

CONTENTS

English Section

1. Matri Vanī	...	...	...	203
2. Mother—As I have Known Her — Girjashanker Bhattacharya			....	206
3. Some Recollections —Arun Prakash Banerji		...	....	216
4. Jai Ma ! —Saroj	....	...	...	231
5. A visit to the Ashram of Sri Anandamayi Ma—Madeleine Langevine		...	...	234
6. From the Diary of a European —Melita Maschmann		...	...	240
7. Matri Lila	...	....	...	247



- May, 1968

*Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,
So there is also a door to Knowledge.*

Mātri Vāni

How can there be an ego where the *Ātmā* is? In the sphere of 'mine and yours', there the ego exists, does it not? Renunciation and attraction dwell side by side. He Himself is both change and immutability. Live for the revelation of the Self hidden within you. He who does not live thus is committing suicide. Try to remove the veil of ignorance by the contemplation of God. Endeavour to tread the path of immortality: become a follower of the Immortal.

*

*

*

To carry out scrupulously the Guru's instructions is the greatest service. It is written: "The gratification of one's own will and pleasure is called self-indulgence, the fulfilment of Sri Krishna's will and pleasure is called love." Therefore: to put into practice without reasoning the Guru's orders means engaging in the greatest service of all.

*

*

*

Wherever you are, from that very state you must obey the Guru's commands. Of course, at times the Guru Himself arranges for the carrying out of His orders. If you exert yourself, the power to live according to His injunctions may manifest. One should have complete faith in the Guru's precepts.

*

*

*

This body is not here to reply to your questions. In actual truth this body does not stay with another, nor eat

or wear anything given by another, nor enter the home of another, nor converse with another. Then again, expressed from a different angle, this body, as it were, speaks to its own mothers, fathers and friends. To deliver a talk or lecture does not occur to this body. As you ring the bell so you hear the sound.

*

*

*

He alone IS; therefore, He Himself speaks to Himself for the sake of His own revelation. The ONE who appears as movement as well as stability, He is also the *Akṣara*—that which is indestructible. On the surface and in the deepest depths is none but He; in movement He is spontaneous movement where, although ever remaining motionless, He is perpetual motion.

*

*

*

The store of action which leads to vain results, vain experience—appearing to be quite useless—even in the guise of futility is He and no other. This is so where the question of store or no store of action does not arise, where everything exists, although there is nothing: One's own true Self—the Self reposing within Itself.

*

*

*

The delightful words or sayings that help towards Self-realization, anything leading in that direction, should be accepted. Just as a thirsty man cannot forget water, so should one endeavour to keep the Goal awake within oneself.

*

*

*

Different kinds of flowers are prescribed for different kinds of *pūjā*; similarly there are various mantras and various kinds of rosaries. To practise *japa* with the help

of beads is certainly necessary. But when *japa* comes about of itself—spontaneously—then of course there is no more need to count. However, as long as one performs *japa* by effort, one will have to keep count of it. There is all the difference between doing *japa* and *japa* occurring of itself. The mind must reach a condition where it cannot remain without the remembrance of God.

*

*

*

One should make an effort to practise *sādhana*, in other words, to go to one's real home. If the mind is not turned in that direction there will be foolishness, misery—suffering. As if by compulsion the mind runs after the gratification of its desires, which leads to suffering. The mind has become uncontrollable. By the repetition of a divine name or mantra and by meditation this illness can be cured.

*

*

*

You have not seen Him, but you are yearning for Him—because He is your very own. Does one pine for that which one is seeing? One's own has been lost, or rather is hidden behind a screen, this is why one is hankering after it.

== == ==

Mother—As I Have Known Her*

Girijashanker Bhattacharya

On the eve of the summer vacation of 1925, my very revered friend Rai Bahadur Pran Gopal Mukherjee, then Dy. Post Master General at Dacca, invited me there, holding but as a bait the likelihood of hearing the exposition of the *Bhāgavata* by two very learned Goswamis and also meeting a "Māji" who, the Rai Bahadur added, had impressed him very deeply. I did not give much thought to the Māji, but accepted my friend's invitation with some alacrity as both the Goswamis he mentioned commanded great respect as sound exponents of the doctrine of the Bengali school of Vaishnavism. So I went to Dacca; and a day or two after reaching there, I accompanied the Rai Bahadur and Srijut Nani Gopal Banerji, then lecturer in Sanskrit, Dacca University, to Shahbagh, a magnificent garden of the Nawab of Dacca. The late Ramani Mohan Chakravarti, known subsequently as Bholanath, husband of Ma Anandamayi, was Superintendent of the Shahbag gardens.

Ramani Babu was then living in a small building in the garden with his family, i.e. Ma Anandamayi and one or two other members. There were two rooms in the building, one rather small and the other a little bigger. The shades of evening were gathering, and the extensive and carefully tended garden looked sombre owing to the tall and leafy trees, filling our hearts with reverence, while the sweet perfume of the numerous flowering plants nearby added a rare charm. We were given *āsanas* on the floor of the bigger room and near the door between the rooms sat

* The following are portions of an article published in the book :
"Ma Anandamayi" by Devotees, in 1946. The book has been exhausted years ago and will not be reprinted.

Ramani Babu while in the small room sat Mataji. She did not yet speak to any stranger, and questions put to her would be answered through Ramani Babu. She sat partly veiled so that I could not get a full view of her face.

No sooner had I taken my seat, than I felt myself in a peculiar state of mind, of which I had had no previous experience and the reason for which is yet a mystery to me. I had gone to see Mataji with hardly any preconceived notion, and indeed I did not expect to be very much interested. The state of mind of which I speak, is difficult to describe; in any case I cannot give an adequate idea of it. All thoughts and ideas seemed to have vanished from my mind; and practically oblivious as I was of the surroundings, there was a sense of pleasure, very great pleasure, arising from what I do not know. Almost as long as I was in the presence of Mataji my mind was in that state. I left the place however with the Rai Bahadur, somewhat surprised at what had happened, and spoke to him about it on the way. He gave me the *sāstric* name for it. What struck me then, as it strikes me now, is that this was an experience which came, as it were of itself. I should have regarded it as accidental were it not for the fact that a similar experience came to me next year (1926) at 'Shibnivas' in the Nadia District in the same circumstances, i. e. sitting near Mataji while the evening closed upon us. I was therefore led to think that on both these occasions, Mataji, for reasons best known to her, induced the peculiar state of mind in me, and since I found it very pleasurable I felt attracted towards her. Thus began an acquaintance which her ineffable grace has ripened into a relation no whit less dear than the dearest in the world.

By 1927, Mataji began to talk to all who sought her blessings, without the restrictions she had imposed on herself so far. Oh! For the glorious days we passed in her company then! Now she does not enter the dwelling-rooms in the residence of *grihasthas*; and wherever she goes she has

to be accommodated in a temple, dharmasala or ashram. But in those days she came to our homes just like a member of the family. The ladies of the house would prepare their beds alongside that of Mataji where they would sleep with her. But generally sleep there would be very little, for there would be *kirtana* and conversation with her till very late at night, sometimes even till the early hours of the morning. On those occasions Mataji would listen sympathetically to all, sometimes speak of her own early experiences and above all, by kindness of speech, gracious looks and sweet manners, inspire not only love and affection for her but also a faith that her presence enveloped us and would protect us in all circumstances. We did not care to ask ourselves whether she was a *Siddha Mahātmā* or an *Avatāra* (divine incarnation). We felt that she was *Mother* and that we might depend upon her. Could we but be with her always in this life and hereafter, we thought we would be perfectly happy, and more we did not want. Thus it is seen that she made an assault upon our hearts, and they were hers before we knew it—the intellect came into play much later.

In February 1945, Mataji's bhaktas at Berhampore (Bengal) made arrangements for celebrations lasting for a fortnight in view of her presence in their midst, and some *sannyāsis* and *sādhus* travelled all the way from Benares and other distant places to attend the function. I met there a very learned Swami of the *Śrī Sampradāya* who had come from Vrindaban. In the course of conversation he asked me : "What do you think of Anandamayi Ma?" I replied in a non-committal manner : "The Divine Power (*Daiṇi Śakti*) seems to be manifest in her." The Swamiji said : "Mataji is certainly a saint of the highest order. We cannot however, believing as we do in the *Śāstras* (Hindu Scriptures), agree with people who declare that she is an *Avatāra* or that she is the *Bhagavati* Herself."

Another very old saintly person, widely recognized as a *sādhu* of high order, on the other hand, prostrated himself

before Mataji, saying that she was the Universal Mother Herself (*Svayam Jagadamba*). When someone asked Mataji why she allowed him to fall at her feet, for at this his disciples were mortified, she replied: "Tell them that the feet of the Baba are always on my head."

I am of the opinion that for us it is an idle and entirely meaningless discussion whether Mataji is an *Avatāra* or a *Siddha Mahātmā*. While all other creatures come to the world in accordance with the law of *karma*, the *Avatāras* come of their own free will. *Siddha Mahātmās*, as is well known, are also free from *māyā* and come to the earth of their own will, proceeding from their *samskāras* of doing good to the world. Some hold, however, that the difficulty of regarding Mataji as a *Siddha Mahātmā* is unsurmountable. For we have no information of any *sādhana* by her in this body.

On this point there is no room for any doubt. I have made enquiries for myself. The first occasion when Mataji was discovered to be in *Bhāva Samādhi* was when she lived in our village (Ashtagram), and I have the evidence of reliable people, indeed of everybody living near about the place, that it lasted for nineteen hours during which she was, as it were, lifeless, so much so that ants gathered round her eyes. The different stages that she seemed to pass through after this came naturally and were completed within a short time and also without any instruction whatsoever from any living being, indeed, for some time, in spite of the opposition of relatives. All this points to the strange but incontrovertible fact that the various stages and forms of *sādhana* or spiritual exercises and evolution took place automatically in her body without any active agency on her part. The theory that her *siddhi* has not been attained in this body but in a previous one does not either seem to be tenable since she has said that she had no previous birth.

Again "*Brahmavid Brahma eva bhavati*" ("one who

knows the Brahman becomes the Brahman Himself"). This too some hold is not applicable to Mataji because, as she says there has never been any question of knowing or not knowing so far as she is concerned. This superconsciousness may be regarded as her very nature (*svabhāva*).

This diversity of opinion regarding her essential nature hardly touches Mataji and her reply to those who ask her : "What really are you ?" hits in my opinion the nail right on the head. She says : "I am what you think I am."

In 1927, when Mataji was staying with us for a day or two at Rajshahi, late Professor Aswini Kumar Mukerji put some questions to her. In those days Mataji used to have *Bhāva Samādhi*, sometimes so deep that she seemed almost lifeless. Hardly could any respiration be perceived and the pulse felt at the wrists. Sometimes again she would roll from one end of the room to the other ; and on one particular occasion in 1926, I remember she moved forward and backward on a fairly large platform in the Ashram of the late Balananda Brahmachari Maharaj at Deoghar. Her movements were so rhythmical and yet so awe-inspiring that I, for one, was reminded of the Cosmic Dance of Devi Kali. Again at times, Mataji would in her *āvesha* (trancelike state) utter sweet and sonorous *stotras* (verses) not however in ordinary Sanskrit and with a preponderance of seed *mantras* (*bijas*).

Referring to Mataji's deep *samādhi*, Professor Mukherji asked : "How do you feel when you are in that state ?" I am afraid she will not answer such a question now. She tried then also to avoid answering ; but the Professor, old as he was, respectfully insisted. Mataji then said : "As you sit in this room you can see everything outside through the doors and windows, but when they are shut you cannot. This body feels as if all its doors and windows were shut. Again when you take a handful of mud and wash it in the water of a pond you see how finely it spreads on the water, So does this body feel". I do not know what

Prof. Mukherji understood but to me the meaning was clear. I understood Mataji to say that she became inwardly conscious while her outward consciousness received a check for the time being and she had a sense of expansion—Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Expansion.

Then the Professor asked: "Do you perceive the presence of any god or goddess at that time?" Mataji tried to parry a good long while saying that gods and goddesses might be seen if one wished to do so. But the Professor insisted: "Do *you* see them?" And finally she said: "They were seen before." I understood therefore, that she had passed from all forms to the Formless. Thus must all seekers after Truth and Reality do before their efforts are crowned with success.*

Mataji, to me, is one through whom shines forth in all its effulgence the Infinite, and when I bow down to her, I bow down to *It (Tat)*. At the same time, however, I am not blind, nay I value very much the human kindness in her, her solicitude for the least of our comforts when we are with her, the sweetness of her speech and smile, the affectionate inquiry about our welfare. Call her an *Avatāra* if you like or a *Siddha Mahātmā* if you prefer, it makes no difference to me for all practical purposes.

Is it a tiny tot that has been brought to her? See how her face beams. Does a school or college girl want to talk to her? How kindly she receives them! Can you be half as tender as she is to the sick and decrepit? And has anybody ever had elsewhere such a balm of sympathy at the loss of a near and dear one? Yet, if you are tired of walking in the mazes of philosophy, in a few words she points out the way and you are thrilled with surprise and

* In Mataji's case there was never any effort. All the various stages came to her of themselves and as a play, not in order to attain anything.