everything. This feeling made an immense impact on me. There are some aspects which cannot be described adequately – an ineffable quality, which made her a mystic.

I wish to refer to a passage in Hindi, which seeks to express a view which I heartily share. It is part of an article written for the "Ananda – Sansmriti", published from Allahabad, in 1995. The author of the article is an erudite scholar of Sanskrit, and one of U.P. States redoubtable civil servant, Dr. S D Ojha:

### मातृतत्त्व और आनन्दमयी माँ

कुछ दिन पूर्व जब हमारे बड़ेय भाई न्यायमूर्ति श्री अमिताभ वनजी एवं उनकी सहघर्मिणी मातृस्वरूपा पूज्या भाभी जी ने मुझसे यह कहा कि माँ आनन्दमयी के जन्म शतवार्षिकी समारोह के सुअबसर पर उनके भक्त शिष्यों द्वारा एक स्मारक ग्रन्थ का प्रकाशन हो रहा है, अतएव मैं भी माँ से सम्बद्ध अपने संस्मरण दूँ, तो मेरी प्रसन्नता की सीमा न रही। मुझ जैसे स्वार्थी, अकिञ्चन, माँ के याचक को जो यह गौरव दिया गया है, उसमें माँ की ही अहैतुकी कृपा और सटोरणा कारणभूत है, किन्तु पुत्र कुपुत्र हो सकता है, परन्तु माता कभी कुमाता नहीं हो सकती की उक्ति ने ही मुझे प्रेरणा प्रदान की है कि इस शुभावसर पर अपने श्रद्धाप्रसून माँके महिमामण्डित चरणाकिन्दों में अर्पित करूँ। अपार करुणा, अगाध स्नेह और अमित आनन्द देने वाली माँ का पुण्यदायी दर्शन मुझे न्यायमूर्ति श्री अमिताभ वनजी को तेजबहादुर सपू मार्ग, इलाहाबाद स्थित भवन के प्राङ्गण में हुआ था। उसके बाद भी दो-तीन बार हरिद्वार में उनके चरणों का साक्षात्कार हुआ था तथा उनके हरिद्वार, देहरादुन एवं वाराणसी स्थित आश्रमों में जाकर उनके चित्रों और झांकियों तथा पुण्य स्मृतियों के दर्शन तो बारम्बार मिले। हर बार यही लगा की माँ साक्षात विराजमान हैं। उनकी पुण्य प्रदा गोद में सभी भक्तगण आश्रित होकर बैठे हैं और उन सभी पर माँ के अमोघ अभयहस्त की छाया है। माँ का क्या बरदान गुणगान करूँ। उसका तो कोई प्रतिरूप संसार में है ही नहीं। माँ आनन्दमयी तो बस माँ आनन्दमयी की तरह है। यह अनन्वय अलङ्कार है। जब उपमान उपमेय बन जाय और उपमेय उपमा बन जाय तो अनन्वय अलङ्कार होता है। माँ तो बस माँ थीं, और हैं। अगर उनके नाम के साथ कोई विशेषण जोड़ा जा सकता है तो बस एक आनन्दमयी का। वह अन्तिम विश्रान्ति का एकमात्र स्थान है जहाँ-पीछे, ऊपर-नीचे, आसपास आनन्द ही आनन्द का सागर लहरा रहा है। माँ जब बोलती थी तो गुड़ गे गुड़ तत्त्व सरलतम भाषा में अपने आप संमझ में आ जाते थे। बोलते बोलते जब वह मौन होकर शुन्य में निहारती थीं तो उनका

समुचा मुखमण्डल जैसे मुखरित हो उठता था। उनकी आँखों की तरलता में क्षमा, करुणा और स्नेह की निर्झरिणी प्रवाहित होती थी। उसके कोटि कोटि पुण्य जाग उठते थे जिस पर वह करुणाभरी दृष्टि डाल देती थीं।

वैसे दर्शनार्थी भक्त की यह भ्रान्ति थी कि मैं उसे नहीं, बल्कि किसी और को देख रही हूँ। वास्तव में वह सामने बैठे सभी भक्तों पर समान दृष्टि डालती थीं। उनकी कृपा दृष्टि से कोई भी वंचित नहीं रह सकता था। कितने ही प्रश्नों के उत्तर मा का मात्र सान्निध्य प्रदान कर देता था। उनकी ममतामयी मुसकान से दैहिक, दैविक तथा भौतिक ताप जैसे घुलघुल कर बहने लगते थे। सन्तप्त भक्त को परम शान्ति का, अनुभव होने लगता था। इसी प्रकार का अनुभव भक्त को उस समय भी हो जाता था जिस समय माँ से दूर रह कर वह माँ का स्मरण-वन्दन करता था। यह अनुभूति भक्तों की निजी सम्पत्ति है, जिसे केवल मन ही मन महसूस किया जा सकता है, उसका वर्णन नहीं किया जा सकता।

There was sociological aspect which moulded the thinking of Ma's Bhaktas. A feeling went round that Ma's blessings protected the devotee from all evils but then, one had to maintain purity of thought, action and in himself or herself in a manner that was fair and transparent. While in her presence, one had to control his or her mind, for Ma had power to notice them. Ma would know the feelings and desires of such a person instantly. Hence it was necessary that the devotee or any other visitor had to change his views and attitudes and that was a gain for the society.

Hundreds came to have Ma's darshan, wherever she went. Hundreds came to meet her and seek her blessings ; some came to seek advice in their problems. All these persons came with a hope, and Ma met them, discussed their problems, gave advice and solace wherever necessary. A few simple words of advice and the person went back happy and overwhelmed with her love. They spread the word that Ma was alive to human problems and gave words of advice that worked like balm. In other words they went back satisfied

and happy. If philosophers say that 'happiness is an attitude of mind', Ma infused some of her attributes in this respect, one may say 'in the mind-set' of those persons and that worked like a miracle. The spirit of happiness prevailed. And that was something that one could not get easily or everywhere.

Ma's voice was soothing and affectionate. It was persuasive. It was confidence creative. Her words would get engraved in the mind of the devotee, and the listener. They formed an instant rapport with the listener and the latter understood that the words so uttered were in his interest. This worked as her as such. They felt they were very close to her, and spoke to her in confidence. And a few words from Ma, caused complete transformation. 'Ma was bliss herself' was the refrain one heard everywhere.

'Ma was mother to everyone' was another view where Ma went. The indelible impression left behind was she was mother. Ma to everyone. The universal Ma,. Ma the affectionate and, then, Anandamayee Ma. This feeling did wonders to the populace. Her large following all over the country whether they understood Ma's language or not. But Ma, ie, Mother always understands the child's problems and wants. And that means kindness, compassion and benevolence. Ma had them in abundance and distributed them to all those who sought them.

**Ma was 'matri-sakti', the power which we find in our scriptures, Matri-sakti was more powerful than anything else. In this country 'mother's position' has always been on a high pedestal. She had been assigned a superior position. A benign mother, a kind-hearted, affectionate mother, a sincere well wisher is our**

**concept of mother. Mother is also the first teacher of the child. Similarly, Ma was teacher to her devotees.** This was another aspect of Ma's activities. Removing traces of want and educating the minds with fair and clear thinking was Ma's great contribution to the society.

Ma's appearance is all well chronicled. It needs no repetition. But how did Ma get cosmic powers ? Ma did not get it by any penance or learning. Ma had it all the time; it became manifest gradually.

I recall two passages from Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and the Ram Charith Manas, expressing more or less the same view. I quote them here.

Gita Chapter IV shlokas 7 & 8

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।  
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥  
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।  
धर्मसंस्थापनायै संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

And a Chaupai from Balkanda, Stanza 121, where Sant Tulsidas penned these lines.

जब जब होई धरम के हादी ।  
बाढ़हिं असुर अधम अभिमानी ॥  
तब तब प्रभु घरि बिबिध सरीरा ।  
हरहिं कृपानिधि सज्जन पीरा ॥

**These two scriptures state more or less the same view but in different languages eg. Sankrit and Avadhi Hindi.** Arjuna enquires how is it possible for him

to reveal doctrine that was prevalent at the beginning of the creation when he was born in the present age. Lord Krishna replied that he frequently appeared in the world in material garb whenever it was necessary particularly when wicked people thrived and harrassed virtuous people, when good and noble customs and traditions were trampled under foot and were replaced by evil and mischievous customs, he appeared to destroy the wicked and eradicate the evil customs and to restore good traditions and to help virtuous people.

Sant Tulsidass says the same thing, perhaps in a manner, to which we are accustomed. Nevertheless, Ma Anandamayee also appears in the same way. Ma had a human form no doubt but she was different and that was much too evident. The physical frame was no different but the mental frame, the thought, the activities and the consciousness was entirely different. She was born with indications of greatness, with qualities that saints even did not possess. She was omniscient and omnipresent, who did not have to learn anything. Ma was here on earth, to reform and mend the ways of the wayward, even evil thinking persons and attract good men and women to think of God, do some introspection show good behaviour to others. Ma had indeed different ways for different people but her affection was the same for all. It was overpowering and all pervading.

Ma did not write any book on her advices. It was unnecessary. Ma's vanis are printed by those who mattered—those who were with her and heard her. Numerous are her vani and a perusal of the same makes life sublime. A whole new world is laid bare, a new vision, in short there is an awakening. Swami Virajananda Maharaj, may be quoted,

in regard to Ma's clarion call for abiding to truth. He says **Ma would caution : What proves to be false and ephemeral, and one has to transcend the periphery of its jurisdiction and establish himself in 'Satya', by taking resort to 'Satya' being devoted to Satya', and abiding in the sole determination to observe 'Satya', only - where this stage is reached or attained, then only the path to vivek and 'vairagya would unfold'. Ma used to say, he wrote, 'Whatever you do, do it perfectly, bringing out the inner beauty and significance of the work in hand'. Ma's view was that the habit inculcated to do any work in perfection (Purna) would bring about an identification with perfection.**

Numerous are the incidents, which devotees have noticed, some have written about them, some have spoken about them, some have experienced them. Ma's devotees have sometime or the other noticed them. I too had on several occasions, opportunity to notice her supernatural powers. I need not recount them but I am convinced that ordinary mortals do not have such powers. Ma was supreme. There was no one like Ma during my lifetime. **The sadhu samaj accepted her as the foremost Sant in the country. Param Acharyas, Maha Mandleshwars, Shankaracharyas acceded her the prime position, the highest asan for her. Ma's thoughts, vanis actions all placed her ahead of all others, as she represented 'pure consciousness', and one who was part of 'brahman', Ma was a rare phenomenon that strode this earth as a colossus, the like of which was not seen in this century at least. Her contribution to the spiritual and social heritage of India was unfathomable and undoubtedly profound.**

I conclude here by uttering 'JAI MA', the two words which spells a thrill for the person who hears them. The listener begins to think of Her joyous, blissful form, Her enduring smile!

# Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma's Contribution to the Spiritual Heritage of India

Prof. Debipada Bhattacharya

Science investigates, with admirable thoroughness and precision, the world of phenomenon where everything moves and changes; there is nothing that is fixed and stable. The business of the men of science is not, however, merely to observe those changes and motions but to explain why they occur; ; and this they do by discovering general 'laws'— the greater the degree of generality, the better. Hence the importance of mathematics as an instrument in Physics and Astronomy. It is here, namely, in its attempt to arrive at general laws governing natural phenomena that science is getting closer and closer to Philosophy - to metaphysics, to be more precise.

The scientific process of formulating "laws" which are more and more general and comprehensive is essentially progressive in character ; it is a progressive approximation to universally valid "truths" which remain an elusive, ultimately unattainable ideal. In science, therefore, there is no such things as "truth" with a capital "T; it is not Truth, but truths, plural in number and relative in character. Generally, it's method is, as I have just remarked, essentially progressive in nature.

New progress is a concept of utmost importance in our present context. For it is almost inextricably bound up with the central, modern concept of "evolution". Indeed "progress" is inconceivable without "evolution", so that if a man believes in progress he must *ipso facto* believe in evolution. My central

contention is that the concept of evolution alongwith its correlative progress, however, fascinating to the modern mind - no matter whether it is East or West - is totally alien to the Indian Weltanschavung (world-view). "The world is getting better and better everyday, every year and every century, we human beings are getting to know more and more about ourselves and the universe around us and though the horizon is ever receding, human knowledge is steadily expanding and will continue to do so in future endlessly" - all this it may sound beautiful, and immensely thrilling to many ears, including those of most of us, Indians; all this may very well be, but it is most certainly not the ancient Indian Weltanschavung. This is a point that has to be carefully and constantly kept in mind if we really want to understand how and in what sense the great saints and mystics of later times, down to our own, came to contribute to the ancient immemorial spiritual tradition of India.

The Indian tradition of spiritual philosophy fully admits "progress" in the case of Sadhaka or Yogi ( a spiritual aspirant) where spiritual progress or advance is not a mere concept but a palpable fact. A question nevertheless arises even here ; it is this : "Is this spiritual progress endless, so that in every successive age a Sadhaka of outstanding eminence attains in his spiritual ascent a new height, a new peak, so to speak, on a higher altitude, setting a new record? The answer, from the Indian point of view, a clear and emphatic 'No'. Spiritual development, on this view is certainly there, and so is progress- inevitably. But that does not mean that will go on and on and on, with the spiritual horizon ever-receding, as mysteriously elusive as a mirage. For the Sadhaka in the Indian spiritual tradition has a clearly defined goal before him, not set by himself but by his Guru, who on his part, has inherited this vision of the final

goal of human existence from his Guru and so goes up this uninterrupted line of ascent that reaches back finally to a great seer (rishi) of old.

This tradition - parampara - goes back, to the great rishis of old - its ultimate source, and these great rishis, these illumined souls of ancient times have declared (in our shastras) that the spiritual journey of Man, though interminably long and intensely arduous, has an end a definite aim precisely because there is an ultimate Reality behind phenomena. Regarding the nature of this ultimate reality the Upanishads (Vedanta), which, according to Indian spiritual tradition are the supreme authority as the subject namely, **Brahmavidya, tell us that it (Brahman or Atman) is - existence (Sat) - Consciousness (Cit) - Bliss (Ananda). He is called "Sat" in The Rigveda and the Chandogya Upanishad, for He also exists : and so, as there is nothing else. He is described in the Upanishad as One without a second - "ekamevadvitiam". This Sat Brahman as pure existence - is utterly beyond human mind and human speech. This is the reason why Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma frequently refers to it as simply. : "That" though the term which she most often uses in referring to Brahman as the absolute is - "one"). All that can be said in words regarding the nature, essential nature (Svarupa) of this Sat is that it is a pure experience (cit) of ineffable, infinite bliss (rasa or ananda)**

Readers may know that the name of Shree Shree Anandamayee Maa is being mentioned here for the first time in the strange context of a grave discussion on the nature of ultimate reality - a subject which must be *terra-incognita* for a woman who had never had any formal education even at the primary level. And yet, though it may sound incredible,

that this almost illiterate woman from a far away village of (the then) East Bengal refers, every now and then, in replying to questions to the ultimate Reality (the Divine Ground of all Existence, – in the words of Aldous Huxley) ; and this she does by using, on most occasions, the word “One” or simply “That” and in doing so, she utters unwittingly, perhaps the last word of Vedanta.

No doubt, she occasionally mentions God - Ishwara or Bhagavan in referring to the Supreme : more frequently, it is the Vedantic expression for ultimate Reality – “Brahman”. This, indeed, is somewhat surprising ; for one would naturally have expected is Her repeated mention of the Self, Atman (atma) and her central emphasis on self-realisation as the final goal of Man. How central this concept of the **Atman** and **Atmajnana** (Self-realisation) is in her teaching. I shall try to illustrate by quoting a few passages taken almost at random from a remarkable book by an intensely earnest and astonishingly perceptive German author who, a teacher at a school in Varanasi, chose to remain anonymous. The book has a beautiful title “As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance”.

“We must reach that state where we know the One alone and everything as His forms. There is only One \_ Brahman - without - a - second”. (ibid P.89).

“When the Self has been realised, when one has become absorbed in the Bliss of the Self, then there is no more question of work, of experience, or of sleep, because there is only ONE!” (ibid P.100)

“..... Finding your Self, discovering who you really are means to find God, for there is nothing outside of Him” (ibid P. 129)

"To find Him means to find Oneself and to find Oneself means to find Him". (ibid 133)

"Find the One everywhere and in everything and there will be an end of pain and suffering." (ibid P. 158)

**The central emphasis on the Self and Self realisation that we find in Her utterances and there are hundreds of others of a similar nature recorded in the 17 volumes monumental and most authentic. Diary of Gurupriya Devi - is profoundly characteristic of the speaker. It is also, as I have said, surprising and unexpected.** For one who knows her family background, her upbringing, her education or rather lack of education and her whole course of life would not expect her to speak in such language ; he would expect her, very naturally, to speak the language of "bhakti", of love and devotion towards the Divine and thus she would be expected to recommend to all who came to her : as a matter of fact this is exactly what we do find : **for whatever she went there would usually begin, soon after her arrival, choral chanting of divine names - nama - Samkirtana - in which she herself would sometimes participate ; and this name - samkirtana, followed sometimes by devotional songs would often go on for hours.**

**Then the scene changes : conversation starts, with all sorts of questions, being asked by all sorts of people, ranging from simple, uneducated but devout women to cultivated and highly educated persons including quite a few foreigners. When the interlocuter is sincere and earnest (for otherwise, she gave the right answer, he (or she) won't understand, being not yet ripe for it) the answer comes : and the answer is always astonishingly, incredibly**

**prompt, and though sometimes it may sound somewhat paradoxical and enigmatic, owing to our failure in understanding, it is rightly followed, admirably clear and precise.**

From the passages quoted earlier, one thing emerges clearly which is of the utmost importance in any study of Shree Shree Maa : it is this : **In every utterance of hers**, especially, when she is replying to questions from earnest spiritual seekers, there is almost always a reference to some "tatva." This important Sanskrit word is difficult to render in English or any other European language. In English it may be rendered, roughly and according to the context, as "reality", "the true or real nature." the "true" principle or the "essence" of something.

**Tattva is one of the key concepts of Indian philosophy - especially the Samkhya Philosophy ;** it is also central, as we have just noted in the utterances of Shree Shree Ma. This may sound strange, for philosophy is hardly the thing one would even remotely associate with Ma- for obvious reasons. And yet the fact remains, that she hardly ever says any thing, in replying to question, that does not end up in a tattva. And this is not all ; **for what is even more remarkable is that tattva often, surprisingly turns out of the "parama tatva"- ultimate Reality.** It is to this "parama tattva" that she would refer by her favourite word, "**the One**", often using another word along with it, "**akhanda**" signifying "undivided whole" - a word which clearly points to **complete non-dualism "purna advaita"**. Together, they - eka and akhanda - reminds one of the favour "**ekamevaditiam**" (one without a second) of the Chandogya Upanishad.

**And the most remarkable, the most amazing thing about Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma, to my mind, is the way in which almost every statement She makes, no matter what the statement is about, irresistibly leads up to and ends in the "One", - the ultimate Reality. To those who are sufficiently familiar with her ways and her manner of speaking this way sound strange, even "absurd". It is not so. It is not so because she demonstrates, with a logic that is compelling and totally convincing, that as there is nothing else in the Universe but the Om, nothing can be really explained and rendered fully intelligible without a reference to Him.**

Hence all roads lead to Rome. Bringing the distinction nearer home. Let us call it Delhi. Starting from Howrah, we shall pass through a number of big stations *en route* Patna, Moghalsarai. Allahabad, Kanpur and so on, each station signifying (metaphorically) higher and higher stages in our spiritual progress. **But we must not stop at any of them, but fix our minds steadfastly, unwaveringly on our final destination - Delhi which stands for Brahman - knowledge or self realisation. To Shree Shree Ma, as we have seen, they mean the same thing, which is entirely in accordance with the spiritual tradition of India. "This body speaks of the Supreme Quest." She once remarked.**

This last statement is profoundly true ; and it is also profoundly characteristic of the speaker for whom this "Supreme Quest" is all that ultimately matters, all that give value and meaning to human life. This is the supreme message of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma to mankind. It is not something new ; there cannot be anything new that can be added or "contributed" to the spiritual heritage of India,

for everything is there. There are only differences in emphasis among comparatively modern saints and sages of India - difference that are either to individual temperaments or needs of the times, or both.

Creation means diversity. Sameness and uniformity characterise according to Samkhya Philosophy, the state of "avyakta" (unmanifest) or "prakriti" (Primordial Nature), which proceeds and follows creation). Hence, no two persons are exactly alike; even if they are both highly advanced spiritually, there must be differences - even if they are spiritually on the same level, there will be differences - in nature and temperament, in their language and modes of expression. Their realisation, however, will be the same; here, there can not be any real difference, any contraction. It is the same with those who have attained the highest realisation which is self-realisation or Brahman-knowledge (the number of such fully illumined, liberated souls, it should be noted, is exceedingly small in all ages, even in India). Only language, which essentially deals with the world of duality (dvaita) when confronted with the task of describing the ultimate Reality almost breaks down under the strain; it cracks and bursts, so to speak, in trying to express the utterly ineffable. This is why even Shree Shree Ma, who, (despite her semi-illiteracy), has such a splendid command of language, can hardly find words to describe the Reality: She calls it the "One" or simply - "That" and stops at that. And so while **speaking to those who came to see and listen to her, She would concentrate on the means of getting at the One, and the means that she frequently and characteristically, recommended was to bring the Divine mentally closer and closer to us, so that finally He is realised as our very self (atma). Thus, She combines harmoniously and beautifully Sankhya and**

**Vedanta, and by doing so, brings us right in the midst of the perennial and central stream of the Indian spiritual tradition.**

Closely linked with the central emphasis there is another thing which must be mentioned here, for it has profound importance and relevance for all of us in our day-to-day life ; it is this ; **Supremely indifferent to everything that is transitory and mundane**, Shree Shree Ma at the same time intensely alert and not infrequently, keenly attentive, to little details that might have seemed trivial to most of us, through a series of incidents, faithfully and vividly recorded by Gurupriya Devi in her invaluable Diary. Shree Shree Ma has opened our eyes to the tremendous. Truth that nothing in this universe is accidental or fortuitous, that every event has a cause and a consequence, that things which seem, at first sight, insignificant and trivial have a meaning. Our sense of the triviality of the objects around us and of fortuitousness and meaninglessness, things that happen to us and to others is the result of ignorance. Every object, every event, every action is charged with meaning because the One is present everywhere, because it is the "One" who has become the "Many" ; because there is nothing else.

It would not be entirely fanciful to think, as I do, that the smile that lit up her face so often while she talked, was due partly to the fact that She saw things that we do not, I say "partly", because it (her smile) expressed much more than a touch of mild amusement of our ignorance : it expressed deep tenderness and compassion ; above all love and this tender concern and loving kindness that flowed out from her in such divine abundance, was extended not only to us, Indians, but also, and equally, to foreigners from many countries especially from the West, who visited her. They came in large

numbers and with great expectations, and their expectations were never disappointed. Indeed, what they received often far exceeded their expectations, that when they return and sometimes lingering here longer than they had originally planned, their whole schedule being somewhat upset by the irresistible attraction they felt towards the Mother - with their modes of thought and feeling, even their ways of life changed in various degrees. This is not surprising at all, for **Anandamayee Maa is not for us alone. She is for the whole of mankind. This again, is in entire consonance with the spiritual heritage of India; for it is the common heritage of mankind, though it happened to originate in this ancient land of ours, sanctified by the presence of the great rishis of old who bequeathed to the world an imperishable treasure - Brahmavidya, the full revelation of the nature of Reality, the spiritual Reality behind phenomena.**

# Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma: God's gift to Mankind

Dr. Indu Tikekar

This century has been eulogized as unique in widening the horizons of Science and Technology. The patrons of science cherished the dream of happy, prosperous, healthy and peace loving homo-sapiens on earth. And the possibility of such a progressive human world appeared quite evident when Man walked on Moon, climbed the Everest and tried to play equally with heredity and environment. The world of senses, the gross universe of five elements, has been the main dominating factor in human psyche throughout this century. And yet as we are fast approaching the end of this last decade, the heavenly dream of peace and happiness for individual and society, is crumbling down. Not only that destructive wars and paralyzing infighting have blackened the victories of this century, surging doubt is engulfing serious thinking humanity as to whether there will be enough healthy food, unpolluted drinking water or even clean oxygen to breathe on earth in the coming century. Naturally a pertinent question is raised : What has gone wrong? Why has the human world been led astray? Is progress real or merely an illusion?

It has been India's privilege and role, since ancient ages, to guide humanity when grave problems crop up. **India is rightly called "The God-intoxicated Country". Swami Vivekananda had pointed out that every country has her own God-given mission, and India's mission is to provide spiritual guidance to humanity. Time and again, the unseen, yet all power full and all-pervading Reality—which is called Ashraya—the final resort by**

**Srimad Bhagwata**—peeps in human affairs, through some seers, saints or Avatars, to create the awareness of defects, wrong doings and short comings of the passing age, and prompts individuals and groups to choose the correct way out of the calamitous situation. Today the whole human world has reached a turning point. And we Indian's believe that the path is already shown by great spiritual leaders in this very century. **Shree Shree Ma Ananadamayeeji is a special expression of Divinity in human form guiding us out of the present impossible blockade.**

**Shree Shree Ma has been for us a personified expression of India's ancient wisdom, a living symbol of oneness of life and a unique synthesis of all the paths, Yoga, Devotion, Action blended into a deep understanding of the phenomenon of life, leading towards the wholeness of spiritual realization.** Not that She was the only moving figure in the spiritual arena of the past and present century in India or even in Bengal, when political slavery weighed heavily on Indian minds. May be to help India's struggle for political independence and enrich the cultural renaissance, a host of remarkable spiritual guides like Ramakrishna Paramanhasa, Sharadamani Ma, Devendranath Thakur, Keshavchandra Sen, Rammohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda and lastly Yogi Shree Aurobindo were born in Bengal alone, not to mention many other like Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mahatma Gandhi, Rishi Dayanand and others from all over India. They all emphasized the spiritual glory of India's past, awakened the sleeping majority to accomplish the herculian task of freeing the nation from the clutches of inner and overt slavery. In the whole world, India could demonstrate that the will to conquer through inner determination and moral strength, from spiritual awareness, can work wonders.

**And yet, Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee's Avirbhava (Advent) human form—was an outstanding phenomenon, simply because of the spontaneity and simplicity with which She stepped out into the gatherings of Pandits and larger Indian society from a traditional Hindu Brahmin family of Bengal where the face of young married girl is covered while facing elders. In many ways, She was a social revolutionary, easily and unconsciously setting aside many barricades. Her spiritual status commanded such a respect and honour that none could dare utter a word against her pure, spontaneous and yet non-traditional behaviour. Her courage came to her without any effort, quite like her spiritual sadhna itself which was play to her. Her love and care for all, her consideration and respect for elderly ones, her sense of duty as a polite, hard-working house-wife and afterwards the responsibility of a Spiritual Guru of thousands of seekers not only from India but from many other countries as well, everything came to her without any struggle, quite in the fashion of the beautiful petals of a pure and fragrant jasmine flower opening one by one to the joy of the spiritual seekers.**

**Her inner joy was contagious, so much so, that leaving back her parents' given name-Nirmala, She was called Anandamayee—Joy as ever present beatitude pervading not only her person but the very atmosphere around her. No wonder that every where She was welcomed with eagerness. When honey is ready, bees need no invitation. Even at the time of birth, She had no business to cry, as normally all new-born babies do without exception. When asked how and why such a wonderous thing happened, She amusedly told, 'How could I cry, when I could see from our window the beauty of the lush green trees, waving joyously, out in the courtyard?' She could even**

recollect the name of an elderly person who visited their home on the 13<sup>th</sup> day after her birth, when mother could not remember it. That She was a very special embodiment of Life as divinity could be gathered from the one occasion when **She was chosen at the age of five, for kumari puja** the worship of a very young girl—as a symbol of Goddess herself.

No lust, not a tinge of worldliness, could touch her all her life, and She could only be immersed in **Mahabhava** all the time, a spiritually advanced stage when the uplifted all pervading consciousness of the oneness of life alone dominates. **Such a non-dual awareness is seen only in mature, realized and rare souls like Radha of the Dwapar Juga—Knowing Pandits say. Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj is himself a realized soul and a vastly learned personality—declared Shree Shree Ma as a very rare example of Spiritual Guru. It seems that Shree Shree Ma equals herself with the Rigvedic seer Vagambhruni whose spontaneous utterances of the Advaitic realization are included in the famous tenth Mandala of Rigveda; “Ahm Brahma-Swarupini.....Shunyan Cha Ashunyam Cha, Ahm akhila Jagat,” [I am the final, eternal, limitless spiritual Reality. I am the Void as well as non-void itself. I am the whole of this moving Cosmos.]**

Obviously, She could not be accepted at her own word, in the beginning. But Shree Bholanath-her husband-could see her as beyond any consciousness of the difference between male and female and the attraction between them, from the very first day of their married life. **Her very touch transformed him into a devotee and a spiritual seeker.** Till his last he was a devout seeker, a protector and always

a friend of her. As if to complete the previous century's example of Shree Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Ma Sharadamani—the Spiritual teacher and his spouse as his disciple, here was a converse of the same experience, perhaps even more instructive for today's consumerist society. Consumerism treats everything and even everybody specially woman-as an object for enjoyment. Since ancient times, India has evolved the ideal of perfection in human form wherein there is total freedom from Sex-attraction. The Sadhana paths of yoga, Bhakti or Dhyana ultimately take a seeker to the consumption of the experience of Oneness where all duality vanishes, how can male and female attraction survive where All is one? **Sarvam Khalu idam Brahma?** It follows that none in society and nothing in Nature can be treated as objects for consumption. **Every thing and everybody are an expression of the Divine Reality as sung in the Bhagvad Geeta**, and deserve prayer and worship. Shree Shree Ma instructed all around her through her simple, childlike way the great tenets of spiritual Sadhana, leading them to a life of simplicity, prayerfulness and joy. All our present-day distresses have sprung from our lustful attitude towards life.

Every individual is different from others, and needs special guidance for spiritual advancement. Shree Shree Ma treated everyone according to his or her special temperament and characteristic. One major point of importance She usually emphasized for every one. **That one has to give oneself totally in Sadhana, partial approach and attention lead not only to distraction but also to aberrations.** Once while in Varanasi, during the decade of sixties, Shree Shree Ma was visited by a group of Sarvadya Social workers headed by Shree Shankarao Deo from Maharashtra—a great social leader as well as spiritual

aspirant. He asked Ma the most pertinent question—everpresent on a struggling spiritual seeker's mind. "Ma, how can one keep one's mind steady in **Dyana**?" Smiling with all her radiance Shree Shree Ma spoke in her usual simple, yet cryptic way. "Whatever time, say five minutes, you could snatch for yourself, give it totally. A seed cannot be sprouted if sown broken." **Wholeness of total attention is the first requirement to achieve wholeness in spirituality.** Obviously, whatever deed, work we do wholeheartedly, no residue remains, and no possibility of hankering after the results of our deeds in terms of money, power or status in Society, could hamper the simplicity of total awareness of our psyche.

The whole human world is reeling under the stresses and strains of the modern so-called developed societies. Are we to be considered developed when war-mongering in the name of religion, caste, creed or nation is encouraged? Are we to be supposed advanced and learned while we are absorbed in break-neck competition for getting more and more of things for enjoyment? Actually there is nothing like materialistic seeking as apart from spiritual aspiration. To treat life in divisions is the real and only sin. Shree Shree Ma has always pointed out that Politics, Finance, Education and all other sections of life are suffering from partial approach that breeds the seeds of misery, injustice and cruelty. Shree Shree Ma implored all concerned to live totally, holistically, that is spiritually. **Many influential families in politics and business sought her advice and She time and again advised them to be lenient, compassionate, just and selfless. If these virtues of head and heart are lacking in us are we still to be taken as human beings? Spiritual aspiration is the only distinguishing mark of being human.**

Shree Shree Ma knew that unless women are rightly educated, are implored to come forward in society to handle all sorts of responsibilities, there will be no end to the cruelties in the names of religion, tradition or modernities. As capable human beings, women well-educated in our sciences and arts, of ancient India, can no more be the victims of many abuses. Through her own example Shree Shree Ma has encouraged many young girls to lead a spiritual life of intense sadhana. Many Ashram -Schools for young Brahmacharinees are guiding them.

Physical well-being is not to be neglected, according to Shree Shree Ma. Through her encouragement many hospitals with most modern facilities are setup and thousands get loving treatment for bodily diseases.

But all learning all care for bodily and mental health are futile if sadhana spiritual practice is forgotten. **So Shree Shree Ma started organizing Sadhana saptahas or week long spiritual programme every year.** Eminent spiritual gurus, besides Ma herself, are invited to speak and guide at Kankhal Ashram as at other places too. Though Shree Shree Ma has dropped her earthly body, her presence is sensed by her near and dear ones. While appreciating that service done to her by her companion—Gurupriyaji—Shree Shree Ma had commented—“I like her doing my work because She is not conscious of her doing.” In all our exertions, if we forget ourselves, then in that void Ma’s presence is felt. **Her presence is like the sweet tune of Shree Krishna’s flute, and a flute allows the spiritual melody played only if it is inwardly empty, void. This humility is the life breath of spirituality. All Sadhana is to usher in this emptiness, nothingness.**

Shree Shree Ma’s spiritual guidance recognized no

divisions of religion nor of country. She attracted all from the nook and corner of the whole earth . Many Muslim and Christian devotees surround her, finding in her the incarnations of peace and love. During the second world war, one German devotee of Shree Shree Ma—Alfred Wuerfel, working in German Consulate, was incarcerated at the Dehradun jail and he used to run away from the jail every day just to have a glimpse of his spiritual Guru-Shree Ma ! The authorities of jail knew this saintly person so well that they never objected to his absence from jail while he could get a glimpse of his own great Mother! What are the different branches sprouted from the original tree of spirituality, at different times and in different circumstances? Are not all seeking the same oneness, same peace and beatitude? Wherein lies the possibility of quarrel if deep understanding dawns on earth through the spiritual strivings of human beings?

**Through Shree Shree Ma's enlightening example India has again sought to explain the root of human misery. Through her sublime effortless effort the way to realize oneness is again powerfully explored. There is no other way to find unconditional joy at heart and peace and poise in outside world except the ancient and ever new path of spirituality exemplified by Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee. Salutations to Her, Salutations to Her.**

# Mother Anandamayee seen in the light of Agamas

Dr. Debabrata Sen Sharma

It is universally acknowledged in India that all spiritual teachers are in reality spiritual masters who are chosen by the Supreme Being (Paramesvara) to serve as the instruments for the transmission of His divine grace to individual beings in bondage. The Agamas speak about two kinds of Sadhakas (spiritual adepts)—one, the **Mumuksu Sadhakas** who aspire for securing their personal liberation; two, the **Bubhuksu Sadhakas** desiring to help those suffering human beings by showering the divine Grace on them and side by side, providing them with proper guidance. All great souls, well known spiritual masters beginning with Gautama Buddha, down to Trailanga Swami, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Lokenath Brahmachari, Sri Aurobindo, Mother Anandamayee are classic examples of such kind of spiritual masters whose heart melted with compassion on seeing the suffering humanity.

Before attempting evaluation of Mother Anandamayee, her place among the galaxy of the spiritual masters of this century in the light of Agamas and her contribution to our rich spiritual heritage, it would perhaps be proper to know **what our scriptures, especially the Agamas say on the different kinds of spiritual masters** in connection with the discussion on the spiritual teachers, who are also ***Sadhakas par excellence***. Here we are referring only to the Agamas because they have special place in the field of spirituality due to their being the repositories of spiritual knowledge arising from the spiritual experiences of the Sadhakas.

**The Agamic tradition classifies spiritual teachers under three broad heads viz., the celestial teachers (Daivaguru), the super-human teachers (Siddhagurus) and the human teachers (Purusagurus). The celestial teachers are the highest class of teachers who, having attained the highest degree of perfection by dissociating themselves from impure matter, live on higher plane of creation, always absorbed in contemplation. They have bodies made of pure consciousness. The presiding deities of different regions (bhuvanas) such as Rudra, Visnu, Brahma, Mantra, mantra-maheswara, constitute this class of spiritual teachers. Though the celestial teachers are said to have their separate existence, independent of the Supreme Lord, they do not have their independent will. They always remain coalesced with the Divine Being as it were, and always operate divine will of the Supreme Lord.**

There are superhuman teachers (Siddhagurus) who possess pure physical bodies, and as such, they occupy elevated position in the hierarchy of beings in the world. They are perfect beings, the realized souls but they are accessible to human beings on account of their existence in embodied condition. They have direct connection with the supreme Lord, and they always function in unison with Him. Quoting from some Tantric work, Abhinavagupta in his Tantraloka (Ahnika XIII) praises the Siddhagurus as the example of perfect spiritual teachers as they occupy unique position in the hierarchy of spiritual teachers on account of their existence in the mid-position between the higher spiritual levels and the impure levels of gross matter in creation.

The human teachers (manus gurus) are the lowest kind

of teachers who possess physical bodies dominated by the impure matter. They too are realized beings who outwardly resemble fettered human beings on account of their having realized their true nature, and also having close connection with the Supreme Being whom they are said to represent.

In the light of this Agamic classification of spiritual masters vis-à-vis Sadhakas described above, **if we carefully examine the spiritual life of Mother Anandamoyee and critically evaluate her spiritual attainments gleaned from her numerous utterances on spiritual matters, it would perhaps be not wrong to put her in the category of Siddha gurus or the most perfect spiritual Sadhakas.**

Abhinavagupta, the well known exponent of the highly esoteric spiritual philosophy of **Advaita Saivism** in Kashmir in his *Tantraloka* (Ahnika XIII) further classifies the siddha and the manusa gurus taken together under four heads, from the point of view of nature of their spiritual realization. They are called the akalpita gurus, the akalpita Kalpaka gurus, the kalpita gurus and the Kalpitakalpaka gurus.

**The akalpita gurus or Sadhakas are the highest class of gurus or Sadhakas** who are endowed with pure physical bodies right from their appearance on the earth. Being equipped with gross physical bodies they are born out following biological process, but their physical bodies are characterized by extraordinary traits or qualities which are absent in ordinary beings. **The highest spiritual wisdom arises in them within spontaneously without their making any effort whatsoever for acquiring it. They do not require any initiation (diksha) not do they need to perform any spiritual discipline (Sadhana) because**

**the highest spiritual wisdom, technically called pratibha (intuitive wisdom)** is inborn in them which unfolds gradually in course of time and illumine their intellect. Such gurus are also called the Samsiddhika gurus or Sadhakas the most perfect Sadhaka, when they are required to act as gurus, they awaken the supreme spiritual knowledge in the disciples coming in contact with them without performing externally any initiatory rite to them.

The **akalpita kalpaka gurus** or the **Sadhakas** constitute the second kind of gurus or Sadhakas. They also obtain the supreme spiritual knowledge within their pure intellect automatically. Though the spiritual knowledge awakens within them without their having performed any rite externally, it does not arise spontaneously following the infusion of divine grace as in the case with the first kind of **gurus or sadhakas**. They are required to contemplate or meditate on the spiritual knowledge gained from the lips of gurus, or study of scriptures, and contemplation of their true import. They have to experience the correspondence between what is obtained by them from the guru in the form of verbal instructions or by their self study of the scriptures or through contemplation on the true meaning of guru's words or scriptural statements. But since their **adhara** or physical body which includes their intellect is fully purged of all defilements (malas) the awakening of the highest spiritual wisdom immediately follow contemplation by them. Obviously such gurus or Sadhakas are slightly inferior to those described above in as much as they are required to contemplate on that they receive externally from a guru or study of scriptures etc. Such sadhakas when acting as gurus to others, are required to perform initiatory rite externally (Tantraloka XIII verse 142-43).

The **Kalpita gurus** or **Sadhaka** constitute the third class of gurus or sadhakas. The spiritual knowledge does not arise in them automatically as their intellect, their adhara, is enveloped by thick veils of defilements. They are therefore required to take help from other gurus, seek their guidance and follow their instructions for performing certain spiritual practices, primarily for the removal of defilements covering them. After they succeed in purging all defilements from their adhara, they obtain the illuminating spiritual wisdom.

The **kalpita kalpaka gurus a sadhakas** form the most inferior class of gurus or sadhakas who have to depend on other spiritual teachers or gurus for instructions and guidance for performing spiritual discipline. They are required to perform some kind of spiritual discipline in order to cleanse their **adhara** so that the spiritual knowledge could arise within them on being coronated by the gurus (Tantraloka Ah. XIII verse 144-45 pp94-95).

**If we attempt assessment of the place of Mother Anadamayee among the different kinds of sadhakas in the light of above description by Abhinavagupta, we can safely put her in the category of *akalpita kalapaka sadhakas* who are not required to perform any spiritual discipline to obtain the highest spiritual wisdom.** It is revealed within gradually as their *adhara* is purged of impurities in course of time. Such sadhakas are not required to approach any external guru for help and guidance. *Mother Anandamoyee's early life in Dacca truly exemplifies akalpita kalpaka sadhaka.* Her physical body was pure from the very beginning and this helped in the awakening of the highest spiritual knowledge within them automatically.

Some ardent devotees of Mother Anandamayee look upon her as an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. They argue that **Mother Anandamayee descended on the earth to fulfill divine mission, for rescuing people from misery and suffering. Mother Anandamayee represents highest class of sadhakas or gurus who are very rare and they appear on the earth with a purpose to carry out God's will. Tailanga Swami, Shyama Charan Lahiri, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Lokenath Brahmachari, Sri Aurobindo etc. all belonged to this rare class of sadhaka gurus in the past.** It has been said in the *Gurugita*, all spiritual aspirants should look upon their gurus as veritable godheads whose instructions should be followed by the disciples in letter and spirit.

**Gurureva Jagatsarvam brahma-visnu-sivatmakam/  
Guroh parataram nasti tasmāt sampūjyē gurum//  
Jnanam vijñanasahitam labhyote gurubhaktitah/  
Guroh parataram nasti dhyeyo'sau gurumargibhik//**

“Indeed the Guru is the whole universe, consisting of Brahman, Vishnu and Siva. There is nothing higher than the guru. Therefore, worship the guru.”

“By devotion of the Guru, one obtains knowledge as well as wisdom. There is nothing higher than the guru. Followers of the guru should meditate on him.”

(V. 80-81-Gurugita)

# **Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma :** **An epitome of Cultural and Spiritual** **Heritage of India**

Dr. Prafulla Chandra Dutta

The activities and teaching of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma were expressed for the benefit of Mankind. Her spontaneous utterances and activities were prompted by some divine "Kheyal", not by the intellect or mind, but by some divine "lila".

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MA**

**Rituals**—Ma started her life with a revolutionary spirit against conventional system of distinguishing Adhikari (competent) or Anadhikari (incompetent). **Convention is that a Sudra (a person without a sacred thread-upabit) and women should not utter the word of Aum (Pranabs).** But the word came not forcefully and spontaneously from Ma's mouth. Ma herself spontaneously uttered vedic language or hymns in Jagna. In Ma's presence afterwards many Jagnas were performed by the devotees, **Atimaha Rudra Jagna etc.** All Jagnas were for the benefit of Mankind.

Once Ma was seen to say Namaj (prayer) with one of his Muslim devotees. She said namaj spontaneously and perfectly and heartily. The Muslim devotee was amazed and said that Ma did the namaj more perfectly than our usual namaj. Sometime She uttered spontaneously hymns of the Quran in Arabian language.

**Upanayan for female devotees** –The revolutionary activities of Ma's Kheyal involves **upanayan of Sudras and women**. She said, "The Kheyal is coming and will be done accordingly, but I want to know what the Shastras say Pandits of Beneras said "very early days women took upabits like men. But as now the system has been abolished, how can we support this idea?" **Gopinath Kaviraj said, "What Ma said, that will be the shastra, Shastra will follow Ma, Ma need not follow Shastra."** Probably about 100 female devotees have been given Upabit.

**Ashram**—When Ma Anandamayee was asked about starting Ashram Ma replied,—“There is only one Ashram, already covering the whole universe. Only one exists. This body belongs to that Ashram.”

Devotees insisted on an Ashram Building, where they could sit together freely and pray to God. Ma did not discourage, because that is also a way of developing aspiration and of attaining a stage in the spiritual voyage. Thus have been established by now a large number of Ashram buildings (more than 32) in India. But Ma reminds us of the truth that, the Ashram with boundary concrete walls do not belong to Ma. She resides in a universe which has no boundary and that only one Ashram exists. What is that Ashram? Ma replied – “where there is no shram, is the Ashram” Ma explained that after attaining which, there exists no shram, no trouble, no conflict, no feeling of hardship, no worry. It is infinite in space and time. **Brahmacharya Ashram, Garhasthya Ashram, Banaprastha Ashram, Sannyasha Ashram**— all Ashrams merge into one. How can we attain that Ashram? All Bihars merge with one Sangha, that is true Ashram. He who has attained that Ashram discovers the one in all diversities. Internal Ashram should be discovered through love.

Ma discovered many new and sacred places. Most of such places are related to many miraculous **Lila and Kheyal**. She herself one day guided by the divine force entered a forest area, where there was a temple of Kali, which was called **Siddheswari**. By instruction of Ma a bedi was constructed near the temple. On that bedi Ma used to sit for a long time. A room was built there leaving the bedi untouched. Ma said that it was a place of sadhana of Bholanath.

Similarly Ramna Ashram was constructed. A similar place of Bholanath's sadhana was discovered by Ma.

There was a history behind the Vindhyachal Ashram also. There was a temple of "*Vindhyabasini*" on the hill. But for some reason, the pujaries and local pandits concealed the Mother's statue in the planes of Vindhyachal town, below the hill. About 200 vigrahas of gods were also concealed under the earth. This fact was not known to the public. Only Ma heard the voice from some deities asking Ma to liberate them from the earth. Ma asked a devotee, Chief Archeologist of U.P., to excavate the land the position of which was at the centre of the Ashram compound. He arranged groups of diggers and after a few days they discovered 200 deities under the soil. Now in this plot the mother's disciples sing devotional songs.

Naimisharanya was the place where Bhagabat was told to the Rishis (sages). Ma discovered the sacred place and *installed a model of Puran Purusha*.

In this way Kalyanvan was established on the basis of Mother's vision that a number of sages were loudly uttering the word "Kalyanvan". In that place Ashram

**was constructed.** She encouraged persons talking about Mahabharat, Ramayan, Bhagabat, Gita, Yogna with Veda mantras, Upanishads, etc.

**Kanyapeeth; Divine will worked through selected instruments (Gurupriya Devi, Ganga Ma, and many others), who with blessings of Ma established Kanyapeeth (Brahma-Charinis, 'Ashram) for girls, where they are taught all modern subjects along with the Vedas and the Upaishads etc. in the Rishidhara so that they are truly awakened from inside. In this connection, I should mention that Ma introduced the practice of Veda reading among the girls and the Sudra.**

Similarly, **Vidyapeeth has been established for boys.** The boys led the life of Brahmachari there. The education system there is same as Kanyapeeth.

**Caste System—**Regarding the question of caste system, Ma belongs to the category of those prophets who consider the Indian society as a living organism. It has changed, is changing and will change, but no artificial arrangement for reforming society should be encouraged. It will automatically change according to the need of society.

**Spiritual heritage and Ma Anandamayee—**Ma's Kheyal—sometimes someone of the devotees sought permission for pronam in 'private' only for two minutes, Ma was taking rest at that time. She eagerly got up and stated clearly at the beginning of talk—"this body does not move according to will, which is not present in this body." She said about an occasion, "When Bhagabatananda was gasping,

everyone was apprehending his immediate death. This body began to utter mantras unknown to this body and he was cured. She talked with the devotee for two hours though only two minutes were prayed.

**In the presence of Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kabiraj, once She was asked by one of the devotees, — “Is it not true, you do not feel the worldly miseries? Sometimes as if acting in drama, you show that you are suffering. Who is the sufferer? Who is the actor?” Ma replied, “There is no question of acting on the stage. Words and action come down directly from the root (Abyaktam). No question of imitation is there.”**

**Unity is Diversity—The basic principle of Indian culture is unity in diversity.** Ma stands on the same idea. In Ashrams erected by the devotees we have seen so many devotees assembled there to have a darshan of Ma. Some were Sannyasis and some were householders. Some wore Tulsi beads, some Rudraksha, somebody had Trishul in one hand and a danda (staff) and a begging bowl in the other. One person was a Sannyasi of tirtha line, another Saraswati line, a third was that of Giri, a fourth Puri, one was Vaisnava, another Saivite and yet another Shakta. Some Jain, some sikh, some parsi, some were muslim or Christian. Even the foreigners from different parts of the world assembled there. All said Ma was guiding them all according to their requirements. **Ma stands as power of Unity at the center of these diversities.** *We observe Ma is fostering all the diverse religious lines of approach just like all the worldly mothers, who nurture their off-springs.* Ma is also engaged in fostering all the multifarious currents of religious aspiration of the world. How can we then discover any special doctrine in Ma?

**Sadhana**—In the spiritual field Ma considered the society as a living organization; which follows certain living and dynamic processes of development. Every organism has its own way of thinking, working and fighting for the survival. Every organism is Sadhaka and every activity or struggle is Sadhana, (Sadhan samar). Indefinite number of living bodies are struggling for a harmony in the diversity of external appearances and behaviour. Diversity is necessary for the development. So we see every person has his own way of progress. Shree Ma helped the aspirants through advice and instruction according to their position (sthiti), where the person stands. **Ma said “every one Nastik or Astik—all are Sadhaka.** Though she appears to know Astango Yoga system—the movement of Kulokundolini (serpentine power), .She revealed this only the day She revealed her identity to Bhaiji. She did not prescribe any particular religious path based on yoga system or any other system. She said, “As many are men, so many are ways to Truth or Beyond.” No two organism are totally identical physically and mentally. **Sadhanas therefore must be different for different men according to their Sanskar.**

Ma further said—”attend every religious ceremony or system of all sampradays and pray to Ista or Guru, Oh! My ista!, Of my Guru! Make me feel, make me understand how beautifully you are maintained here also.”

Ma used some new terminology on the completion of a long course of dehydration of the mind. That is removal of attraction of pleasures of the world. **There are four stages by which mind becomes completely pure or free from worldly hankering, (i) Bhaba Samadhan, (ii) Byakta Samadhan, (iii) Gupta Samadhan, (iv) Purna Samadhan.**

On day a Sannaysi met Ma and told about his **happiness in Bhaba, Ma remained silent. Other devotee of Ma, asked, "Is he a very advanced sannyasi?" Ma replied – "Yes, but he is enjoying it; instead of enjoying, one should proceed steadily."**

**Stages in the life of Sadhaka**—Different experiences may be found by sadhakas. Ma compares these experiences as a person sitting in a train observes many things outside the train. All are not written in Sahastra. **A sadhaka should not be attached much with the outer running objects. He should be Drasta (observer)** and will be able to move further distance. *Samadhi is a samadhan or completion of a course of travel.* After samadhan, the sadhaka wants rest in a rest room available on a road side. In the morning he will start again for the destination. If someone is attracted by pleasure of the rest houses, he will not be able to proceed further, but will be absorbed in facilities of easy life and cannot proceed further. He enjoys the Darshan as a good fortune. He cannot come out from the stage of rest, unless the Sadhak proceeds towards his destination with a non-attached mind. He should be pure Drasta.

Regarding **Sabikalpa** and **Nirvikalpa** Samadhi, Ma said, Sabikalpa samadhi means alteration of samadhi and Byuthan. Nirbikalpa means no such alteration. The question of Samadhi and Byuthan does not arise. Prolongation of samadhi is nothing but a prolongation of the time period of sleep in the rest house. **Nirbikalpa samadhi is above these changes. You will have to go beyond these stages staying aloof from the events of the body and the mind and attain supramental Budhi or powerful consciousness by which you will proceed toward infinite Truth.**

**Expanding God**—To some Ma suggested to worship God in the idols, rocks or trees and gradually to expanding the concept of God in every rock, every idol, every tree, every river and so on. To some She suggested to utter a name of God and then gradually realize God in every name and every sound. To some others she suggested to look upon the crowd or people as God and then to spread the concept to the humanity. To some complaining against family troubles, Ma suggested to discover the creator in his creation (the family and troubles). To some Ma suggested that God is formless, nameless, adjectiveless etc. if some one argued, God is absent in his concept, Ma would say "You are correct, as you are at such a position, where God appears to be absent."

To some Ma said—"**find the self. Realization of self is the realization of God, the realization of God is the realization of self.**" To some, she said, "Liberate yourself from the diversity of the world and plunge into the One." Again she said, "To plunge into the One is not the aim of life, you will have to go beyond, where the conflict of One or many dissolves, where infinite 'Yes' or infinite 'No', infinite truths, infinite falses, infinite creations and infinite distractions remain together, all one infinite but none are barriers to others. "It is inexpressible by worldly language. "it is that what it is" **Ma said, God is beyond all dualities,** nay, the question of beyond and non-beyond also does not arise. "How can one understand this—one cannot realize that after crossing the intellect. For that, one has to start from where he is standing, with the help of his religious guide. Thus the personified God expands into Brahma, qualified Brahma expands into non-qualified Brahma—which merges into a consciousness inexpressible Mahasunya or Mahabhava.

**Gurutattava**—Regarding Gurutattwa Ma's contribution is clear pointing out a principle that a Guru is nothing but God. Therefore, the word Guru cult should not be confused with personality cult, because you say Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu Gurudeva Maheshware. So long you find a Guru as a limited person, you really have a person, not Guru. **The word Guru cult is misnomer. Guru cannot be limited as my Guru, your Guru or some others Guru. Actually Guru remains spread over the universe. Guru is the universal teacher, not bound in any cult, creed or ideal or formula.** Dr. Lipski is correct to state that Ma Anandamayee does not support personality cult. Guru is not a person, and a person is not Guru. Guru is One, **The One God comes to guide you from within.** But so long you are inattentive to the inner voice of Guru, Guru helps you through spiritualization of rituals or local performances relative to local culture.

The activities and words of Ma Anandamayee are provoked from the universal root called "Abyaktam" which are beneficial to all. "No words come from this body, which is nothing but beneficial to Mankind"—said Mā.

# **Ma Anandamayee : A shining symbol of India's spiritual and cultural heritage**

Shri Sunil Guha

In the spiritual firmament of India, Shree Shree "Ma Anandamayee" shines like a brilliant star, alongside the long line of great rishis and saints. Unlike many of our spiritual leaders who acquired their experience and wisdom through years of rigorous 'Sadhana' "Ma Anandamayee" was a born **Siddha**. Research conducted by many scholars has confirmed what Bhagvad Gita says that we, human beings, cycle through a variety of different lives, gaining more and more experience in our quest for soul development. Therefore, all of us have a life purpose, a goal or a mission. In this sense 'Ma' was obviously a highly evolved soul; and the spiritual height she had reached in her previous life-times, she revealed in full glory during her years with her devotees in her last life. Was it her last life? Has she fulfilled her mission? Will she be born again? Another great spiritual leader of India- Shri Shri Sitaramdas Omkarnathji- whom 'Ma' much respected and who, in turn, held 'Ma' in great esteem, has predicted :

"Ma will return soon .....in Bengal ..... With much more creative power. You will all see what a tremendous change for the better will come over in India". How blessed will we all be!

## **Two great Messages of 'Ma'**

Through her messages, discourses, leelas, kheyals and Bhabsamadhi, as well as her personal attitude and conduct, 'Ma' sought to convey the two eternal messages enshrined in India's rich spiritual and cultural heritage:

- (a) A human lifetime is exceedingly precious. The purpose of human life is to gain knowledge and experience of the indweller or Paramatma through self-development. In Short, the concept of non-duality.
- (b) The universal nature of religion; and the need to accept and tolerate all religions as merely diverse paths to reach the same goal, i.e. God and His Worship.

**Be a seeker of your full identity and your true mission in life:**

All our ancient and time-honoured scriptures, be it the Vedas, the Bhagvad Gita, the Upanishads or Brahmasutras, asserts that the knowledge of 'non-duality' i.e. God is within you, is the only real knowledge; and all other forms of knowledge, associated with duality, are ignorance. The truth and consistency of this theory has been corroborated by the inner experiences of many seers of truth. And 'Ma' was indeed a living embodiment of this concept and a living commentary on the varieties and spiritual truth of our scriptures and heritage. She was convinced that consciousness exists as a continuum and is the essence of what we are; and that the physical body is only the current vehicle of our spirit as it lives and learns in the earth dimension. And so 'Ma' frequently reminded us that the most important step in our personal development and evolution was to become conscious of our inner "seat of truth", to concentrate on its presence, and to make it a living fact. She constantly urged us to try and discover our real 'mission' in life and to eliminate consciously whatever contradicts our inner truth. "Be a seeker of your full identity", 'Ma' used to urge her devotees. "Every one's guide is within", she said. When an Irish journalist asked 'Ma' whether she was really God, Ma's reply

was sharp and pointed: "God parvades everything, every being. There is nothing except He alone. In your person too, He has come here to give me darsana".

Not only through her sweet words but also through her 'Kheyals' and 'Bhabsamadhis' she sought to convey this eternal message of non duality. For instance, 'Ma' asked Bholanath to perform kalilpuja; and then herself assumed Mother Kali's postures to the surprise of everyone present and accepted the puja. She absolutely believed that she was Goddess Kali incarnate. At times, 'Ma' used to plunge deep into Samadhi; at other occasions, she used to feel that her body was becoming bigger and bigger and her limbs heavier and heavier. Willams James in his book "Varieties of Religious Experiences", has described these states in the following words; "It is a mystical feelings as if I am no longer small and insignificant. I have expanded and got linked with God. Have a feeling of liberation." How could it be otherwise? How could a self-realized soul like 'Ma' shorn of ego and body-consciousness, feel herself to be small? 'Ma' urged us to see God in everything and every being and practise love, compassion, understanding and kindness. Her most important message was as humans evolve toward less reliance on their ego and more reliance on the inner voice, we begin to achieve a truly spiritualized society'. We must therefore seek to know who we are and discover our true mission on earth. Without this introspection, without the discovery of that spirit within us' we will remain, as Shri Aurobindo said "an ambitious nothing,"

**Respect all religions and love all their practitioners: the Message of Integral Humanism**

The second most important contribution of 'Ma' has been

to reinforce our religious secularism, her unswerving commitment to universal religion and the basic tenets of all religious faith. Like Thakur Sri Ramakrishna, 'Ma' also believed that different religions were but diverse paths leading to the ultimate goal. 'Ma' offered Namaz at the Mazar of a Faquir- a Muslim mystic- at Shahbagh. And a Muslim woman devotee constantly had a vision of 'Ma' with a Taz on her head while offering prayer to Allah. 'Ma' frequented a sikh shrine near Shahbagh and engaged in discussions with sikh devotees on Guru Nanak and Granth Sahab. When an Irish journalist introduced himself to 'Ma' as a Christian, 'Ma' said "so am I, a Christian, a Muslim, anything you like." And on another occasion, a Christian devotee burst forth on meeting 'Ma': "Now we have a face to put on God". On another occasion when a young Christian girl asked 'Ma' how she could overcome a terrible fear that was haunting her, 'Ma' advised her to repeat the name of Christ and cover her mind and heart with vision of Christ.

Such indeed was Ma's faith in love for all Gods, and for all people of all lands whichever religion they professed and practised. The prayer of Japuji 28. M.I. of Adi Granth- the holy book of the sikh community says "Let all mankind be thy sect". 'Ma' too considered the family of humankind as one; and saw the same face of God in all gods.

### **Relevance of 'Ma's teachings today:**

The relevance of Ma's teachings, the shining example of integral humanism that she embodied in her divine self and which she urged us to practice, in today's troubled world needs no emphasis. Our own country and society today is being torn asunder by widespread crisis of character, erosion of moral and ethical values, abuse of human rights,

politicization of religion and emergence of fundamentalism. We devotees of Ma, our Sangha, must deeply introspect if we have done enough to spread Ma's message, Ma's teachings, if we ourselves practice in our everyday life what we have been preached by 'Ma'.

I do believe that the coming of 'Ma' in our midst and our coming together with her has not been a mere accident. It has had a deep significance. Could it be that 'Ma' came and gathered us and gave us the lead to discover, first, our own divine potential and then work as a critical mass of individuals to bring about the spiritual awakening that we need so urgently in the whole world and especially in our country, in our culture.

Let us work together as sisters and brothers inspired by "Ma's" teachings and personal examples, to carry forward "Ma's" noble mission. Let us remember these precious words of Swami Vivekananda. "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal must be to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal". Let us manifest this divinity within ourselves by engaging in the many humanitarian work which were very dear to 'Ma'. To serve the poor, the needy and the sick, to promote and support educational activities based on our rich cultural heritage and human values. For, 'Ma' will soon be on this earth again, as predicted by Swami Omkarnathji, and will judge us by our performance on these fronts.

# Ma Anandamayee Impact on Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of India

Dr. Debaprasad Mukhopadhyay

This National Seminar on "Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee-cultural and spiritual heritage of India" in Calcutta is a befitting and unique finale to the most auspicious Centenary celebration year of Maa Anandamayee started in June 1996. Previously, no attempt had been made to assess Ma Anandamayee's contribution to the cultural and spiritual heritage of this holy country of India. While it is true that Ma had religiously shunned all publicity and did never encourage any propoganda throughout Her **leela** spread over a span of 86 years, it is saddening that no major literature or assessment or research papers are available on Ma Anandamayee who has been hailed with very great esteem by all the saints and scholars of our holy and ancient country as well as by devotees and scholars from abroad .

The objective of this short paper is to mention briefly some of Ma's contributions to the cultural and spiritual heritage of this country without going too much into details. Instead it will directly touch on the impact points created by Ma's **Maha Avirbhav**, taking account of the fact that she did not take birth out of any **Prarabdh Karma** and she did neither have any **sankalpa** or **vikalpa**. Ma used to play Her act of **leela** on the strength of spontaneity, as an act of God the Supreme, Which Ma otherwise termed "Jo Ho Jai" and Her '**Kheyal**' (as the things happen spontaneously).

At the concluding function of Ma's Centenary Celebration at Kankhal (Haridwar) on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1996, where

a representative gathering of very learned Sadhus, Mahatmas, Scholars, Indologists from India and even Theosophists from abroad were present to pay their homage to Ma Anandamayee, it was concluded that

“janma karma ca me divyam

evam yo vetti tattvatah

tyaktva deham punarjanma

nai ‘ti mam eti so’ rjuna”-(Gitalv.9)

It was recognised that both Ma’s birth and playful act of **leela** were unique , unnatural and Divine. She was not an ordinary human being with mundane objectives, pre-conceived plans of actions and desire for any particular results or, otherwise. Radhakrishnan comments, “The Divine greatness is conveyed to us in and through these great individuals. Their lives dramatize for us the essential constituents of human life ascending to the fulfillment of its destiny.” In Ma Anandamayee there was neither sorrow nor happiness, nor pain nor sufferings, nor desires nor failure nor promise, nor frustrations. Ma maintained the same constant status or **sthithi** right from the time of Her birth to Her **Maha –Samadhi** at Dehradun on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1982. On this Ma Herself confirmed, “I am what I was earlier and shall remain the same for future too. “ It was held by elevated souls that Ma Anandamayee was constantly immersed with **Brahman** at all times, and She was fully at the state of **Brahmi – sthithi**, as explained by Bhagvad Gita in Chapter 11.56.

The foregoing para was essential to give some small glimpses of Ma’s **swarup** in common man’s language, as

without that it would be impossible to attempt Ma Anandamayee's possible impact points on Indian culture and civilization. In this great country, many Avatars, Mahatmas, public leaders, scholars and social reformers were born, who left an everlasting impression on the country's heritage, culture and its civilization. From that context, Ma Anandamayee's **leela** could not be termed strictly social or cultural in nature or for that matter, any Missionary attempt to change any existing system through conversion by cadreized efforts, or for that matter, preaching any particular dogma or religion. Then what did Ma want to establish or contribute for the benefit of mankind and civilization? There has neither been any systematic debate nor, studies before on this important questions. There are records to substantiate the fact as Ma confirmed, "I have no particular work to do here. You prayed for this body and it is here before you. Take it as a musical instrument. You will hear as you play." This statement clarifies to some extent Ma's real **swarup** in the context of possible existence of any of Her missions or any particular mundane objective, if at all it ever existed. The great speaker and religious leader Swami Dayanand Saraswati once came to see Ma and asked "Mother, what you are in fact?" Ma replied, "You want to know what I am? Well, I am what you consider me to be-not more not less. "Swamijee again asked, "What is the nature of your Samadhi? Is it Savikalpa or Nirvikalpa?" Ma again replied, ".....All that I can say is that in the midst of all apparent changes of state in body and mind , I feel that in me there is no change of state. Call it of any name you like .Is it Samadhi?"

We can go into further depth now while analyzing the foregoing paragraphs to fathom what area or parameter Ma had touched upon or indicated or, hinted at during Her

playful acts of leela, as we are now fortunately placed one hundred years after Her **Maha Abirbhav** and some of the writings, though sketchy, are available including some of Ma Anandamayee's own admission on Her 'self'. It now seems clear from the existing records and analyses by the greatest scholars and Mahatmas of India that Ma Anandamayee had been the primordial (**Adi Parashakti** or **Mahamaya**) Herself, descending before us in human form at a critical juncture, when value system had completely eroded as mankind in general lost its basic goals and natural virtues of love and compassion, truth and humanity, and even forgot its own identity and purpose of human life. People took upon religion rather easily and selfishly and did not hesitate even to mix it up with all sorts of distorted meaning and imposing restrictions. However, a country like India whose main artery stands on Religion, as promulgated by swami Vivekananda, cannot thrive in such atmosphere for long.

Soon after Ma's **Maha Abirbhav** in 1896 at Village Kheora of the then East Bengal (now Bangladesh), this holy country went through an unforgettable and tumultuous experience – **Banga Bhang Andolan** – 1905 and partition (Division of India – 1947) and great famine of Bengal (1941) leading to unimaginable miseries and sufferings of its people. "Swadeshi Movement that followed (1905-1919) the agitation over the partition of Bengal started moving from the hand of moderates to the extremist. **Political Swadeshi** carried things to a point where many of the issues of future Indian politics – including boycott and passive resistance, the relations between Hindu and Muslims and those between the elite and the masses – came up as on a tide (2). Scare and fear from injustice and brutality in the hands of the colonial master, complete loss of faith and confidence in one's self and human being losing appreciation even for his human

birth and purpose followed consequently. Massive destruction of the Second World War broke out (1939-45). Innate beauty of **Sanatan Vedic Dharma** seemed to be lost. People became natively imitative to their master's style of operations for getting petty favours and so-called prosperity. Western materialism started tightening its grip. People largely forgot their own civilization as illustrated and convincingly proved by the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and its Sires (**Rishis** and **Munis**) dating back 5000years and more.

Swamy Vivekananda earlier tried to exhort people of the then subservient India and popularized the original glory of this ancient country and the beauty of Hindu religion vis-à-vis other before the Religious leaders of the world (1893-1897). His efforts bore fruit. People became exposed to the magnanimity, liberalism and vastness of Hindu religion. Vast treasure of Indian civilization and respect for Hindu religion somewhat improved. But Swamy Vivekananda's own mission and his singular effort could not continue for long as he decided to leave this world, rather at an early age of 38 in 1902, although Ramakrishna Mission established by him continued to follow his tenets.

It was a crucial time in the history of Indian spiritual evolution and Sanatan Dharma, after the departure of Ramakrishna Paramhansadeb (1886), that Ma Anandamayee appeared on the scene and started Her unique style of operation, after throwing away all shackles of a Hindu housewife in an ancient and traditional society of the then East Bengal.. While Ramakrishna Paramhansadeb gave a serious jolt and placed on the right track the then swaying away Hindu religion amidst confusion of urban Westernization and distortion by self-styled rural Pandits,

Ma Anandamayee rather daringly liberalized it further and gave a clarion call of salvation to the reach of even common men and women. It was in early 1920s that Ma Anandamayee's spontaneous expression of various **spiritual Bhavas** and **Vibhutis** surprised the people at Bajitpur (Mymensingh) and later scholars and elites of Dhaka. By the end of 1920s Ma left Dhaka on Her sojourn to conquer the spiritual arena of India and beyond and lead mankind from darkness to its glory. At this juncture Ma proclaimed, "those who do not have any refuge or shelter or, any direction on the path of religion or, those who are absolutely blind, helpless or insecure, I need them most and them in particular".

Interpreting Her own admission, many learned scholars, Mahatmas and Indologists today believe that Ma appeared on this earth for the salvation of mankind and humanity at large, to give them new direction in accordance to our centuries-old heritage of Vedic culture and civilization. Ma Anandamayee made Her available to millions of helpless people in the year to come (1932-1982) by constantly moving across the length and breadth of the country in Her ceaseless sojourn. She never bothered of Her own comforts, conveniences, fatigue or pain or state of Her health. She continuously exhorted all of us that human birth is a rare one and we should not miss this opportunity. Ma Anandamayee did not mince words in saying in Her very lucid and motherly tone that path towards God the Almighty (Bhagabat Path) is the only way to be treaded upon and any deviation could bring miseries and sorrows.

She said, "God's favour (kripa) and blessings are ever pouring on!" Without making any compromise with pure spiritualism, brought the means and practice of religion to

common men and women's easy reach. She confirmed, "The ultimate aim of this human birth is God – realization. You can start treading the path of God from any point wherever you may be at present situated. There is nothing to despair! You are all children of Rishis and Munis (Amritasya Putra). Believe my words! Stick to god's Name. Everything is possible with that!"

"In an age when the decadent Hindu Orthodoxy was provoking censure and even revolt, Ramakrishna (1836-1886) afforded a new valid ideal of quintessential Hindu devotion (2)". A few years later in the first quarter of the twentieth century, Ma Anandamayee seemed to break all the barriers – first by Her manifestation as the divine Mother and later bringing in and re-establishing the original tenets of pure **Sanatan Dharma** based on old vedic, Puranic and vedantic principles. In the process, liberalism, Magnanimity and beauty of **Sanatan Dharma** bloomed its finest form. Incidentally, swami Shivananda, Founder of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, once commented, "Ma Anandamayee is the purest flower ever produced by Indian Soil". Maa Anandamayee never condemned any religion nor rejected any of its followers from Her motherly grace, compassion and accommodation. She materialy proved what Vivekananda proclaimed in the West (1893-1897) that baptism and conversion was not our ways of things, yet others were free and most welcome to learn and taste the Divine nectar of our self-contained and self-sustaining **Sanatan Dharma**. For that Ma Anandamayee neither felt any need to visit the West nor did She send any of Her own ascetic follower to visit abroad. This is a great and bold step indeed to revitalize and rejuvenate the decaying trend of our religion. As it such tendencies got swept away under Ma Anandamayee's gigantic presence, and an opposite of life's

goal and discovering the secret of fulfillment of human beings.

In fact, what Ma Anandamayee preached or seemed to have propagated was a **Universal World Religion** – full of love, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, unity and self-fulfillment. It propagates peace, shuns violence, stands on truth and is against all type of fanaticism and hegemony. She laid maximum emphasis on human endeavour and potential, which was infinite. Very plainly and simply, she repeatedly pronounced that “Know yourself and that is knowing God”. She said, “Whatever you perceive is alright. All religions lead in the same direction, all religious trends are identical – we are all one. **Shree Ma hints at a cosmic religion which is eternal, all comprehensive, universal, spontaneous and vital.**” Ma said, “**To know one’s self is to know God.** When this is known, nothing else remains to be known. It is the essence of peace, bliss, the essence of Being!” (1).

Prof. Alexander Lipski of California University nicely summed up by saying, “Her teaching is always adjusted to the need of the individual and varies in accordance to his or her religious background. It does not matter whether one is monist, dualist, Muslim, Buddhist or Christian. Anandamayee Ma had the ability to attune Herself to the particular religious point of view and the level of understanding of those who consult Her” (1).

The above attributes to Ma Anandamayee and Her unique treatment to the contemporary religions and messages clearly established the fact that **She thoroughly churned up our Sanatan Vedic Dharma, made its complete integration and presented to the world its innate**

beauties up to the core of its strength at a critical juncture, when it was needed most by all. Such feat was achieved never before in the contemporary spiritual history of India. Despite the fact that Ma did not tour western countries and no publicity or campaign was ever made in those lands, scores of people visited India to have Her darshan and confirmed loudly as having quenched their spiritual thirst or, having received the answer for which they longed so much. Amidst confusion in values, multiplicity of ideas or dogmas and cruel materialism amounting to rat race, Ma Anandamayee's mere sight made them dumbfounded! What they saw was unbelievable! There was no need of any spoken language! Communication had already taken place through hearts and their questions answered! Ma transcended all limits and barriers of time and space, yet She accepted everybody whoever came to Her, and any level whatsoever it may be. She said, "You have to go beyond the mirage of getting or not getting, achieving or not achieving. That is the supreme achievement in one's life. She called it '**Charam-Param**'. The super blissful state! Ma said, "Don't brood over anything excepting **Chidananda** (super blissful) Ma".

It has to be appreciated that as an integral part of Ma's playful act of leela for a considerable period of time (1896-1982), Ma Anandamayee advocated established norms and means of our Sanatan Dharma, e.g., Yagnas, worshipping gods and goddesses strictly as per puranic rites and principles, publicity of Vedas and Upanishads and its spread to common man through spiritual discourses by eminent Mahatmas and Saints, establishment of Vedic and Puranic Research Institution at Naimisharanya, the place of origin of eighteen Puranas, successful establishment of Kashi Kanypeeth at Varanasi for girls (Brahmcharinis) in strict

Gurukul system for more than half a century now, popularizing Srimad Bhagavat Parayan and Bhagvad Gita etc., only to make us conscious of our heritage.

Similarly, *Savitri Maha Yagna* was held in Varanasi (1947-1950) in an unprecedented scale for three years continuously. A large congregation of very senior saints from all over India assembled around Ma Anandamayee and memorable Satsangs were held. **In Ma Anandamayee's leela**, we find that a prominent place has been allotted to orthodox Yagnas and kindling of sacrificial fire as performed by Rishis in the day of yore. Again, **Ati Rudra Maha Yagna was held at Kankhal (Haridwar) in 1981** which was unprecedented in modern times and considered a model for posterity to emulate. **All these had remained our rich Vedic culture for the benefit of mankind!**

**Ma never took Sannyas or Diksha from any outside Guru.** In Her play of Sadhana, She initiated Herself when Guru, Mantra and all the ingredients of initiation came from Her within and mingled back in Her, after those were done with (Bajitpur, 1922). Ma's humbleness, show of respect and concern for the ochre robe and Sadhus, Mahatmas and saints of the country were exemplary in nature. Ma was their true protector and natural guardian. At the same time, all Sadhu-Mahatmas including very senior ones used to give their utmost regards and recognized Ma as "Bhagavati Incarnate". The pronouncement of Lord Krishna in Gita became truly alive in Ma Anandamayee Leela.

paritranya sadhunam  
vinasaya ca duskritam  
dharmasamsthapanarthaya  
sambhavami yuge-yuge (4.8)

For the protection of the good for the destruction of the wicked and evil forces; and for the establishment of righteousness and Sanatan Dharma, I come into being from age to age.

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# **Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma :** **Cultural and Spiritual heritage of India**

Km. Aruna Pandya

“Divine Consciousness “ ‘sparkling in perfect purity, bewildering in depth, and diversity manifested itself in the form of an infant girl, in a small village named Kheora, now in Bangladesh in the early hours of 30th April, 1968.

Her life from little “Nirmala” to the world acclaimed “Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma” is a revelation, a ‘play’ or ‘lila’ of the Self with the Self in a ‘body’ which was also none other than the ‘Self’ or Pure Consciousness. Being desireless, the very cause for a material body is absent.

She was a ‘Being’ in whom everything happened by ‘itself’. She was completely devoid of ‘I-ness’. She was ever-active and yet not a ‘Doer’. The ‘I’ just did not exist. Totally desireless one expects no urge for action in Her and yet, She was ever busy. Every action was a response to a spiritual call, to meet the spiritual need of man. “This body, is an instrument, howsoever, you play, you shall hear”- Ma.

“Consciousness is Brahman, the mind is Brahman, the intellect is Brahman, Brahman alone is the substance, Sound or word is Brahman, and Brahman alone is the component of all substances.”

***Brahma cid brahma ca maro brahma vijñānavastu  
ca brahmartho brahma***

***sadas ca brahma cid brahma dhātavaḥ’ –***

- Says the Yog Vasistha.

This realisation of the Supreme Truth is the highest ideal of our scriptures. All Vedic teachings culminate in the attainment of this 'Universal Truth', the Self, Brahma or the Atma, all of which are but synonyms. Today within our perception we have in Ma, such a 'Being who is One with the Self. "In all Infinity is He and no other -I alone am."

"For this body only One exists".

"The Immutable Brahman, the primeval sound, the Omkara are one and the same as the word 'Ma' -'Ananda in essence" -Ma.

These are not words of a rambling mind but irrefutable words of a Being in a state of Oneness where nothing remains to be known or attained. Ma's philosophy centered around the 'One' and this was apparent in Her from Her very childhood-in games, with nature, with associates, with music, with kirtan. She responded by becoming One with the 'bhava' of the surrounding.

The Vedas have been a marvellous spiritual heritage of mankind unparalleled and 'apaurushaye' (owing their authority to no one). They are a store house of Wisdom and Spiritual learning and contain the knowledge of God. Vedas literally mean "to know". Shree Ma was undifferentiated from these Vedic teachings and their goal. Her physical presence placed before mankind an 'Ideal' which so far had only been heard of in the scriptures. The theoretical Brahman of the scriptures -distant and Impersonal was no longer so. Amidst us was a living 'Reality' personal and approachable. Her love penetrated deep into the core of the hearts of all and aroused in them the desire to aspire for the realisation of the Supreme Self- "Charam Param".

Shree Ma was perfect in Herself. She was perfect in all that She did. In fact She was Perfection personified. Speaking the silent language of Universal love She Spiritualised the materialistic and worldly attitudes of all who came in contact with Her. In particular She revived and reinfused the Indian mind with a regard for its own culture and ideology. She showed the individuals the simplest and easiest paths towards the realisation of the Eternal. She was ever-concerned for the spiritual welfare of the people, traversing the country to meet their Spiritual need.

Thus as the 20th Century beheld this unique wonder of a Bliss-permeated Mother, radiating light and joy, there dawned a Golden Age in Spirituality or a Spiritual Renaissance.

The Spiritual was important in our culture and daily way of life. All activity-religious, cultural or social, all knowledge-philosophy, scientific and or medicine centered around the great principle of achieving Oneness with the Self, and ignorance, the source of all diversity, misfortune, misery and cause of all sorrow could be removed by right action and right knowledge.

According to Ma "Just as there is a veil of ignorance, there is also a door to knowledge. Her religion was Universal. It accommodated all the religious sects and diversifications. **To Ma there were no contradictions, they were only different paths to the same goal. She advised all to remember Him in whatever form they believed. She advised the Muslim to be a perfect Muslim, the Hindu a perfect Hindu, the Christian a true Christian. To the many others that came to Her She pointed out that as Perfection was the goal, so the dictates of their Scriptures or the instructions of their Gurus should be followed as perfectly as possible.**

“Verily God is in all shapes and forms. Everybody should be told that in God’s creation according to the Hindu Sanatan Dharma, it is unlawful to say anything which will cause hostility or distress to anyone. To be opposed to anyone is to be opposed to the Supreme Being. We are all one Atma. This is what we have to bear in mind. Preserve a spirit of calm and friendliness.” -Ma

To Ma “All were Her very own -since all were that”. Her response to their spiritual needs was spontaneous irrespective of caste, religion or creed.

**In Shahbagh, near the tomb of a Saint Ma was seen to perform the ‘Namaaz’ with such accurate pronunciation and perfect hand-movements that even the Muslims were astonished and were unable to surpass Her feat. Ma’s birthplace, even today is very respectfully and devotedly looked after by some - Muslims.**

Once as a child Ma requested Her mother, DidiMa, to purchase some Christian literature which two nuns had brought to the house, and later spent quite some time looking through it. On another occasion even as a child, Ma was spontaneously drawn towards a group of Christian nuns living in a tent across the village. At sunset when Ma reached the tent she found them engrossed in their evening prayer. Was Ma’s visit an answer to their prayers?

**A few years ago an American Christian lady desirous of taking initiation was torn in a conflict between her devotion to Christ and her love for Ma. Early one morning she had a clear vision of Jesus Christ giving her a ‘Mantra’. Later she was amazed to**

**receive the same mantra from Ma at the time of her initiation !**

Shree 108 Triveni Puri Maharaj had said about Mother -  
"She is like a vast ocean in which all the rivers meet."

The play of Sadhana in Ma depicts the magnificent exposition of the various Sadhanas: their various diversifications (be it dwait, adwait or Buddhism). **In Ma each Sadhana unfolded itself, through all the stages in a matter of hours, whereas for an ordinary Sadhak, from the start to the culmination of the process of each sadhana could mean the achievement of many births. Ma's sadhana was not the activity of one striving for realisation but a divine play in response to the need of man and solely for their benefit.** Those who were fortunate to witness those forms, wonder of wonders, not only looked upon Ma with awe and reverence but also remembered and recorded them for posterity. For those who were present, these visions became a part of their lives.

On being questioned as to 'who She was' during the 'play' of one of these sadhanas pat came the reply "Purna Brahma Narayan". At first the so called abnormal behaviour of the untutored village girl was looked upon with misgivings but later as the significance of the observations gained depth they bowed down to the Spirituality Incarnate.

From the very early age Ma has responded to the spiritual call of Her associates and helped and guided each one spiritually in Her unique way -a touch, a glance, a word.

A grand aunt of Ma repeatedly forgot the process of counting the mantra on her fingers until little Nirmala

playfully taught her the process much to the astonishment of Her mother.

In the passing away of Her brother's, bachelor uncle 'Sona mama' and later of saints like' Haribaba, Bhaiji, and other devotees, Ma subtly guided their last thoughts towards the Eternal, as the Gita says -

"Prayan Kalé Manasa Chalén."

True to tradition Ma emphasised the need of a Guru until the inner Guru revealed itself. "The relation between Guru and Shishya deserves to be called Eternal only when the Guru is possessed of Divine Powers and can and does communicate this power to the latter at the time of his initiation. She also placed before us the ideal Guru Shri Muktanand Giriji Maharaj in whom the required qualities were inherent.

**Complete, unquestioning obedience to the Guru, strict discipline, adherence to the social order, virtuous qualities and conduct based on good moral precepts were helpful towards self-realisation. Truthfulness was the very foundation of good behaviour.**

सत्यनैव पन्था वितता देवयान ।

The purity of the lineage plays a significant role in spiritual attainment. Both Ma's paternal and maternal ancestors had strictly observed the disciplines and norms pertaining to the lineage of Rishi, and there had been successive generations of pandits, sadhaks, yogis and siddha Gurus in their families.

Ma however, is the finest example of how one can live in the Highest Self and yet continue to work in the world.

**Her very action was a ' lesson' to be learnt. In obedience She was obedience itself, in Truth She was Truth itself, She was the ideal child, ideal daughter, ideal friend, ideal guide.** Moral precepts and good behaviour were natural to Her. Discrimination and renunciation were part of Her.

**Her many ashrams are centres where cultural and spiritual ideals are being maintained defying the threat of pollution which materialism, poses. In these institutions the ashram system prevalent in India from the Vedic Age is preserved. The highest ideals are laid down for all the four orders . The sanyasi, the Van Prasthi, the Householder and the Brahmachari.**

The Brahmacharya is the very foundation of all spiritual life. No Yogic kriya is possible without Brahmacharya. According to Ma, if Brahmacharya is strictly maintained in thought, word and deed it automatically leads to a natural unfoldment of the spiritual. Ma's entire life was one of an ideal Brahmacharini. A school for boys and one for girls was started on this basis.

To the householder Ma said- "To those we have adopted the ashram of a householder they should be model householders and live according to the precepts of dharma." **She also said the husband was to be looked upon as the Lord, the wife as Laxmi, the son Gopal and the daughter Kumari. This spirit eventually led to detachment.**

The 'sanyam saptah' is an annual function where all the four ashrams gather together under the umbrella of a number of saints and sages. A week of strict discipline for their spiritual upliftment is a very delightfully and joyful experience for all participating in it. Ma thus infused "Tapasya ..with a spirit of joy and it no longer appeared as a hard chore.

Shree Ma restores amity amongst the religious orders. Ma was looked upon as a leader in spirituality and almost all the saints and sages of the time have paid homage to Her at some time or the other. She was the jewel-crest in Spirituality. Shree Ma held the saints and sages in great esteem and taught by Her own example how they were to be respected.

Shree Gopinath Kavirajji after great deliberation on Shree Ma came to the conclusion that Ma could not be compared to any saint, sage or even an Avtar. To him "Ma was Ma alone."

In the ashrams all kinds of spiritual rites, yagnas, worships, prayers, rituals and the like are observed and performed mainly for the welfare of the world and for the benefit of mankind in keeping with the ideals of the Rishis. The entire society participates in these functions throughout the year and they are performed strictly accordingly to the injunctions of the Shastras.

Great impetus was given by Shree Ma to the spiritual upliftment of Indian womanhood. After years of suppression, with the advent of Ma, Indian girls and ladies received tremendous opportunities for leading a spiritual life."

**"Strisu dustashu varsaneya jayate varnasankara"**

says the Gita. Keeping this in mind, on the suggestion of 'Bhaiji' under the guidance of Shree Ma's was started a Sanskrit school for girls based on the Gurukul System. Here opportunity is given to every girl to mould herself in ascetic way of life, whether she joins the 'Grihastha ashram' or continues to lead the life of a Brahmacharini. Great stress is laid on the study of scriptures and household arts. Strict discipline and code of conduct is also maintained for development of character.

By reintroducing the thread ceremony for girls in accordance with the Shastras. Ma enhanced the status of women by giving them equal rights with men in spiritual and religious activities. In ancient days Indian women like Gargi, Lopamudra, Maitreiji etc. were renowned for their intellectual prowess. The right to take sanyas by women was also encouraged.

Besides the school several opportunities were given to other kumari girls and ladies wishing to lead a spiritual life, for organising religious functions and spiritual discourses and participating fully in them. Thus Ma rejuvenated Indian womanhood with a new dignity and gave them a new independent way of spiritual life.

**In this way Ma brought religion to the doorsteps of the common man. It was no longer the right of the privileged few. The 'Atithi' (guest), 'Daridra' (poor) the 'Rogi (Sick) were all to be served as service to God. Work done in this spirit promoted selflessness and the constant remembrance of the Supreme was maintained throughout the day.**

In an ever-changing world Shree Ma was changeless,

maintaining a perfect equilibrium in all circumstances. "I am, I was and will be" -Ma.

In a world of struggle and strife She was all peaceful.

To the lost She was an epitome of love.

To the shattered She was an embodiment of encouragement.

To the downtrodden She was a light of Hope.

To the lonely She was all in all. To the devotee She was spirituality Incarnate and to the child She was the mother.

In Ma's words "Ma means Atma", Ma means 'Mayi'—Self permeated reposing in the 'Atma'

Blessed are we to see Ma, the Winged Spirit, Eternal, Universal and beyond the limits of time, space and reason.

# **Our Universal Ma Anandamayee : Personification of Love and Compassion**

Kum. Chitra Ghosh

In May, 1961 Ma was in Bombay in the premises of Sri B. K. Shah (Ex-President, Anandamayee Sangha). He is known to all Ma's devotees as "Bhaiya." Ma was residing in a pagoda type wooden cottage in the midst of Bhaiya's Garden.

Bhaiya had requested Ma to pay a visit to Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital, where respected Gopinath Kavirajji was convalescing after his critical cancer operation. Sri Gopinath Kaviraj was one of those philosophers in whom great erudition and high scholarship was combined with deep spirituality and genuine aspiration for experiencing the truths propounded in Philosophy.

Gopibaba - as Ma called him would be released soon and Bhaiya pleaded Ma to have Kheyal to visit the hospital on the day BABA will be discharged. Ma asked Bhaiya to arrange Her visit. The doctors, nurses and staff of the Tata Cancer Hospital were very much eager to have Darshan of Ma. They were surprised at the miraculous cure of Gopibaba from such a critical attack of cancer at this ripe old age.

The date was fixed and I had the rare opportunity, luck and above all Ma's Kripa, to accompany Her with Bhaiya and Paramanand Swami for the visit to the Hospital.

As Ma entered the cabin of Gopibaba he was all set and

ready for his trip back with Ma. The doctors and nurses stood in a line greeting Ma with garlands. Ma accepted their garlands but returned "the Malas" to them after blessing them. However, She kept aside a huge red rose mala. Ma was offered a basket of red big apples also. She distributed all the apples but kept 2 big red apples aside. She looked at me and asked me to keep the Red Rose Mala and the 2 apples, saying in Bengali "Rakho - parey - Lagbe" (keep aside for future distribution).

Now Ma in her sweet voice overflowing with compassion thanked the doctors and nurses for their selfless, untiring Seva of Baba. They all said to Ma "its your blessings and Kheyal and Kripa that miraculously saved Baba -we are only instruments of God -nothing else!"

At this moment I heard someone's feeble voice, as if weeping and muttering Ha Allah thrice. I moved to the next cabin and peeped in. Ma was then supervising the arrangements regarding Baba's journey by wheel chair. Inside the adjacent cabin I saw an Arabic Muslim, cancer patient, with brown beard and hair lying straight on his bed. His body was so much emaciated that he looked like a skeleton. His mid-chest had caved in, tears of pain (acute) and suffering were rolling down his sunken cheeks. "Hiccups" were coming of and on. Now and then he uttered feebly 'Ha Allah !' His eyes were closed. His attending nurse told me he was a terminal lung cancer patient.

I returned near Ma. Ma started to move out towards the corridor and elevator with Gopibaba and his troupe of Doctors and Nurses. Suddenly She reverted back and without a word walked steadily towards the cabin of the Arabian Muslim.

patient. Bhaiya looked puzzled, Paramanandaji looked serene ; the others and Gopibaba were spellbound and just halted on the way stunned !

I entered with Ma into the cabin of the Arabian patient. Bhaiya and all stood outside. Ma said smilingly -"Baba, I have come to you, look at me!" saying this, She caressed the caved in chest of the terminal cancer patient with Her soft heavenly blissful compassionate touches thrice. I felt that by doing this Ma was giving him liberation from human bondage or mortal coils. Then She wiped his overflowing tears with the corner of Her dhoti. Now Ma took the Red Rose Garland from my hand and placed it on the neck and chest of the muslim patient. Soon after Ma took from me one of the big apples and put it into his folded hands. The other apple Ma gave to his nurse. Now the patient slowly opened his eyes and gazed in gratitude at Ma -he took Ma's hand and put it on his head. Ma made a gesture signifying that he repeats within his Koran Mantra. Ma and the patient had changes of glances. Ma stood near him five minutes. Her eyes had an X-Ray look through him as if She was witnessing his past, present and future all at the same time. I just wept, to see this union (Spiritual) of a true devotee and God, ("Bhakta -Bhagabaner Milon ...:in Bengali) irrespective of caste, creed ,religion and nationality. Ma knew this was his first-cum-last Darshan. Ma walked backwards instead of turning round so that the patient could see Her till She went out. The doctors told Ma that his days were numbered. Next morning on my own I asked Bhaiya to find out how the Arabian patient was. In the afternoon Bhaiya told me that he (patient) died the same night peacefully. I rushed to tell Ma but before I could utter any words Ma told me in Bengali

- "Arab Desher Baba Chole Gachhay".

"Arabian Baba is no more"! So Ma's unsolicited Kripa (Ahetuk) hastened his sojourn back to the kingdom of heaven where there is everlasting peace. The Arabian Baba was no more."!

*Only' He knows to whom*

*You reveal Yourself*

*and once you have known Him you become*

*one with Him " (Tulsidas Ram Charit Manas)*

# The Significance of The Mother's Advent

Dr. Govindagopal Mukhopadhyaya

This holy land of India has been hailed since time immemorial as heaven on earth—*divah kantimat khandam ekam*—because Gods and Goddesses choose to come down here alone again and again to manifest their divinity. Here the spirit is made flesh, the abstract becomes concrete, the divine manifests itself as human. The unfailing promise is repeated both in the Bhagavad Gita as well as in Sri Sri Chandi that whenever there is a gloom, the light will reveal itself :

Yada Yada hi Dharmasya, glanir bhavati Bharata!  
abhyutthanam adharmasya tada / imanam srjamy aham II  
Paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya ca duskrtam!  
dharmasamasthapanathaya sambhavami yuge yuge II

(Gita - 4,7-8)

Ittham yada yada badha danavottha bhavisyati.I  
tada tada vatiry a harh karisyamy' arusanjsatan, II  
(Chandi 11,51)

The references to the duskrita, danava, ari etc all signify the dark or hostile forces that shut out the light, which is always indicated by the term 'deva', which do not basically mean the god but that which is luminous or effulgent.

Darkness is always dispelled by the light and the main darkness, as is well-known, is nothing but ajnana or non-cognition, ignorance.

Even when the divine power manifests itself, it is seldom recognised or known as such due to ignorance. This has been beautifully brought out in the Kena Upanisad, section three. The gods became victorious by vanquishing the demons, once after a long fight. As we all know, the two forces of darkness and light are in eternal conflict, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, overpowering its opponent. The gods or the forces of light after their victory this time became very proud and were full of vain and glory. This was duly noticed by the supreme source of all power and light, which is termed as Brahman in the Upanisads, because it is the vast, the great ocean of light, of which the gods are only sparks or limited manifestations.

To remove their pride, born of utter ignorance, Brahman appeared before them in the form of a Yaksa, an apparition in the form of a Mammon, a strange being. Being curious to know its identity, the gods, first of all, sent Agni to ascertain who was he. When Agni came near it, the Yaksa enquired what god was he and what was his power. Agni proudly answered that he was Agni and he could burn down everything on earth. On hearing this confident self-assertion on his part, the Yaksa just put a piece of dry grass before him and requested him to burn it out. With all his power being put forth, Agni failed to burn that single small piece of grass. He came back humiliated and reported to the other gods that he could not fathom who actually was this Yaksa. The gods then sent as their representative, vayu or the Wind-god to probe the identity of this Yaksa. When he came near the Yaksa, the same question was put to him once again and

vayu replied that he was the Wind, who could blow away all things on earth. Yaksa put before him the same tiny piece of dry grass but even after exerting to the utmost power in him, Wind failed to move it even slightly. He also thus being humbled came back almost dumbfounded and reported to the gods that he was unable to fathom the mystery of this curious apparition of this Yaksa. Thereafter, the gods had no other option but to request their head or king, Devaraj Indra to go himself to resolve the mystery of this Yaksa. But then a strange thing happened. As soon as Indra approached the Yaksa, it vanished and in that vacuum (akasa) appeared a resplendent form of a goddess, **Ma Haimavati**. She then revealed to Indra that the victory of the gods over the demons or powers of darkness was actually the **victory of Brahman**, through which they have all been glorified. Only then through this intimation of **Ma Haimavati** to Indra that the gods came to realise how insignificant all of them were, with no power whatsoever actually belonging to them. The supreme source of all powers is Brahman and Brahman alone. This narrative in the **Kena Upanisad** illustrates three things: (i) the insignificance of the gods, (ii) the significance of the female principle or Sakti, here described as Ma Haimavati, in revealing the true nature of the Saktiman, the ultimate Being called Brahman, in which all Sakti or Power ultimately rests and (iii) that ultimate Being is beyond the grasp of all, even of the gods. It is indescribable, indefinable, ineffable. It is **svayamprakasa, svatahprakasa**, self-revealed i.e. not to be revealed by anything outside itself.

Whenever and wherever it manifests itself, it is through its own nature or self. This we find clearly stated in that wonderful hymn in the **Rigveda** called **Devi-sukta or vak-Sukta**, comprised of eight verses. **Aham eva svayam idam vadami** i.e. I myself am revealing my own identity, In the

Durga-saptasati or the Chandi, as it is commonly called in Bengal, there is again that profound declaration ,

**Ekai'váham jagaty atra  
dvitiyá Ká mamá' pará, '**

In this entire existence, I alone am here. Where is the second other beyond Me?"

This solemn affirmation of the One without a second is the keynote of the supreme wisdom, which has been made manifest in this holy land from time immemorial. Through it alone the demon of division is vanquished, the darkness of ignorance that is heavy on hearts is dispelled, the night is transformed into light. Again and again the demon of darkness manifests itself to cover this knowledge of unity, sometimes as Madhu and Kaitabha, sometimes as Mahisasura sometimes as Chanda and Munda and again as Sumbha and Nisumbha, The world is ever full of division and discord, which are the progeny of the darkness of ignorance but along with it is also the comforting promise of the manifestation of light, as we find it voiced gain and again.

Even at the end of the last century in 1896, there was again such a manifestation in this holy land of that divine power in its utter purity and spontaneity. This time the divine power manifested in the form of a woman, in her own true nature of Mother, which was a unique phenomenon, Born in a small hamlet in a far-off corner of the East Bengal, now called Bangladesh, almost unnoticed by all, this Mother Anandamayee, as She came to be known later on throughout the world, gradually revealed Her true nature to Her devotees. She was what She ever is. There was no becoming,

no process, no Sadhana, it was all self-unfoldment of the true being, On being asked about Her identity, She just revealed that She was 'Purna Brahma Narayana'. Hardly anyone realised then nor does anyone truly comprehend even now what She actually meant by this astounding declaration. It was just a reaffirmation of the age-old revelation, which has been voiced time and again here in India since the time of the Vedas through such utterances which are called Mahakyas, Great Utterances, as 'Aha Brahma Asmi' 'I am that Brahman'.

Though every being in this world is in reality no other than Brahman, yet all of us are unaware of this basic, covered as we all are by the thick veil of ignorance (anrtena hi pr tyudhah). This ignorance makes our true nature false or unreal and instead makes the false appear as true. Our phenomenal being alone is true to us, while our true being always remains hidden. Mother Anandamayee took the human form like all of us, yet She was ever stationed in Her true being since Her birth. She played all the roles to their utmost perfection, a devoted and ever faithful wife closely following to the letter all the commands of Her husband, a loving mother to millions ever awake to their pangs of sorrow, keen to render all help to remove their sorrows and sufferings. Throughout Her long life She was always on the move, never resting at one place for long and yet all places were one and the same to Her. This spirit of oneness under all circumstances was Her marked characteristic, through which She tried to inculcate among others the true spirit of utter unity in which She lived forever throughout Her life.

Let us try to imbibe that spirit in this strife-torn world of ours, if we really claim to be Her true devotees. She came to remind us that all is useless and full of pain except the

remembrance of the One, call it Hari or call it Rama or call it Siva or by any other name. She had written with Her own hand to my revered father that during those days of Her early life, She used to wait till others went to sleep and then She will only weep for the plight of others, who do not care to partake of this divine delight that is stored in the Name of the Lord.

If we are really sincere, we must try to wipe off those tears from the eyes of the compassionate Mother by devoting ourselves solely and sincerely to that one pursuit alone viz. the attainment of the One, who alone Is it the Reality, who alone is our Consciousness and who alone is our Bliss-Sat-Cit-Ananda. She lived, moved and had Her being in this Sacchidananda alone and that is why Sri Aurobindo on seeing Her photograph had commented: "She lives in the Sacchidananda Consciousness." She wanted everyone to live as such and that is why she manifested Herself to exemplify this in Her own being.

# Matrika Chaturthi

Amal Kumar Roy

The air was resonant with the name of the divine mother – Ma Anandamayee. Glory to the Mother – Jai Ma, Jai Ma. On that dark fortnight of Baishakh, an ecstasy had gripped one and all. Some wondered, “Who is this Ma?” The written chronicles on the holy mother unroll a record of miracles. Many of these appear unbelievable, and impenetrable mystery, The world bows low to pay its obeisance at Mother’s feet!

**On the fourth lunar day of the dark fortnight in the month of Baishakh, a baby girl was born in the village of Kheora, now in Bangladesh.** Who was she really? The question was uppermost in every mind. All who could come close to Mother were flooded by her divine love, to some she had been a guru, few had even attained liberation by her grace. **But as Srikrishna had told Arjuna in the Gita, “Even among the thousands who attain siddhi, only a few know who I am.” Even the eminent philosopher of our times, Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, could not fathom Mother and prayed to her,..... Ma, you reveal yourself.....” Anandamayee Ma is indeed, a wonder in the world of spirituality.**

Ma’s very appearance is mystery to us. Why did she choose the dark fortnight? Why on the fourth lunar day? Is the day, the lagna, an ordinary sequence as in the case of all other mortals? Lesser mortals like us muse over this. Seeker of ‘highest reality’ muses over this. **He has heard from Sri Sri Sitaram Das Onkarnath that Nama and Nami are one and indivisible** in essence. He sits down with the name-‘Ma’-chanting in his lips.

The Seeker sits down to meditate on Ma, yet Ma herself was meditation; Ma is the worshipped, Ma is the worship; Ma is the goal, Ma is the means. Slowly he delves deep into the darkness of his mind. **His mind resonates with the sweet name of Ma – waves of joy rise and fall inside him.** When he leaves the asana, his mind is not same as before.

But why did Ma favour a dark fortnight to descend on this world? The Gita had said, “Sa nisa pasyato mune.....” What is daylight to the ordinary man is night to the yogi and vice-versa. Shankaracharya had said, “when a lamp burns within a pot with many holes on it, one can see only rays of light emanating from the holes. The lamp, the source of light, remains outside our vision. So also, the light within ourselves is revealed through our sense organs but itself remains hidden.”

Perhaps that was why Ma is so incomprehensible to us. She was immanent in the entire world yet hidden from our eyes. Even when she decided to reveal herself to us, she did not deviate from her inner self. She decided on the dark fortnight, because what was dark to us, was illumination to a spiritual deity like Mother. We have heard her saying, “I do not arrive or depart.”

The only way to understand Mother, was to understand the Matrika Sakti of the Supreme Being, Brahman. The ‘Highest Reality’ reveals the whole universe; Matrika is the power inherent in that ‘reality’. The ego of the individual living being, the letters in the alphabet – all are but revelations of Matrika Sakti.

The Seeker sits down for meditation on the first hour (pratipada) of dark fortnight. His heart beats to the rhythm of the universe, which is prana, the first manifestation of 'Chaitanya' in the process of creation of the universe. He keeps chanting the name incessantly. The letters (varna) melt and his consciousness spurts upwards along with it. A divine light (jyoti) dances before his mind's eye and an unworldly tune of flute fills his mind.

His japa enters its second phase- from **baikhari**, japa proceeds to **madhyama**. From the point of view of Time, pratipada enters dvitiya, the second quarter. The darkness inside his "mind's sky" (chittakash) is now illuminated with divine light. The mantra ceases – Ma herself appears before him. Time is progressing from the second to the third quarter.

Some yogis think that the appearance of the divine deity is all that there is to one's sadhana. But for this seeker a sense of imperfection still prevails. **True, that Divine manifestation of what Pratyabhijna philosophy terms as Isvara Tattva has been experienced, yet one has to travel still further to experience Sadasiva Tattva to know Ma in her svarupa.** An unimpeded urge for the 'Highest Reality' swells in him. The reality of which Abhinava Gupta in his Tantraloke III-100, has described: "If the Highest reality did not manifest in infinite variety but remained cooped up within its solid singleness, it would neither be the Highest power nor consciousness but something like a jar". The Seeker further remembers with gratitude what Brahmarsi Satya Dev and Sri Mat Narendra Nath Brahmachariji teach in 'Satya Partistha'.

The Seeker sits down again and sinks deep in meditation ... The word of Upanisad begins ringing in his mind....'Yame Vaisa bruntetena labhyah.'

The Seeker, strictly speaking, still in Jiva consciousness realizes his limitations and feels so helpless, seeks for His grace- 'Saranagatoham -Saranagatoham -Saranagatoham and ultimately loses his consciousness. He transcends into what is called 'Para'. He opens his eyes and sees ..... not in space within mind but on the dust and sand of the earth. MA HAD ARRIVED in Kheora. Ma had revealed Herself in Chaturthi - the fourth quarter - the stage transcending Baikhari, Madhyama and Pasyanti. She reveals herself from darkness -Hence her appearance in Krisnapaksa, the dark fortnight.

Mother is visible eternally to this seeker in her full glory. The Seeker knows her and becomes one with Her. The entire universe vibrates and dances in his consciousness, in the form of Ma when the seeker attains the fourth stage of Vak, i.e. Para, keeping all his sadhana hidden. Whenever, that moment comes to the devotee, it is Krisna Chaturthi, for him, an ever Lagna of Ma's descent on the earth in the first month of the year Baisakh -which is beginning of new year - and for the devotee a new birth - He is now Dvija

# Anandamayee Ma – Beyond Imagination!

Shri Shyamal Kumar Bose

The author first saw Anandamayee Ma some time in the year 1947 at Satta Gopal Geetasharm in the presence of Gopal Thakur. She was talking in a very simple language enquiring welfare of many including **myself!** Her words (**Kamon Achhis**) touched my heart as if my nearest relation is asking. I was unable to move from there. It seemed some unknown force of **Love** is preventing me to leave the place. The feelings are now expressed by Jean Herbert who, although, did not understand her spoken words, yet realized fragrance of her marvellous love and expressed in appropriate manner “seeing the radiant face of Anandamayee, a supreme spiritual personality and hearing her laughter, somehow, I guessed that she is an incarnation of joy. Touched by the caress of her glance, I simply realized that her heart is overflowing with love”. Later, I had many opportunities to witness assembly of intellects, advanced spiritual practitioners and theologists sitting at her feet discussing about the Formless which is attributed and unattributed. It was an informal and homely gathering. Everything seemed to me friendly and congenial. All of a sudden her smiling face and pleasant look turned towards me with attraction which I felt even at that tender age.

Realizing ‘Herself’ to be one of my nearest persons, I felt like talking to Her. But my voice was choked due to nervousness. Sri Maa looked at me. Bibhuda sitting by the side made the situation lighter by whispering “**only look at the face of Maa, you will get all answers**”. Later I realized that talking to Maa – a supreme spiritual personality

demands tremendous stability and courage. Even understanding real meaning of her simple expressions were more difficult. A French disciple sitting quietly there was asked by someone **“you don’t understand anything of what Ma says”?** His reply at once was **“who does”?** This reply is truly correct. Meanwhile someone casually asked Maa **“What are you thinking when you sit in silence”?** She turned Her attention with an immediate response **“Nothing, nothing at all. Mind is absolutely clean of thoughts (Jhara Ponchha)”**.

One cannot realize this state of mind unless the thoughts and desires are totally eliminated. Once this condition is fulfilled, the process of meditation is triggered. **“ Whatever we do or achieve is through mind (Osho)”**.

Anandamayee on several occasions expressed **“State of meditation is not to be achieved. It is your hidden spiritual treasure to be made. Known by emptying mind of thoughts”**. It is a state of clarity of mind which is all the time restless in confusion. More scientifically meditation is inversely proportional to mind overpowered by thoughts and desires. In a state of nothingness as it is with Anandamayee Ma, mind remains fully relaxed free from bondage, from delusion. **‘A state of Zero Entropy’** with no restlessness due to thought clouds. Once the mind becomes clear then you see your **Self** in the mirror. This critical moment comes of itself and one should be fully prepared for it absorbing the spiritual power of his Guru. Then only the vision becomes sharp, penetrating with absolute clarity and the soul no more remains captive in the clutches of the materialistic world. **“Remember, real vision is that vision where the wish to see anything more vanishes for ever,**

to hear that which when heard the desire to hear any thing, for ever silenced".

The aim should therefore be to make desperate efforts to drive away thoughts and desires of the materialistic world yet remain conscious and alert from inside. Ramana Maharishi called it **"wakeful thoughtlessness"**. One needs to be conscious of this all the time even if he is engaged in office or at home. The very first principle therefore is to realize that, meditation is not something to be achieved, 'be resolved and recognized'. Just as fire is enveloped by smoke, just as mirror is covered by dust, just as an embryo is covered by the womb, so is the Atman' is covered by thoughts and desires (Bhagvat Geeta). 'What is wanted is genuine awakening after which nothing remains to be attended', said Maa to one devotee.

Atmanand got unique opportunities to witness many private and open interview with persons of varying educational and spiritual background. In all the cases She responded in appropriate words appealing to each person's nature and feelings. Once in response to a question posed jointly by Dr. Pannalal and a foreign devotee, Ma Anandamayee expressed **"It is also true that there is no necessity to pray to God because he is with you all the time without characterizing the instruction probably given by his Guru"**. But it is to be kept in mind **"to surrender fully to the supreme power in the first instance and only then the power will compel you to do what is required to be done to uncover Atman"**.

In the simple language of Thakur Ram Krishna **"God has brought us on this earth and it is His duty to be with us all the time and look after us. However one**

cannot experience this so long he is in the process of knowing 'Self'.

Kamala Sahai wanted to know how does one know that he had surrendered? Maa's reply was "**when you are hungry and eat you are satisfied and so you know that you have eaten just so when you surrender, you are satisfied**". Subsequently Maa smilingly turned Her face towards Gopal Thakur and whispered "**the words came out of its own probably because his Guru has given similar instruction to the foreign devotee**". Gopal dada simply nodded and smiled.

Recapitulating all these heavenly events I personally feel that I am fortunate enough to have 'Darshan' of Anandamayee Ma, went nearer to Her, talked, obtained blessings and spiritual strength to lead a noble life right from my educational to research career.

PRAY, NOT YOUR DESIRE MAY

BE DONE, BUT 'HIS'.

THINK OF HIM

OF EVERY BREATH SINCE HE

BREATHS THROUGH YOU.

JAIMAA

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