

CONTENTS

1. Matri Vani	...	...	...	...	73
2. Matri Satsang		—Swami Bhagawatananda Giri	...		75
3. From the Life of Mataji		—Bithika Mukerji	...		90
4. Miracles Happen Even To-day	...	...	...		104
5. What Mataji is Not		—Vijayananda	...		116
6. What Sri Sri Anandamayi Mataji Means to Me		—R. Rattan Singh	...		128
7. Matri Lila	...	...	...		136



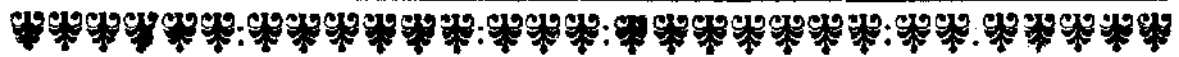
Ānanda Vārtā



Vol. XXIII]

APRIL, 1976

[No. 2



*The One who is the Eternal, the Atman,
He Himself is the pilgrim on the path of Immortality,
He is all in all, He alone is.*

Mātri Vāni

Provide your mind with pure nourishment. If you let your mind dwell on God most of the time, there is hope that all the people around you will start thinking about God. When the screen of consciousness has become immaculate, God reveals Himself. Whatever one's state may have been at the last breath, in keeping with that very state one receives in the present.

*

*

*

By effort attachment cannot be given up. Only by strengthening the longing to find Him, the yearning for other things will fade away. It is the nature of worldly things to pass off. Bliss and peace are the aim of everybody ; for these are in fact present deep within everyone and therefore can never be relinquished. Only that which in any case has to fall away can be given up.

* * *

One has to become agitated with eagerness. Restless eagerness is our very nature ; the desperate eagerness to realize Him comes to us of itself. At the recovery of one's true wealth this restlessness will disappear.

* * *

As long as one is able to hold on to anything, one must try to hold on to the One. It is imperative to become entirely single-minded, and one's duty to remain concentrated exclusively on the One. By adhering to one name, one contemplation, one thought—one-pointedness will be achieved.

* * *

Firm faith is needed, yet it is sorely lacking. By performing action desire will not be brought to an end. If one goes on doing one thing after another, ever more desires will spring up endlessly. But by fostering one single desire, namely the desire to find God, other desires become extinct. Just as when, without paying attention to the twigs and branches, one waters the roots of a tree day after day, it will be seen that the old leaves fall off and new leaves start growing;

exactly in a similar manner, if without looking in any other direction, a person simply and exclusively practises the Name, he can be liberated from his old tendencies and inclinations and gain new life.

* * *

The fruit of action directed towards God does not go to waste. The results of one's deeds in former births have to be enjoyed and suffered. As long as karmayoga in God is not practised so long will He not spare man from the experience of the consequences of his accumulated actions.

* * *

The meaning of the "*Pranava*"¹ is "indestructible Brahman," also the letter or syllable expressing Brahman. It is contained in all other letters of the alphabet ; it is that which cannot be dissolved ; this is the *Śabda Brahman*².

1. The syllable "OM" is called "*Pranava*".

2. *Śabda Brahman*—The eternal sound that is the first manifestation of the Supreme Reality and lies at the root of all subsequent creation.

Matri Satsang

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

(Translated from Bengali)

Question : Mataji, would you please speak to us about Samyam Vrata.

Mataji : All the mahātmās have given so many wise counsels regarding Samyam Vrata. Have you not listened ?

Questioner : You can't get away with this kind of reply.

Mataji : First digest all that you have heard.

Questioner : It is difficult to digest the advice of the mahātmās. They talk about rather superior topics.

Mataji : The mahātmās represent the spirit of the Brahman and are akin to āchāryas. Just listen to their various precepts.

Questioner : Mataji, we are very ordinary folk. We cannot understand those high sounding discourses.

Mataji : You must try to assimilate what you have heard.

Question : How should one participate in a Samyam Vrata ?
What harm is there in not taking part ?

Mataji : (Referring to Swami Swatantrananda) Swatantra has already covered these points.

Swatantranandaji : Ma, they want to hear it from you. Please tell them something about *samyam*.

Jogesh Brahmachāri : Look, Ma, all these people come here only to behold you. They don't even glance anywhere else.

Mataji : Yes, indeed. They look towards you. You have to speak. This body is such a little girl. Swatantra, do speak !

Swatantranandaji : This time is set apart for your conversation. How can I speak ?

Mataji : As you play the instrument so you will hear.

Jogesh Brahmachari : Ma, towards whom is your glance directed ?

Mataji : If I say that I am not looking at anybody, what then ?

Jogesh Br. In which direction do you cast your looks ?

Mataji : Ah, how well you have spoken ! Who looks at whom ? This question only arises if there are eyes. I do not go to anyone's house, I do not speak to anybody, nor eat anyone's food, nor do I look at anybody.

Jogesh Brahmachari : Indeed, you yourself speak through the mouths of all.

Mataji : How true ! You alone exist. There is nothing else. It is He alone who exists. Here the question of juggling with words does not arise. When playing with words the triangle (*triputi*)¹ remains.

1. *Triputi* The triple manifestation of the supreme unity of the One in time, such as subject, object and the relation between the two; or knower, knowledge, knowing, etc.

Questioner : We are not conversant with Vedanta. We do not understand all this !

Swatantranandaji : Oh, why do you blame Vedanta ?

Mataji : What ? have I said anything wrong ?

Swatantranandaji : No, Ma, you have spoken from a high level.

Mataji : Some advocate that creation (birth) is illusory. Where creation itself is a myth, the question of what is or what is not does not arise. Whatever you may suggest, so it is. Argument can come into being only when there is difference and distinction.—This has been said by way of explanation.

Questioner : Mataji, would you please enlarge on this in accordance with the theory of dualism (*dvaita vāda*) !

Mataji : In dualism there are you and I—is not that so ? As long as I am, where is the “Thou” ? Where egotism is present, is there scope for the “Thou” ? In order to realize Him you must resort to some practice (*kriyā*). He who is eternally Self-revealed is also with form (*sākāra*), in other words, He Himself manifests through *kriyā* (action).

Swatantranandaji : Ma, would you please now enter the realm of *Advaita* (non-dualism).

Mataji : Ma Herself is always present in concrete form. Just as water and ice are eternally connected, even so the Supreme Being is without attributes and also with attributes (*nirguna* and *saguna*). In order to

realize Him try to follow the paths pointed out by your respective Gurus. What the Guru says is for your best (*Iṣṭa*) ; try to realize Him in whom there is no question of evil (*aniṣṭa*).

Question : What can we do, existing as we are on such low levels ?

Mataji : Seek the company of saints, cultivate satsang, engage in the service of sādhus.

Question : Although being our Mother, why do you sit inactive ? We can only do what you make us do. You have given us birth, so you must also be responsible for our efforts.

Mataji : You yourself are responsible for your birth, you yourself have taken birth.

Jogesh Brahmachari : You have given us birth.

Mataji : Your births are the results of your desires and longings.

Jogesh Brahmachari : The desires are also yours alone.

Mataji : If you put the entire responsibility on someone, you cannot tell that person "please, teach us !" It is you who provide the reason for your birth and you have taken birth, both these facts are inescapable.

Question : Can a child understand his Mother ?

Mataji : This body has heard that if a mother, other than his own, holds a child in her lap, the child is able to sense that she is not his own mother. The mind

is like a child, to be embraced closely. When a child cries, the mother, wherever she may be, comes and places him in her lap, and the child then becomes quiet. To lie in the Mother's lap, this indeed is *samādhi*. The mind is like a child, immersed in his own self. By one's own mother is meant the *Ātmā*. So long as the child does not get his mother's milk to drink, he cannot be quietened. Who is the mind? Who am I? Investigate this closely. Your mind is like a child that continually seeks *ānanda*. So long as uninterrupted bliss is not found, the search continues. By going after perishable and fleeting things the mind plays with itself. By pursuing perishable goods, peace of mind cannot be won, there can never be *samādhi*. If you really desire peace, then give your mind proper nourishment all the time. Man is incessantly in want. He is hungry; he lacks food, he lacks clothes. He is constantly engaged in satisfying all these wants. Who is the *jīva* (individual)? He who is held in bondage is the *jīva* and that which is in continual motion is the world (*jagat*). The relationship of the individual with the world constitutes the play of the mind. If you provide pure food for the mind, then your own natural path, your own real Being, you yourself poised in your Self will be revealed. Move in your own rhythm, that is to say, towards your own true nature*. Being debarred from your true nature you suffer. You cannot get peace of mind by indulg-

* Mataji says: "Man's true nature flows towards God alone."

See: "Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma."

ing in the pleasures of this world, by eating and drinking, by merely catering to your senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and so forth. If you wish to calm your mind-child, then take recourse to satsang. The mahātmās provide you with counsel on how to realize your true Self. Go forward in the company of Him alone. Otherwise there cannot be peace. If you heed the advice of this little girl to the effect that running after worldly goods can never lead to peace, what should you do? Get into the rhythm of your True Nature. If you go on satisfying your wants, the sense of want will go on increasing. Suppose you want a car. It lies in the nature of a car to perish. The revelation of the Supreme Beloved (*Parama Iṣṭa*) can never result from chasing perishable commodities. If you proceed with your mind-child in the direction of God, you will become established in your True Nature. You will daily savour of new and different divine delights. When will you taste these? Only when you proceed along the correct course. Do not forge ahead slowly; you will benefit exactly according to the pace of your advance. To realise the Supreme Being is our Goal. His nature is to give with great abundance. At first He may allow His *darśana* by mere glimpses, later there may be the experience of His divine Presence. By these fragmentary visions He increases your longing for Him. You will reap exactly as you sow. In order to realize God you must engage in some *kriyā* (spiritual practice). You will advance precisely in the measure of your efforts. Endeavour

to obtain His complete, unveiled vision. With form and formless—He is one, just like water and ice. The Brahman is one without a second. To talk about *Samyam*, which means the mastery of the sensory urges—he whose mind-child has been controlled will proceed towards the realization, the revelation of His true Self.

Question : Is the mind a child or is it aged ?

Mataji : I call it a child because when a child is given something he does not judge whether it is ordinary or valuable. He has no power of discrimination.

Question : Yesterday, Avadhutaji declared during his discourse that the world is full of filth. But to us it does not seem so.

Mataji : Why don't you ask Avadhutaji himself ?

Question : You also emphasize that sense objects (*viṣaya*) are poison (*viṣ*) but how can we understand that worldliness is poison ?

Mataji : One gentleman exclaimed : "Ma, this sort of talk can never come to an end." (Everybody burst into laughter). He did well, suggesting to stop it. When you are ill, do you not consult a doctor and carry out his prescription ? Do likewise here.

Question : But I do not understand that I am ill.

Mataji : Have you any comprehension at all ?

Questioner : I have not.

Mataji : As regards *sūnya*—if you mean *Mahāsunya*¹⁾ (the Great Void), how can there be a reference to the existence of a Goddess ? Tell us what you know !

Questioner : They say the *ātmā* becomes absorbed. I do not know any further explanation.

Mataji : If you read Buddhist Scriptures, study them by all means. So far as the *ātmā* is concerned, there is no question of coming or going, of merging or being absorbed. If you talk about a Goddess then she also is part and parcel of the Supreme Power. She is not different from the *ātmā*, but one with it—He Himself. Here, there can be no description of an appearance. In the realm of form and its attributes, there it can be explained. What actually is Nairatmya Devi ? Why do you not ask scholars of the Buddhist Scriptures ?

Question : Is it true that the *ātmā* can vanish ?

Mataji : The *ātmā* and the *Paramātmā* can never vanish. He exists eternally for all time. There is no question of being absorbed or vanishing.

Swatāntranandaji : The Buddha preached. "*Sarvam sūnyam*", the whole universe dissolves into the void of the *ātmā*.

Mataji : The void is also not perfect in itself. A vacuum has a shape, it is a kind of manifestation or appearance. But when one speaks of *Mahāsunya* the Great Void (which is Absolute Consciousness) there, no action (*kriyā*) is possible. This is a different matter.

1) *Mahasunya* Great Void means Absolute Consciousness characterized by the absence of all creation.

Swatantranandaji : Where the ātmā is there can be no attributes and no actions.

Mataji : Yes, where the Paramātmā is, there can be no qualities or actions. But where the *jivātmā* (human soul) is, there are of course qualities and actions.

Question : The mahātmā has just now mentioned in his discourse that when one takes part in satsang, something or other always sticks.

Mataji : Yes, these words of his have stuck. (Everyone laughs heartily.)

Question : Just as milch-cows should not be disturbed while grazing because there is no food more beneficial than cow's milk ; likewise why disturb a simple, guileless person who would like to go on eating ? Swatantranandaji pointed out in reply to this question : "Just as the milch cow, being simple and guileless, should not be disturbed while feeding, so when somebody goes to a shop and eats rasagullas, he should not be prevented from doing so."

Mataji : Nobody can snatch away somebody else's ego. If you go to eat in a shop you will only consume your own share. Behold, how beautiful is God's dispensation ! What a lovely peel has He not made for the orange ! Everywhere has He provided food for creatures. Nobody can take away anyone's bread, nor does it disappear of itself.

Question : Then why do we chase away a mosquito when it bites ?

Mataji : You do so because it has no share in your own blood. If it had any, you could not remove it.

Swatantranandaji : What then is our duty under the circumstances. ?

Mataji : Whatever takes place is your duty, what comes about is your duty. The road you take determines your duty; and if you do not proceed, then that is also as it should be. If I am driven along a certain course, where is the scope for any obligation ? I am His tool.

Swantranandaji : Suppose a man is stealing ; does God induce him to do so ?

Mataji : That also has to be done. It is necessary. What you induce yourself to perform becomes your duty.

Swatantranandaji : Nowadays people blame those who possess houses.

Mataji : To censure them is also a duty.

Swatantranandaji : This statement has stuck ! (Everybody laughs.)

Mataji : To reproach them was also necessary. Just as it is right to perform Samyam Vrata. Without observing Samyam Vrata you will never attain to supreme peace. Whatever God causes you to carry out is always right. He is responsible for whatever comes to pass. If He puts an impediment in your way, this also is as it should be; and if He grants you success, that again is proper. Look at everything as a manifestation of THAT. Thou alone art, in every form art

Thou and no other : in affirmation and in negation, in whatever you may say. What God induces you to perform is your duty.

Question : It is the opinion of some people that the Brahman constitutes the only truth and that the world is illusory. Yet others say that the world is real and the Brahman non-existent.

Mataji : If you want to know : There is one Brahman and no second, there is nobody and nothing else.

Swatantranandaji : Where have you read that the Brahman is illusory ?

Questioner 1 According to Charvak's theory : "You can continue to enjoy the things of life even if you incur debts."

Swatantranandaji : Just because the world is false, it does not mean that the Brahman is false.

Mataji : This body speaks in its own peculiar way, without rhyme or reason ; you have not provided this body (Ma) with any education. If you consider the body to be real, then this view leads to continuous manifold wants and to non-fulfilment. HE is the supreme, ultimate Truth, while the world is ever changing.

Question : Ma, sometimes you appear to favour someone greatly and at other times you never even glance at a person.

Mataji : I do not behave in any way towards anyone. There is no question at all of behaviour.

Question : Then to whom are you talking ?

Mataji : I am not talking to anybody, to none at all. I do not go to anyone's house, I do not eat anyone's food. All names are Thine, all characteristics Thine.

Question : Mataji, God is always present with everybody. I acknowledge Him, yet why does He not prevent me from committing sins ?

Mataji : If the scope for prevention were not there, then why should you ask this question ? Since the question has arisen, you will also have to accept the reply. You must stop committing sins. You yourself are none but God. Everywhere it is God alone who exists in all shapes and forms, He Himself indeed. That your thoughts have turned toward seeking means and ways of stopping to sin is due to God's merey. Proceed along the path which your Guru indicates.

*

*

*

Referring to the aforesaid, Mataji added : "If an ordinary person tells you to do something in a particular manner, you may not be able to achieve it, but if somebody with power and authority gives you an instruction you will be able to carry it out correctly by virtue of his inherent power. Without it you would not be able to perform the task. There is another possibility which lies in the power and strength of the *ātma*. So, one way is to use one's own

strength and capacity and the other is to be powerless. Both emanate from the same source, therefore use the power of your *ātmā* to fix the mind on God. You are reading the Bhagavad Gītā. We are merely instruments, as He wields us so we function. Use your inherent strength to realize that it is you alone and no other that exists.



Just as a flower contains seeds that can be seen only when it opens, and in the seed again the tree is potentially present, so also He resides within you. By practising sadhana this may come to light—in other words, if the veil of ignorance can be removed, the one who is Self-effulgent will be realized. Just as the whole tree is potentially contained in the seed, in a similar manner, He in His fulness is enthroned within you

Mata Anandamayi

From the Life of Mataji

Bithika Mukerji

(Continued from the October 1975 issue.)

September, 1938.

In Hardwar Mataji was taken ill with severe pain in the stomach. Dr. Panth persuaded Her to come to Pith-kuthi, his house on the bank of the Ganges. Mataji Herself remarked that the disease was likely to assume its severest form. Dr. Panth diagnosed some sort of ulceration and was very perturbed about Her condition. He said to Her, "Ma, this disease, if left to run its course, will assume terrible proportions. So, please, for our sakes, bring about your *kheyāla* for your own recovery".

It will be recalled that Mataji had been quite sick in Hardwar once before, when Dr. Panth had treated Her for ailment. Subsequently, he had had an argument with Hariram Joshi about the nature of Mataji's illnesses. Joshiji had maintained stoutly that medicines were futile in Her case and that Her own *kheyāla* for recovery was all important. The doctor, on the other hand, saw no reason for disregarding the efficacy of medicines in cases of maladies of the body ; but he was also well aware that the 'patient' in question was anything but an ordinary sick person. As he confessed later, he had all the time been experiencing a conflict with regard to this matter. Now that he knew Mataji a little better, he was a bit wary of glibly prescribing medicines,

and yet he did not quite see his way to ignoring the clear symptoms of disease apparent to his professional eye.

It may not be out of place here to point out that with Mataji there is no question of pretence to any mood or any type of behaviour. On occasions She is seen to relegate, as it were, Her usual state of radiant joyousness to the background ; as for example, when She is seen to mingle Her tears with those of some afflicted person. At such moments nobody could become nearer or dearer to the heart of the sorrowing. Further, those who have the privilege of being close to Her, know to their cost that Mataji at times becomes completely remote and unapproachable. It is not that a barrier is thrown up but She seems entirely withdrawn within Herself. A perfect image of aloofness that forestalls all language of familiarity ; ties of various relationships stand dissolved for the time being. On rare occasions a few people have experienced a flash of anger, comparable to a sudden streak of lightning. Yet at the same moment Mataji has smiled serenely at other people. It is very difficult to describe these aspects without giving rise to wrong impressions. It is difficult because the simultaneity of the normal and a variance is unique to Her. It can only be said that they are neither pretences nor are they real. The various responses are called forth, at times, if it be Her *kheyāla* by the exigency of the situation, created by time, people and events. Illnesses can also perhaps be understood as a variety of such responses, which are 'real' and yet unreal. No matter how severe the illness may be, bodily suffering never overpowers Mataji's personality. Those, who are familiar with Her ways, know therefore, that the disease (or any other varia-

tion) brought about by some 'cause', must be allowed to take its course, or, alternately, devotees may try to bring about Her *kheyāla* for Her own recovery.

It is possible that on this occasion, Mataji responded to Dr. Panth's sincere bewilderment. It so happened that the same night, Mataji's body was seen to undergo various yogic *kriyās*. As always, the actions did not appear to be performed wilfully, but the limbs seemed to arrange themselves in a variety of beautiful postures. Dr. Panth watched the *kriyās* enthralled. Mataji said smilingly, "How interesting : the whole body is as if righting itself in and out."

The yogic postures lasted for about an hour. All this while Mataji kept on speaking in Her usual manner. Later on, She stated that it had been Her *kheyāla* to do so, to preclude ideas of fits or seizures from the mind of the doctor. At the end of the *kriyās*, Mataji seemed transformed back to Her normal state of glowing vitality. Her radiant smile put new heart into the dejected people who had been so desperate with anxiety a short while ago. Dr. Panth realized that he had witnessed a manifestation of great yogic powers. He now admitted that up to that moment he had not been entirely convinced by Hariram Joshi but now all his doubts were laid at rest. He said, "Ma, I am sure, you have rid yourself of all vestiges of illness and are completely recovered."

"Is that so?" Mataji enquired, with a smile, "Well, you are an upright brahmin, living like an ascetic on the banks of the Ganges. If I recover, it will be because you have spoken so and your words cannot be in vain !"

Many devotees from near and far, alarmed by Didi's letters, came to Hardwar to see Mataji. They found Her quite Her normal self. Much to the amusement of the people around Her, Mataji said to Didi, "You will be made to look a fool now !" Didi was understood to say that she preferred being made to look a fool to the other alternative.

On September 25th, the foundation for the future Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth was laid at Peetkuthi. The first two inmates were Bhaktipriya and Shantipriya, two little girls from Dacca. The first sponsors were Swami Akhandananda and Sheo Prasad Sinha, a reputed lawyer from Allahabad. The latter had recently come to know Mataji and had experienced a radical transformation in his life. The aim of the institution was to found a place where young girls who wished to live a life of spiritual endeavour could find means of support, encouragement and an atmosphere congenial to their aspirations. The little girls would form a nucleus around whom such an institution could develop. Manmatha Nath Chatterjee performed the puja to commemorate the occasion.

Mataji left Hardwar after the Puja holidays and after visiting other places came to Allahabad on October 12th, at the invitation of Sheo Prasad Sinha. He was beside himself with joy and nothing that he could do was enough. The elite of the town, including High Court judges, eminent lawyers, University professors were invited by him to come and present themselves to Mataji, about whom he had been talking to them whenever he found an opportunity. Most probably this was the occasion when Dr. Pannalal met Mataji for the first time ; the beginning of a life of ever

deepening devotion for him and his family. She also graced by Her presence the grounds of 31, George Town, the home of Shaila Nath Mukerji ; the site which was hallowed by Her *kheyāla* of *kriṣa* in succeeding years.

From Allahabad Mataji proceeded to Calcutta. Dr. Panth was travelling with Her this time. He was trying his best to introduce some sort of order in Mataji's hectic programmes. Deferring to his wishes, Mataji retired to Her room every night at 10 p.m. Hours were set for visitors in the evenings ; times were fixed by him for meals too. This type of routine was quite unheard of in Mataji's vicinity, where time was reckoned neither by the clock nor the sun. People were trying hard to adjust themselves to the new order.

In Calcutta, this new order at once came to grief. Impatient crowds were not in the mood to abide by Dr. Panth's requests for short visiting hours. People waiting in anguished expectancy for a glimpse of Mataji and a few words perhaps, were made distracted by doors being closed to them. Many turned away deeply hurt. A few hardy souls worked their way past the harrassed door-keepers. Mataji, looking at their tearful countenances, said with a smile, 'Tears ! Let me also shed some tears !' Then in the same mood of fun She went on invoking the tears to come to Her. Within a few moments the entire atmosphere had changed. Mataji wept in the manner of the deeply afflicted. All those who were present now forgot their grievances and addressed themselves to the task of praying for Mataji's *kheyāla* for desisting from crying. After a while

Mataji smiled through Her tears, restoring the atmosphere to normal.

Devotees realized that they had been over-reacting to a new situation. They should have remembered that it was not Mataji's way to inhibit anybody from doing what he obviously thought was the very best thing to do. She, in general, waits with infinite patience till the person is ready for a re-evaluation or a turning around. Only once in a while She is seen to give definite orders to somebody; no doubt such persons have the very rare capacity of obedience, which distinguishes them from others. In this case Dr. Panth himself realized that he was trying to guard somebody whose freedom could not be curtailed by anybody or anything. Mataji gave Herself freely to the people, or rather as She Herself sometimes said, there were no 'others' for Her. She was always with Herself only. Dr. Panth understood this now and gradually lost the incentive for introducing order and system into Mataji's way of life.

On October 20, Subhas Chandra Bose came to see Mataji at Dakshineswar, where She was spending the day. A small group of people sat with them in the quiet precincts of the Pancavati. One of those present, Amulya Chandra Dattagupta, asked "Is it possible to attain to God by way of service to one's country?"

"Why not? A true spirit of service may lead one to the same goal." Mataji then turned to Subhas Babu and asked, "You have dedicated your life to the service of your country. Can you tell me why you have done so?" "Because it makes me happy to be able to do so," he answered

gravely. "Is this happiness lasting and unqualified or is it momentary?" "I am afraid I do not know the answer to this question."

"Pitaji, my request is, keep in mind 'another rendering of service' along with the service you are already engaged in. If one were to say, 'I am not doing this for myself but for the sake of others', I will still say that, anything anyone may do is done for his own sake only. Everyone is a pilgrim on the path to knowing his own Self, because everyone seeks that state of Bliss (ānanda) which is another aspect of self-fulfilment. And why should one seek it? Because we already have a taste of it in our lives. One may, however object to this by maintaining that this search is of no use to anybody else. But I will say, if there is true effort in this direction and a knowledge of Self is gained, then that itself becomes of great benefit to the world. Just as a learned man transforms the lives of so many unlettered pupils and makes them knowledgeable."

Mataji spoke to him again, "I am told that you speak in public. Will you not talk to us too?"

"But I have not come here to speak. I am here to listen."

"In that case, will you listen to what this little girl of yours may say?"

"I shall try."

"Do not preoccupy yourself with the outside world only. You have so much capacity. Keep in mind the inner life too."

“How should I do that ? By what method ?”

Unfortunately, a sudden influx of visitors at this moment put an end to the conversation and Mataji had no chance to talk to him again. Subhas Babu made his pranāmas and went away.

Two days later Mataji paid one of Her rare and short visits to Dacca. The devotees of Dacca had been painstakingly maintaining all the traditions which had come into being while Mataji had resided in their midst. All these festivities came to life with renewed vigour in Mataji's presence.

From Dacca Mataji again returned to Uttar Pradesh. She had no definite plans and allowed the circumstances themselves to direct Her movements. She stayed on houseboats on the Ganges in Allahabad and Varanasi. At Vindhya-chala, She spent many hours sitting under the tree in front of the small Ashram building. For Mataji's companions the natural stillness of the quiet hill top was a contrast to the hectic activity of Dacca and Calcutta. Mataji Herself is never troubled by crowds and so cannot be said to prefer solitude. Both circumstances are equally welcome to Her.

Mataji had the *kheyāla* to visit Deoghar and arrived there on November 17th. Pran Gopal Mukherji, getting news of Her arrival, persuaded Her to put up at the Ashram. He remonstrated with Her for not informing him beforehand so that he could have made proper arrangements for Her. Mataji disarmed him from being reproachful by saying, “I was with you at the inn too. You, who live in the Ashram

should not identify yourself with it. The inn is also an ashram. I do not visit different places, I am always at the same place, you know that, don't you ?”

However, it goes without saying that Pran Gopal Babu and Mohananandaji Maharaj preferred Her to stay at the Ashram. Mataji was well known in Deoghar and there was no dearth of visitors at Her residence.

Mataji spoke again about the life of spiritual endeavour. She would say, “Everyone has to walk along a particular path and so one should not hastily conclude that one's own path is the way for all. And why not ? Because while one is still in a state of endeavour one is naturally operating within the dimension of want and ignorance. This state of incompleteness should bring home to us the vastness of the area of the as yet unknown and unattained. Final resolution is not a matter of legislation, but an overflow of enlightenment which brings with it the light of total vision. Don't you see how a pot while being filled makes a great deal of noise ; when it is full, it becomes quiet, even the overflow spills over noiselessly in all directions. The right to speak and a state of overflowing plenitude are the same.

“Everyone is a wayfarer on the path to the knowledge of Self. The Self is one. All is one. It is an inadequacy to describe it thus, however, because, to say that there is one universal consciousness is not to state the One. Moreover, one may ask, ‘If the Self is one, how is it that the death of x does not bring about the death of y ? To this it may be replied that births and deaths are to the Self what a rising and falling of a breeze is to the air. We only feel the air when

there is movement in it. We are not aware of it when it does not manifest as currents of air. Births and deaths, manifestation and non-manifestation, indicate the presence of the One unchanging consciousness.

“The crux of the matter is, to know oneself. Actually, the enquiry into Self-knowledge comes naturally to us, because, everyone, in truth, loves himself only. Sometimes people say, ‘I put so and so, or such and such a thing above myself.’ That is not so. If one were to look closely enough one would discover the affinity which underlies such ties. If it so happens that some action has to be performed which is completely against our self-expression, or someone accommodated, who is totally an outsider, then such actions curtail our freedom to be ourselves.

‘Not only is Self-enquiry a natural thing for us to be engaged in, but we constantly participate in the play of the One and the Infinite. This single tree here is the middle of a series extending infinitely both before and after. Our bodies have a beginning, middle and end and yet from within this finiteness we get a glimpse of infinity. How? Because if I touch your hand you will say ‘It is I’, ‘if I touch your foot or head, you will still say, ‘It is I’. The ‘I’ would fain not identify itself with the body. The mind is yet more interesting. You cannot give a full account of your mental activity of even the last five minutes, let alone of months or years. This mind which is defeated by five minutes, yet dares to think that it understands the Infinite! So you see, an awareness of our own desire to know more is all that is required to begin with. It is like cutting one’s way out of a forest. The

bewilderment of being lost in a multitude of ways and means, is the natural state of the human being in the world. A sustained, uni-directional effort is required to work one's way out to a clearing to gain an unclouded vision. In other words, to attain to the stillness of perfect tranquillity, one must begin by focussing on the constantly wavering ebb and flow of one's own life-breath.

"The *sādhaka* knows that his aim is to know himself. He proceeds to harness his mind to a one-pointed attention towards this goal. The questions of Infinity, Oneness, and other such questions must remain unanswered till the goal is reached. It is right that this should be so, because, unless one experiences a state of burning enquiry, one cannot go beyond, to the region of certitude, which transcends speech as well as silence." *)

Mataji would smile at the visitors and say, "How much more time will you spend at a wayside inn? Don't you want to go home? How exquisite it all is...One is, in his own Self, the wanderer, the exile, the home-coming and the home...oneself is all that there is...."

From Deoghar, Mataji returned again to Uttar Pradesh. This time She did not remain for long at any place. Passing through Uttar Pradesh She came to Gujrat, but did not stop at any of the usual places. Travelling through Baroda and Chandod, She, accompanied by Didi, Ruma Devi and Sādhan Brahmachari, arrived at Vyāsātīrtha, a remote site on the banks of the holy Narmada, on November 29th.

Vyāsa had been visited once before by Mataji when She had stayed there overnight. It was a forest retreat with

*) From Gurupriya Devi, *Sri Śri Ma Anandāmayi, Vol. VII Page 18*

only a few temples and ashrams nestling among the trees. The local people held the place in great veneration as the site where a great number of renowned ascetics had practised their *sādhanā*. Mataji was not known in this secluded corner, but it was not long before this matter remedied itself. Men and women living in retirement from the world were attracted to Mataji, although not many of them could speak Hindi. The inmates of the ashram of Swami Yogananda made room for Her and Her companions in their own building. Their care and attention to Mataji was not of the kind one extends to a stranger but to a well-beloved person.

Mataji stayed in Vyāsa for more than a month. Off and on people from Chandod, Baroda or other nearby places came to visit Her, otherwise She had local visitors only. Much of Her time She sat on the banks of the Narmada, under a big tamarind tree. Abhaya had joined Her and he would converse with Her occasionally about Her life in Dacca, Bajitpur and other places, but most of the time would be spent in meditative silence.

Mataji came to know an old lady living in a cottage by herself, in retirement from the world. This lady was much respected by the local people for her piety and her gravely dignified deportment. Mataji got into the habit of going to see her every now and then. Phalahari Ma, as the old lady came to be known by Mataji's companions was, in the beginning, obviously reluctant to allow even a slight variation to mar the routine of her daily programme. Then, of her own accord, she started coming to Mataji. In due course she became so attached to Her that she was visibly upset when Mataji went away, for the day, to the villages

on the other side of the river. Abhaya remonstrated with Mataji on this issue, saying, "Why do you distract this poor soul, who has chosen to live such a hard life of spiritual discipline? She will not know a moment's peace when you go away." Mataji smiled but kept quiet. Phalahari Ma revealed to Mataji, one day, the story of her life. Her only daughter, the joy of her life, had died at the age of twenty. After that Phalahari Ma had not been able to take any interest in the world and had retired to this far off place to carve out a different life for herself. She also confessed that Mataji, in some strange fashion reminded her of her daughter and perhaps this was the reason why she was so attracted to Her.

On Her next visit to the old lady, Mataji said to her, "Ma, you have said I am like your daughter, so you are my mother, right?"

"Yes, yes."

"Then you won't mind if I call you 'Ma'?"

"Of course not."

Mataji at once began to call out in the appealing tones of a child crying for his mother, "Ma, ma, ma, ma. . ."

Phalahari Ma became very agitated and her own eyes filled with slow unaccustomed tears. Mataji said to her in a gentle tone, "Ma, you have in your time shed bitter and profuse tears. I have today mingled mine with yours."

Abhaya again was very dissatisfied with Mataji's behaviour, remonstrating, "Why did you remind her of all that she is trying so hard to forget? You have now spoiled her peace of mind!"

Mataji said, "It is not right to bury your problems and sorrows and smooth them over. It is best to bring them out into the open so that they can be overcome and left behind."

Phalahari Ma did seem to become more approachable, and less prone to withdraw from any contact with the world and people. As time went on, she appeared more relaxed altogether. Who can say if one major reason for Mataji's visit to Vyasa had not arisen out of the mute and real need of this old lady, so bravely living a life of solitude.

Mataji left Vyasa during the second week of January 1939, for Dakore, a town renowned for its magnificent temple of Dwarakadisha.

(To be continued.)

"To expect peace from worldly life is in vain. Try to live exclusively in His presence and do all service from a sense of duty. The world is certainly not an abode of happiness. The sole hope is to take refuge at the feet of God."

Mata Anandamayi

Miracles Happen Even To-day

(Translated From Bengali)*

1

The following took place in the beginning of the year 1955, at the Sri Anandamayi Ashram on the top of Astabhujahill at Vindhyachal, District Mirzapur. Mataji had come to Vindhyachal for a short stay. At that time Sri Narsingh Prasad Chatterji, whose father, the late Sri Manmatha Nath Chatterji had been a marked devotee of Mataji, was the District Magistrate of Mirzapur.

On learning the welcome news of Ma's arrival, Narsingh Babu came to the Ashram in the evening. Mataji was then in Her room on the first floor. She seemed to have expected him and so, without any preamble, She took him to the veranda on the west side. From there She pointed to a spot down below which was about 20 ft. by 16 ft. She said ; "Look, below this ground a number of images of Gods and Goddesses are buried. They have come to me and told me. 'It is very irksome for us to remain down there. Please have us taken out'."

Mataji looked entreatingly at Narsingh Babu : "Can you not do something about it ?"

Narsingh Babu, having lost his own mother at an early age, had received Mataji's kindness on many occasions. Without any protest he gave his promise to do his utmost

* The Bengali original appeared in the "Souvenir" published in Calcutta in May, 1975.

in the matter. He very well knew that the task was extremely difficult, as the ground consisted of hard stones. Expert masons were needed and all kinds of tools and implements as well as experienced engineers.

By Mataji's grace everything was arranged. Soon, as per the District Magistrate's orders, work started in full swing. After the first day's strenuous digging by twenty labourers, stones were removed and a big hole measuring 20 ft. by 16 ft. with a depth of about 3 ft. had been dug, yet there was no sign of any statues. The workers, greatly discouraged, said, "There are only stones and nothing else."

On the second day, Mataji unhesitatingly directed them to go on digging. Narsingh Babu knew that Mataji's words could never be spoken in vain, so he encouraged his workmen, assuring them of success. They dug tirelessly throughout the second day. The pit became deeper, great big boulders were dug out, but not a single image was found. Mataji said : "Continue to search !"

The labourers had no experience of Ma but obeyed their Collector's orders. He, on the other hand, was determined to carry out Mataji's wishes. So the digging continued. The workers were gradually becoming disheartened. They lost all hope of success, failure seemed to stare at them nakedly.

Later, the Magistrate was working in his office, but his mind was in the Vindhychal Ashram. Suddenly the engineer rang him up excitedly :

"Sahib, many statues have been found, come immediately."

Narsingh Babu did not need a second request. He hurried to the Ashram premises and found that about two hundred images in good condition had been excavated, some of them, weighing about ten to twelve maunds, were pieces of exquisite art and beauty.

The news of the excavation spread in no time. The lonely Ashtabhujā Hill was swarming with people.

There was great excitement and enthusiasm, all kinds of opinions were voiced. Gradually, from far and near, archaeologists, historians, pressmen and the curious gathered at Vindiyachal. Specialists from various countries also were attracted by the amazing discovery.

But She, who was the root-cause of all this upheaval, looked at the statues just once and then calmly walked away as if nothing special had occurred. Yet a miracle had happened.

It was in the year 1942. On Her way from Delhi to Varanasi Mataji halted for a couple of days at Kanpur with the family of Sri Harendra Nath Gupta. When Ma started from Kanpur for Varanasi, the late Bunidi remembered on the way to the station that one of Mataji's blouses that had been put to dry on the roof, had been left behind. As there was not much time left for the train to start, Bunidi said : "No need to send the car back for it, keep it carefully with you."

At the station devotees had collected round Mataji with sad hearts at Her departure. Haren Babu's little daughter was also among the crowd. Abruptly Ma said to her ; "Friend, how are you ? Are you well ?" The child felt shy at such prominence shown to her in front of so many people and replied coyly : "I am quite well." Mataji said : "Keep well !" Ma asked the same question twice again and on getting the child's reply, said every time : "Keep well !" Thus Ma repeated this three times. Nobody at that time understood the mystery underlying this simple conversation but later we realized that it was the prelude to a miracle. A letter received from Haren Babu made this clear. He wrote : "After Ma's departure I returned home with a heavy heart. That night we suddenly discovered that the child had high fever. The next morning the temperature rose to 104°, in the evening it went up to 106°. This extreme temperature continued for four days. No kind of treatment had any effect. The doctors were at a loss and almost gave up hope. We went on praying fervently to Ma to come to our rescue. The blouse which Bunidi had left behind we put under the child's head. On the fifth day the patient was in a deplorable state and became delirious. We sent a telegram to Mataji.

We were all doing japa when suddenly the room was filled with a sweet fragrance like what we get in Mataji's room. A friend of mine, Sri Shambhu Roy, entered the sick-room and immediately came out. He told me : "Harendra, I have seen an amazing thing. When I entered the room I could not see your daughter, but a lady—the lady of that photo (pointing to Ma's photo)—was lying in the

child's bed. Be prepared ! Something good or bad will happen to-day."

At midnight the fever started to subside and by the morning came down to normal. Later we learnt that our wire had been read out to Ma at Vindhyachal at precisely 12 o'clock at night. Mataji wired to us immediately, asking whether my daughter's health had improved.

The mystery of Mataji leaving Her blouse behind and repeating three times to my daughter to keep well, now became clear to us. It was to save her from the grip of death.

3.

Mataji has said : "At times a doubt comes into your minds : you feel, 'What we have not been able to get from Ma in twenty years, someone else gains in a moment.' Remember that your relationship with Ma is not of this birth only, it has continued for ages. Some, whom you consider to have come quite recently have been connected with Ma in so many previous lives and therefore appear to be old acquaintances."

A striking example of this are Sri Pinaki Ganguli and his wife, Mira Devi. They first had Mataji's *darśana* on the eve of *Dol Purnima* in 1968, when Sri Krishnananda Brahmachari (Shobhanda) was celebrating the installation of his *Gopal-vigraha* at Hijuligram of Ranaghat at his Krishna Kutir Ashram. Mataji's presence gave beauty and splendour

to the function. In the afternoon Ma proceeded to Calcutta, accompanied by Krishnanandaji with his Gopal.

Sri Pinaki's family was well known in Ranaghat. They had attended the function as guests. At the time of leaving, Mataji gave a garland of flowers to Mira Devi. Later it was seen that this garland acted as a talisman. By Mataji's grace and mercy the family of Sri Pinaki were miraculously saved from the jaws of death. Here is an extract from Pinaki Babu's diary :

“Mataji went to Calcutta with Shobhanda and his *vigraha* of Gopal. After lunch we decided to visit Navadwip in our car. We were seven of us ; my mother, wife, sister, our two daughters, myself and the driver. On reaching Navadwip, we did obeisance to the deity and then came to Navadwip-ghat for our return journey to Calcutta. It was about 9 o'clock at night. Swarupganj-ghat was on the other bank. We planned to cross over and from there to proceed via Shantipur and Krishnanagar to Ranaghat on the way to Calcutta. The river Ganga was thirty-five to forty feet lower than the place where the car was parked. The descent was very steep. No ferry boat was visible, so the driver and I got down from the car and stood on the river bank to find out when a ferry would be available. No other traveller was there, only a lone bullock-cart waited along with us. After a while I turned towards the car and saw a most dreadful sight. The car had rolled half-way down the steep slope. I did not know what to do ! I ran and tried my utmost to stop the car but my efforts were all in vain. The car was sliding down and fast gaining momentum. Putting all my efforts to naught the car entered the

