

Contents

ENGLISH SECTION

	Page No.
1. Matri Vani	211
2. Mataji's Amara Vani	214
3. Words of Inspiration—Swami Ramdas	219
4. Japa Yoga—Swami Sivananda	220
5. Mother in South India —From the Diary of Sja. Guru Priya Devi	223
6. Faith and Doubt—Vijaiananda (Dr. A. Weintrob)	234
7. From the life of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee—Dr. Bithika Mukerji, M.A., Ph.D.	241
8. Matri Lila	247
9. Notes and Comments	255

The ONE who is the Eternal, the Atman,
He Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,
He is all in all, He alone is.

MATRI VANI*

Replies to letters from different people at different time.)

129.

Nobody can possibly be superior to God. Whatever is done, is done by Him Himself. No one else has the power to do anything, bear this in mind. Depend upon God. So long as you feel that someone may do something that may harm you, practise the repetition of the Name of your Beloved (*Ishta*) a little more often than you would do otherwise. To place your reliance on your *Ishta* is the one thing to be done under all circumstances.

130.

Such is the nature of this world. Generally speaking people are born in order to enjoy and suffer the fruits of their past actions. When desires linger one has to come into the world, to have them fulfilled. The world, its happiness and enjoyments are fleeting ; consequently all kinds of sorrows and troubles come in their wake and confuse the mind. This is why great saints, sages and saviours ever point out the path that leads through desirelessness to Eternal Bliss. The quest for THAT which is Eternal is indeed man's duty. He should

* The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in *Ananda Varta*, Vol. VI, No. 2, p. 81.

direct his yearning towards the realization of the state in which he cannot be bewildered anymore by worldly suffering. In the traveller's inn (which this world is) everyone has to stay only for the short time that has been assigned to him. It is the One who appears in the guise of the world. He is making you serve Him in this manner. Keep wide awake ;—in every living being there is Shiva and in every woman Gauri. Remembering that everyone is but an expression of THAT be ever engaged in service. It is only natural that one's mind should wander to the needs of one's loved-ones, but one must forcibly pull one's thoughts away and contemplate the Lord's Lotus feet. By so doing your loved-ones will find peace and so will you yourself, bear this in mind.

131.

Since you are living the lives of *sadhus*, you should try to ignore the cold as much as possible. If one moves about and takes exercise one feels it rather less. By leading a strictly regulated life one becomes firmly anchored on the spiritual path and then one does not have to suffer so much. You might exert yourselves a little more in this direction. If the cold is extreme, do not bathe early morning, but later in the day ; on rising from sleep change your clothes, sprinkle some Ganges water on your body and then proceed with your morning worship (*sandhya* and other spiritual exercises). Brahmacharis must completely shun sarcasm and frivolous jokes. It is therefore important to observe silence as much as possible. Brahmacharis are forbidden to sleep during the day. Rising early, they should take great pains not to fall asleep during the day. If for a prolonged period of time one makes a special effort in this direction, the habit will be established. Do not lose courage and be persevering in your *sadhana*.

132.

Write to the father some of this little girl's unconventional talk : "This small child (Mataji) is ever near her father. The mind's agony, listening to people's talk and speaking oneself—all happens within oneself. Near and far are also but within oneself. You should not only be a *sadhaka* at the time of your

spiritual exercises—although everything is contained in everything. The capacity for uninterrupted *sadhana* is also potentially in oneself: it will be discovered by wise discrimination. One should continuously be immersed in the particular *sadhana* which will enable one to become possessed of the Supreme Treasure which is by its very nature one's own. At all times it is the Self that plays within Itself as ego and as intelligence. Use the present with great skill. The One who manifests in the (impure) actions of the I-ness, He Himself also appears in Pure Action. In order that this may be revealed, intelligence becomes aware of stability in motion, where in the movement of Self-action wise discrimination should realize its own true Nature. When this happens then, in stupidity as well as wisdom, He is recognized, the One who becomes reavealed, who IS. He is infinite and also with end. Towards Him one should try to advance steadily without ever halting, having become free from obstacles and obstructions. When one has entered the *stream* any form that is perceived by the purified mind and intelligence may be accepted as an experience on the way to Self-awareness.

When one has become still, that is to say when one has become established in a state of tranquillity, then the activity of nature which continues at every moment in sleep and in waking and is part of the movement of the pilgrimage from birth to death, this and the thinking mind become caught in that Stream and eternally remain floating in it. Ever to keep the mind poised in the Self, wide awake in the current of Reality, where the Unfathomable, the One without end is ever revealed in His Infinity—this must, with the intensity of a possession, be your one and constant endeavour.

133.

Trading* (giving something in exchange for something else) means that deliverance has not yet come. This world is the place of trading. Try to cross to the other shore. Your one and only work is the contemplation of the Lord, where all affliction is conquered and sorrow finds its end.

* Here Mataji uses a play upon words which cannot be rendered into English. *Bepar*=trading, business; *be-without* and *par hona*=to be delivered.

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(27)*

Mataji : Someone received a *mantra* in a dream : he had a vision of some great Being who gave him a *mantra* or rather he had a vision of the *mantra*. On waking the experience of the *mantra* remained with him pure and simple—in fact in the waking state also he continued to be under the influence of his vision. With what consequence ? A dilemma of many day's standing was dissolved ; he became free from conflict and began to live in this transformed state of mind. He had no more wish to take initiation. Is it necessary even for a person in this condition to accept initiation again in the physical ?

A sadhaka : Depending on the capacity and the spiritual state (*adhikāra*) of the aspirant it may or may not be necessary.

Mataji : That is to say not everything is the same for everybody. Let me relate someone's story. I shall not disclose his name. He had taken *Sannyasa* according to the proper rites (*viraja homa*), as prescribed by the Shastras, and had adopted the staff of the homeless wanderer. But no realization or spiritual experience of any kind was vouchsafed to him. In his intense despair he finally gave up his pilgrim's staff and turned into a kind of sceptic. He was so profoundly depressed, he had no desire even to move his limbs. Then suddenly one day he had an experience—he realized : "All is contained within myself." His despondency vanished together with his suffering.

When after having abandoned the order of *Sannyasa* and all his spiritual practices he had a realization of such a high order, should it still have been necessary for him to take initiation again ? It does of course also happen that someone even after receiving a *mantra* in a dream, takes initiation again in the waking-state.

* The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in *Ananda Varta* Vol. VI/No. 2, page 84.

experience. It is of course difficult to judge whether a person has the capacity to do so. Generally speaking, one may find that in some cases people only outwardly occupy an elevated spiritual position. However if the aspirant is completely sincere and has become as pure as gold, he will himself come to understand in time (whether his experience has been genuine.)

The transmission of power that constitutes the initiation, it is this imparting of power which is the important factor whether the Guru's power is revealed in a dream or in the waking state. If the manifestation of power has actually taken place then the need for an external giving does not exist anymore.

A sadhaka : What is the sign of this ?

Mataji : Having been blessed with this power inwardly, even if to begin with a sense of its lack is still felt, this will disappear as one progresses. It depends on various factors working together. In some cases for instance the power may not have been felt inwardly, but later one becomes aware of it. Or else the realization of it may grow only little by little gradually—this also is a possibility. Then again the result of the initiation may not be felt either at once nor even at the close of a long life. On the other hand one may find someone transformed immediately by virtue of the initiation : its action has in this case borne fruit instantly. If this be so, there will of course be no problem. But even where no effect of the initiation is noticeable for a very long time, even then the power is undoubtedly acting within.

Concerning the dedication* of one's japa (to one's *Ishta*) Mataji said : "After doing japa one should dedicate it to the Object of one's worship. If this is not done and it is stored up by oneself, there is fear of its being lost since one is not aware of the great value of what is in one's keeping. Just

* The Shastras insist that japa, like every other similar act of merit, should be performed in a spirit of dedication and that its fruits, however imperceptible which under the law of causality would inevitably follow, should be immediately offered to the *Ishta* (Beloved). The idea is that these fruits when accumulated from day to-day will be integrated in due course and reveal Siddhi or Perfection. This is possible only when the fruits are dedicated to the *Ishta* for safe custody as it were and not stored up within oneself in a selfish mood. In the latter case the evil acts and thoughts of the *Sadhaka* are likely to act adversely on them and neutralise their beneficial effect.

as when a priceless jewel is left in a small child's custody ; not understanding how precious it is, he may throw the treasure away. Even by keeping the *japa* stored up oneself one will also gain something, but the full benefit of its accumulation cannot be reaped in this way. The whole and entire fruit of the *japa* that is obtained by dedicating it to the Supreme Object of one's devotion cannot be had if one keeps it stored up within oneself. For this reason *japa* should be offered (to one's *Ishta*).

When a child receives something, he brings it to his mother, for he does not know the value of what he has received. No sooner does the mother see it, than she understands how invaluable it is. She therefore takes it at once from the child's hand and puts it safely away. But when the boy has grown up and learnt to understand, then his mother returns the precious object to him, saying : "I have preserved your treasure for you, now take it back."

When one has acquired the capacity (*adhikara*) necessary for it, that which could not be understood formerly is fully grasped. With age and wisdom understanding comes in its fulness. By regularly offering one's *japa* to one's *Ishta*, slowly and gradually light comes : what is the Name and He whose name it is ? Who am I ? What does Self-realization signify ? When all this is revealed then the purpose of one's *japa* has been wholly fulfilled. Nobody can foretell at what particular instant this may occur, therefore ever continue with your *sadhana*.

Infinite are the *sadhanas*, infinite the spiritual experiences, infinite is manifestation—and yet He is unmanifest. By practising *japa* one proceeds along one's own line of approach. Why did I use the term "*infinite*" ? The leaves of a tree are infinite in number and although they are all of the same general pattern, yet there are countless changes within that pattern. Viewed from this angle also variety is infinite. Finally, when enlightenment occurs, this will be the end and at that very instant He will be revealed in the midst of endless variety. Just as the seed is all right and the boughs and branches are all right, there is still infinity in everything. Similarly in the field of *sadhana* also everything is infinite. As one goes on and on practising a prescribed number of repetitions of *japa*, at some moment or other no one knows when the fire will be set ablaze. Fire exists everywhere at all times, only one

cannot tell at what instant the friction will kindle a flame. Therefore be ever prepared ! Of course some Yogis may be able to state after how many repetitions of a Name or Mantra Realization will come.

For this reason engage in *japa*. It will be fully preserved for you as if kept safely with your mother. The moment may come any time when you will realize the many in the One and the One in the many. When will the number of repetitions be completed and what will then be found ? That the Name and the One whose name it is are indivisible ; thus what you have offered will come back to you (as the Realization of Him whose Name you repeated.),

A sadhaka : Suppose the *japa* is not offered to the Guru but kept by oneself, will its fruit be lost ?

Mataji : If it is the Guru's instruction not to offer the *japa*, it will be in his hands even so—for did one not act according to this order ? He may bring it to fulfilment either by storing it up himself or by leaving it to the disciple. He alone knows how it will be brought to completion. Moreover nothing whatsoever is altogether lost. If *japa* has been practised continuously it is bound to bear fruit some day. But on the other hand it may also be fruitless—if for instance the *mantra* is incorrect or when the *japa* is not done according to its inherent rules—no possibility can be entirely excluded.

It may be found that some one practises *japa* and austerities with faith and regularity and yet there is no response. In deep despair he drops all his practices. The agony of his suffering will not let him either sleep or eat. Here his eagerness is so great although he has abandoned all effort ; if he is completely singleminded in his thirst for Enlightenment—it must come then and there.

WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Swami Ramdas

God's name is a wonderful charm that did away my darkness and pain and brought me the full blaze of light and joy. In other words, the Name granted me the awareness of eternal Truth and joy. Now for me there is no death.

× × ×

Freed from desire, I live with the spontaneity of a child, playfully active, which is the sign of one who has God-vision or liberation.

× × ×

Spiritual perfection is to realize God, world and I are one. This is the aim of life by attaining which I got immortal bliss and peace.

× × ×

Freedom means to know that I am not the body but that I have a body. Body passes away but I live for ever.

× × ×

I searched and searched and I found myself and my quest ended.

× × ×

Even though I am He, I posed I am not He. I gave up the pretention and lo! where am I? There is only He.

× × ×

When I beheld the world other than me I was caught in the meshes of desire. Now the world is I, I am free and happy.

× × ×

True devotion took me from the relative life to God the absolute and then I realised that the relative is not different from the Absolute. To see the world apart from God is ignorance. To see world as God is knowledge. So for me God is at once within and without and whatever exists is God.

× × ×

Grace is nothing but God within me willing to reveal Himself.

JAPA YOGA

Swami Sivananda

Japa Yoga is an exact science. Japa is the repetition of any Mantra or Name of the Lord. In this Kali Yuga or iron age when the physique of the vast majority of persons is not fit for rigid Hatha Yogic practices and their gross intellect not fit to grasp the subtle Vedantic truths, Japa is the easiest, surest and safest way for attaining God-realisation. Tukaram, Dhruva, Prahlada, Valmiki, Sri Rama-krishna Paramahansa and many others have attained salvation by uttering the Name of the Lord. In Gita you will find 'Yajnanam Japa Yajnaosmi' 'Among Yajnas (sacrifices) I am Japa Yajna'. In this Kali Yuga by practising Japa alone one can attain eternal peace and communion with the Lord.

A Mantra is a holy formula, by the constant recollection or repetition of which one is protected or released from the round of birth and death *Mananat trayate iti Mantrah*. Mantra is Divine Power manifesting in a 'sound' body. Mantra itself is regarded as the Deity invoked by it. Such is the glory of a Mantra. The constant repetition of a Mantra brings the Deity to the consciousness of the

Sadhaka. By Japa of a Mantra, the Sadhaka awakens the Shakti latent in the Mantra, and then the Mantra Shakti strengthens the Sadhaka's individual shakti, takes him up the spiritual ladder and reveals to him the Deity embodied in the Mantra.

A Mantra accelerates and generates creative force. It produces harmony. Spiritual life needs harmony in all parts of our being. The whole being must be in perfect ease and in tune with the Divine, then only the spiritual truths can be realised. Mantra has the power of bestowing cosmic and super-cosmic consciousness. The repetition of a Mantra or Divine Name removes the dirt of the mind such as lust, anger, greed, etc., purifies it and makes it fit for reflecting the higher truths, even as a mirror which is cleansed of its impurities acquires the capacity to reflect clearly the things placed before it. Mantra or Divine Name is, as it were, a spiritual soap to cleanse the mind. Just as fire cleanses gold of its impurities, even so a Mantra cleanses the mind of all vasanas and desires. All sins too are destroyed by the repetition of a Mantra or Divine Name.

Japa should be practised regularly, every day. Mental Japa should become habitual and should go on even during work. Japa should be attended with Sattvic or Divine Bhava, Purity, Prem and Sraddha. While you are doing Japa, think that you are really praying to your Ishta Devata, that your Ishta Devata is really listening to you, that He is looking at you with merciful eyes, that His grace is flowing to you, that you are becoming purer and purer, and that God with open hands is giving you full protection (Abhaya-dana) with a view to giving you your desired object. Do Japa with a spirit of self-surrend to the Lord. Offer your very being to the Lord when you repeat the Mantra or His Name. Know the meaning of the Mantra and do Japa with feeling. Draw closer and nearer to Him when you repeat the Mantra or Name; think that He is shining in the chambers of your heart, He is witnessing your Japa, He is witnessing your mind. When you do Japa, you must have the same flow of love and devotion in your heart as you will naturally have at the time of His actual Darshan. You should have full faith in the purifying, divinising, God-vision giving power of the Name or Mantra.

Japa is a great help to meditation. Japa leads to meditation. You should combine Japa with meditation. Japa

accompanied by meditation on the form of the Lord is much more efficacious than Japa done without meditation. As you advance, Japa will drop off by itself and meditation alone will remain. This is advanced stage. You can then practise meditation separately. If, however, you find it inconvenient to combine Japa and meditation, you may practise them separately. Unless the mind is purified by the practice of Japa, it will be very difficult to practise successfully meditation or concentration. Even a little recitation of a Mantra or Divine Name with faith, Bhava, one-pointedness of mind and an understanding of its meaning will destroy all impurities of the mind.

One should have at least two sittings daily for Japa, one in the early morning, preferably in Brahma-muhoorta, and the other at sun-set or night. If one can do two hundred Mālās of hundred and eight beads (i.e. twentyone thousand six hundred repetitions daily) it is all the better; the mind will be purified quickly. Otherwise, one should practise as much as possible, fixing a minimum limit for daily practice and sticking to it. On holidays one should do more Japa than on other days.

Sattvic food, observance of the principles of Ahimsa (non-injury),

Satyam (truthfulness) and Brahmacharya (celibacy), freedom from malice, cunningness, crookedness, backbiting, vilification, greed and laziness, and Tapas or austerity are aids to the quick fruitioning of Japa Yoga.

O man, scorched in the fire of Samsara, take refuge in God's Name,

repeat the Divine Name incessantly and attain everlasting bliss and Divine communion. Let Name be your boat to cross this formidable ocean of Samsara, lodging in its bosom innumerable crocodiles and whales of worldly desires. May you all attain eternal bliss, freedom and immortality by the practice of Japa Yoga.

MOTHER IN SOUTH INDIA

(OCTOBER '52—JANUARY '53).

(From the Diary of Sja. Guru Priya Devi).

For a considerable time a proposal had been under consideration at the instance of some Mahātmās, particularly Sri Sri Hari Baba and Sri Avadhutji, that they should visit the sacred places and temples of South India in the company of Mother. During the Dusshera celebrations at Allahabad in the last week of September, 1952, it became generally known that Mother would accordingly leave for the South shortly after.

Banaras, Calcutta & Puri, 30th Sept. to 20th Oct., 1952.

Immediately after the Dusshera celebrations at Allahabad which were carried out with great éclat and which evoked general admiration for the excellent manner in which the whole affair had been managed, Mother left for Banaras on 30th September. Next day She proceeded to Calcutta where She stayed till the 6th October, paying a flying visit to Nabadwip for a day on the 4th. From Calcutta Mother went to Puri (7th Oct.) where She remained till 20th October, during which She

visited Bhuvaneshwar and Cuttack in the company of the Mahātmās.

Waltair, 21st to 23rd Oct.

From Puri, Mother set out on 20th October for Waltair. Our party included besides Mother, Sri Sri Hari Baba and his four followers, Sri Krishnanand Avadhutji, Swami Paramananda, Brahmacharis Kamala Kanta, Kusum Kumar and Bibhu, Kumari Juthika Guha ('Buni'), Misraji (cook) and myself.

We reached Waltair in the morning of 21st. A professor of the Cuttack University who belonged to Madras and some other local gentlemen had made excellent arrangements for Mother's stay at the Dharamshala. Shortly after reaching Waltair, Mother suddenly went out in a Rickshaw without informing others, with only one gentleman who had joined us for a short while in course of his official duty or business. After visiting several places, She finally went to Shanti Ashram where originally arrangements

had been made for Mother's stay. Mother had cautioned the gentleman who accompanied Her not to disclose Her identity ; but it was not long before the inmates of the Ashram discovered the fact and their joy knew no bounds. After a short stay there Mother walked along the road in the neighbourhood where fishermen lived, singing 'Jai Ganesh and also 'Hey Bhagawan'. The people there flocked round Her and followed Her, repeating the names. She then returned to the Dharamshala, having been out for nearly 2½ hours.

In the afternoon, a number of the fishermen came to the Dharamshala where Mother was staying and 'prasad' (sweets etc.) were distributed among them. Later in the day (21st Oct.) many persons including some professors and students of the Cuttack University gathered at the Dharamshala to see Mother. After some Kirtan, etc., Mother went out for a stroll along the beach.

Next morning i. e. on 22nd Oct. Mother went to the temple of Narasingha on the top of a hill. It is said that this was the site of the capital of Hiranyakashipu and Prahlad was hurled down from the top of this hill at the command of his father. We learnt that once a year only on Akshay 'Tritiya day in Baishakh, the deity is exposed to view in this temple. We,

however, were allowed to go in and have our 'darshan'. What struck us was the neatness of the place and absence of clamouring greed on the part of the priests or Pāndās, which is such an ugly feature in most famous places of pilgrimage. There were some 1120 steps, we were told, to reach the temple on the 'hill but we did not feel any strain or fatigue either on our way up or down. We returned from the temple at 9.30 A. M. We left Waltair next day at 11 A. M.

Bezwada, 23rd Oct.

We reached Bezwada at 8.30 P. M. A number of people including some members of the family of late Kanti-bhai Munshaw were at the station to receive Mother. After passing the night there we set out next day in the afternoon for Guntur, which we reached in about an hour.

Ramakshetra (Guntur) 24th to 27th Oct. '52.

Mother was taken to a place known as Ramakshetra, which appeared to be an attractive spot. The usual 'Satsang' (Kirtan and discourse by Sādhus) took place from 7 to 9 P. M. Although the people there could not understand our language, they were keen on serving Mother devotedly and repeatedly expressed their joy and gratitude for this.

visit. We visited several temples there. At one place we were shown a tank with many huts and structures round about for Sādhus to stay in. When a member of our party expressed surprise that there were no signs here of the drought we had heard so much about, we were told that for some time past the tank and the adjoining well had been dried up owing to drought.

When the people heard about the probable visit of Mother, they began to pray saying "What shall we do, O Mother,? Have pity on us". Then shortly after it rained abundantly for three days and we found that the tank and the wells were all full.

On 25th October we proceeded to Amaravati on the bank of the Krishna, 20 miles off. Here also we visited several fine temples. Next morning we went to Mangalgiri, about 18 miles away. There Mother was taken to the temple of Narasinghaji, situated at a height and reached by 400 steps. It is said that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had been to this place and his foot-prints were still preserved. The deity is offered gur-water. We were told in Satya Yuga it was Amrita or nectar that used to be offered, in Treta honey, in Dwapar milk and now in Kali it is gur-water. The silver image of Sri Narasinghaji was dimly visible in the

dark interior. This is one peculiarity we noticed generally in the temples of south India. The image of the deity is usually kept in semi-darkness and only dimly perceived when arati is performed with burning camphor etc. The gur-water, when offered to the deity, was poured down the mouth of the image from a conch by the priest. When the 'prasad' of gur-water was offered to Mother, She opened her mouth and asked the priest to pour it down, which was done amidst general laughter. In the afternoon we visited the temple of Rama and the Math of Sri Shankaracharya. We returned to Ramakshetra where many people had assembled to have 'darshan' of Mother. The same evening we left for Madras.

Madras, 27th Oct. to 3rd Nov.

We reached Madras at 7-30 A. M. Mrs. Taleyar Khan and a few other prominent persons had formed a committee to make necessary arrangements for Mother's visit to the city. She is a pious Parsee lady from Gujrat who had been with Sri Ramana Maharshi for a considerable length of time. We had met her before in the company of H.H. Rani Saheba of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh). Sri Kanti Bhai Munshaw of Ahmedabad had also sent some persons to look after the convenience of the party (in fact he did so throughout Mother's present tour in South India).

Arrangements for Mother's stay had been made in the residence of Sri Tarapore at Mount Road, where She was received with elaborate ceremony including music, recital of the Vedas by ten Brahmins, etc. etc. All arrangements had been made with great care and everything went off very smoothly. Several Bengalee families residing there offered their assistance particularly regarding cooking and the meals. Mother stayed in Madras for eight days and made excursions to different places to see the temples, etc.

We visited many temples far and near during our stay in Madras. The committee had sent word about our visit to the temples and so everywhere we went we were received with great courtesy and ceremony by the priests and the temple authorities, and offered every facility and attention in our Darshan. In this way we visited the temple of Kapaleshwar at Madras and also Venkateshwar. At Conjeevaram (50 miles) we saw the Shivakanchi temple (with its finely carved huge gates) and also the Vishnukanchi. We also went to Mahavalipuram (55 miles), and saw near the sea side the fine images of Vishnu and Siva etc. Next we proceeded to Pakshitirtha (45 miles) where two Rishis are said to be engaged in Sadhana in the form of birds. Daily at 11.30 A. M. sweet rice is offered there and as the priest stands

with folded hands, two birds swoop down and after making a meal of the rice and a drink fly away.

During our stay we also visited the local Ramakrishna Mission centre, the Theosophical Society at Adyair (with its spacious compound, fine library and statues of Olcott, Madame Blavatski, Annie Besant) and the Gaudiya Math.

At their pressing request, Mother was also taken for a short time to the residence of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Ex-Dewan of Travancore who, we were told, had flown to Madras to see Mother. We also went to the place of Sri Rama Rao, a disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, where once a month the saint's picture is worshipped and the Vedas recited as in a temple.

All these days and throughout our tour the daily Satsang was observed whenever possible, at the usual time i. e. 7 to 9 p. m. (including 15 minutes' silence or 'Mauna'). The gathering at last firmly but respectfully protested that whether in Satsang and Kirtan or during Mother's excursions to temples, they had very little opportunity to hear Mother speak for which everybody was very keen and eager. It was pointed out that Mother did not speak formally before gatherings by way of lectures and discourses. However, it was arranged that Mother would sit for

sometime after Satsang in the gathering.

One day someone put the question "How shall we realise God?"

Mother—Weep for Him and you will find Him.

Q. —I cannot weep at all, tears simply won't come. What shall I do?

Mother (laughing)—Seek the company of those who weep. Keep the company of pure and God-minded persons.

Q. —In order to realise God, how much should one put forth one's own efforts and how much should one rely on God?

Mother—Even in relying upon God, you will be able to do it only when He wills it and makes you do it. What is 'Purushakar' or individual will-power and effort? What He wills and causes to be done is 'Purushakar'.

Q. —Why should there be such tremendous attachment for impermanent and perishable things and not for what is real and eternal?

Mother—All this is but His Leela (playful activity). It is only

He playing with Himself. Is it not said in Chandi (Saptashati) that She also exists in the form of Delusion? But what happens when one is attached to worldly things is that one is dragged down; but if drawn towards Him, there is joy and emancipation. If one gets entangled in worldly things, one gets the return ticket—to come and go.

At this there was laughter in which Mother also joined.

Mother continued—Everything is Infinite, there is no finality, no end. That is why one is counselled, do not leave off taking His name. Do it on the quiet, it need not be seen by anybody. Being blessed with this rare human birth, do not waste it. As you breathe so should you keep repeating His name. The body is constantly undergoing changes. Once you were young, now you are grown up. Turn this process to your benefit and welfare. Otherwise it is a case of suicide.

The people present expressed their delight at Mother's words and repeatedly requested Her that She should speak to them. Mother replied "Your

little daughter can neither lecture nor preach. As you beat the drum so do you hear. This is the fond request of this little daughter of yours that you should constantly try to keep the company of His name and bow to Him with folded hands."

In the afternoon Mother was taken to an assembly of Gujratis numbering about 7 to 8 hundred people. They sang songs composed for the occasion.

We left Madras on the 3rd Nov.

Pondicherry (Sri Aurobindo Ashram) 3rd Nov. '52.

At the request of some of the inmates of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, who were known to us, it had been decided that Mataji* and the mahatmas with the rest of the party would pay a visit there on 3rd Nov., 1952. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, the well known writer, singer and disciple of Sri Aurobindo had sent us a Bengali poem written for the occasion (a free rendering of which is given below).

"Ma Anandamayee ! You have come to this remote part, O pure and holy one, so that we may see you. You will speak with accents of love, charged with joy and sweetness. We will touch the dust of your hallowed feet and sing

our songs before them. We offer our devout salutations, O Mother, with fervent gratitude."

We reached Pondicherry at 9 A. M. on 3rd November. Some of the inmates of the Ashram who were known to us, had helped to make arrangements for our stay. Our party was accommodated at the guest house near the sea. At 11 A. M., Mataji and the rest were taken round the Ashram. We went first to the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and seated ourselves by its side. It was a very beautiful spot. The Samadhi had been finely decorated with flowers. A branch of a nearby tree overhangs the Samadhi as if forming a canopy over it. A number of people had gathered there to see Mataji. Shortly after, some one came along to take us to *Mother*. We were first led to Sri Aurobindo's room and seated there. Then we were escorted to another room where Sri Aurobindo used to sit. As we entered moving aside the curtain, we saw *Mother* standing there. As Mataji approached her, *Mother* stood gazing at Her fixedly, occasionally smiling a little. Mataji too stood there looking at her steadily. After a while, *Mother* placed in Mataji's hands a rose and a 'beli' flower with two pieces of chocolate. Mataji gave her back the

*In this account of our visit to Pondicherry Ashram, Mother (Ma Anandamayee) will be referred to as "Mataji" to avoid confusion with the *Mother* of the Pondicherry Ashram.

rose and one piece of chocolate. *Mother* kept the chocolate but again offered the rose to Mataji who now returned both the flowers. In this way when the two flowers had passed from hand to hand two more times, *Mother* tore off a bit of the 'beli' flower and gave the rest to Mataji which She handed over to me as She usually does. *Mother* then left the room and we all returned to the guest house.

At 4 P. M. we were taken to the spacious play-ground near the sea to see the games etc. *Mother* was playing with the younger boys and children. At 5 P. M. we went to the gymnasium where *Mother* was awarding marks to the children taking part. We were then shown the workshop where the inmates make articles for their own use. One thing which struck us was the equality of the sexes in matters of dress, games and other activities. At 4 O' clock the ladies had come out dressed in half-pants, shirts and white shoes with a piece of cloth round their heads and went about freely taking part in games and other activities.

At 7 P. M. Mataji was taken to see the inmates at their exercise—marching in step and moving the limbs all in unison. A little way off a man was telling them what to do from a room fitted with a mike. Owing to this habit of regular exercise, we learnt

that there were but few cases of illness among the inmates. At this time the lights went out and everybody there became silent and motionless just as they were, sitting or standing. We learnt that this was the time for meditation. After a short while the lights came out and the exercise continued.

When this was over, Mataji was taken to the place where *Mother* was, who also had been present there all the time. A man was standing by her side with some fried groundnuts in a wooden vessel. *Mother* gave a spoonful of these to Mataji with a wooden spoon. Mataji looked at these and smiled a little. Later *Mother* began to distribute these groundnuts to the many children present there. Mataji asked the inmate who was accompanying us to tell *Mother*, "This little child (pointing to Herself) was the youngest of the lot." When this was translated to *Mother*, she smiled a little and said in English to this effect, "Ever a little child." We then came away. We were shown the dining rooms or halls where the inmates take their meals. We were told that there are about 800 inmates in the Ashram.

At 8 P.M. Mataji was taken to the apartment of Sri Dilip Roy at the latter's request. He had expressed his desire that he would sing before Mataji

for an hour. A number of people were also present. Dilip Kumar introduced a Punjabi lady named Indira Devi as a disciple of his. We were told that she would go into a trance-like state and in that condition see in vision Mira Bai from whom come songs which she takes down. A collection of songs composed thus was presented to Mataji.

Early next morning i.e. on 4th November, we left Pondicherry for Arunachal, the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

A week or so afterwards when we were at Srirangam, we happened to meet a gentleman who had been to the Pondicherry Ashram shortly after we had left. From him we learnt that some of the inmates of the Ashram were disappointed at the shortness of Mataji's stay there. It was then explained that this could not be helped as the Mahatmas were anxious to continue their tour. Our programme was fixed almost entirely according to their wishes and convenience. As regards Mataji Herself, there was no question of preference of any kind whatsoever. When Mataji heard about it, She said with a laugh, "Whatever comes to pass is right. This was to be on this occasion."

Chidambaram, 4th Nov.

Leaving Pondicherry in the morning we halted at Chidambaram to see the famous temples there on our way to Arunachala. We went to the ancient temple of Kartika and later to that of Shiva, where there was an image of Shiva in 'Tandava' dance, with the left leg raised well over the head in His famous dance pose. It was known as the space-image of Shiva because He dissolved into space (Vyoma) while engaged in the dance. In other places of South India there were images of Shiva corresponding to the rest of the elements viz. earth at Shivakanchee (Ekamreshwar Shiva), water at Jambukeshwar, fire at Arunachal and air at Kalhesti. Adjoining the temple was a huge image of Vishnu lying stretched in Ananta Sayya. The images in many of the temples of South India were artistic and beautiful beyond description. We also went to the 'Nritya Sabha' where there were, besides other images, 108 female figures in various dance poses according to the Bharat school of dance.

Arunachal, 5th and 6th Nov.

We then proceeded to Arunachal which we reached at 11 A.M. The Ashram was situated at the foot of the hill. It was a very quiet and peaceful

spot.* Mother stayed in the guest house built by the Raja Sahab of Morvi while the Mahatmas and the rest of the party were accommodated in the guest house within the Ashram itself. Shortly after our arrival, Mother went to the Ashram. Mrs. Taleyar Khan took Her to the Samadhi of the Maharshi and also to the room where he stayed for nearly 22 years continuously and where later he received 'Nirvana'. Mother then returned to the guest house.

At 5-30 P.M. Mrs. Taleyar Khan brought Mother to the Ashram. Five Brahmins were seen engaged in reciting the Vedas near the Samadhi of the Maharshi as they do daily at this time. The daily Satsang was held on the spacious grounds near the Samadhi.

Mother spent the day looking over the Ashram. In the afternoon we went to the Ishan Math founded by Sri Ishan Swami. We also went to the house of Sri Arabinda Bose, who was not at home at the time, as we had sent no intimation of our visit. He hastened to see Mother shortly after. Mother said to him "Your house has been stolen", and began to laugh.

Sri Bose—"Why steal the house only, Mother, steal me also."

Mother—"Well, when one's house is stolen and one has no place to go to, consider where he will stay."

Mother then was shown the cowshed, kitchen, dining rooms, store rooms, etc. in the Ashram. Everything was neat and well-appointed. On Mother's return to the guest house, Mrs. Taleyar Khan introduced a middle-aged Sadhu saying that he had been the personal attendant of Maharshi since his boyhood. Maharshi rarely or never slept in the usual manner but passed the nights sitting or half-reclined. This Sadhu used to sit up with the Maharshi and accompanied him when the latter moved about the place with a torch when others had retired to sleep. The Sadhu said in Tamil, which was translated into Hindi by Mrs. Taleyar Khan, that he had a few words to say to Mother. "The Bhagwan (meaning Maharshi Raman) is no longer here. But I notice many similarities in Mother with the Bhagwan in talk and manner." Several other inmates of the Ashram were also heard to remark to the same effect about

* Maharshi Raman used to stay at different places on or near the hill on his first arrival here. Later he lived in the Ashram when it was built. He used to say that the Arunachal hill was his father and mother both. He saw Shiva and Parvati here and used to say that they were always present here.

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the similarity between the Maharshi and Mother. In fact, the wonderful spirit of regard and affection with which Mother was received among them left an indelible impression on all of us.

Mrs. Taleyar Khan was looking after Mother with whole-hearted devotion as if she had no other care or thought. We learnt that the Maharshi looked on her with particular favour and kindness. We also met the brother of the Maharshi, Sri Sarvadhikari.

The foundation laying ceremony of a temple of the Maharshi was performed in our presence. After Puja and other ceremonies were gone through, Mother was asked to lay the foundation stone. She touched the piece of stone which was then placed in position. The members of the Ashram committee were present. Someone read out an address to Mother in which they expressed their joy and gratitude at the visit of Mother on this occasion. Mother was garlanded and presented with fruits, etc.

In the evening a lady, the wife of a Madras barrister, sang before Mother to the accompaniment of Sitar. Mother too began to sing with her as if she was learning the song. Mother asked me to take down the words of the song which I did. Mother sang the song over and over again with relish. The correct tune too was captured and reproduced.

In the morning we visited the temple of Trivikram and several others. In the afternoon we went to a temple which was the second biggest in South India, the biggest being the temple of Madura. Intimation of our visit had been sent earlier by Mrs. Taleyar Khan. As we reached the temple, music began to play. An elephant, gaily decorated, saluted Mother with raised trunk. A large number of people had assembled with flags and big umbrellas to receive Mother and the Mahatmas. We were taken to the temples of Ganesh and Shiva. The latter temple had a courtyard with a thousand pillars. The upper part of the temple had been redecorated by Sri Tarapore of Madras at a cost of about Rs. 20,000/-. The image of Shiva known as Jyotirlinga was seen in a dark cave-like spot. Near it, the devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi pointed out a corner where the Maharshi used to sit. Large pictures of the Maharshi and of the places where he stayed had been placed near the spot. Adjoining the temple was a well and a wooded street where under a tree the Maharshi used to practise austerities till his body came to have a thick coating of earth and dirt. It is said that when the Maharshi came to this part, he went straight to the temple and spoke thus before the image of Shiva, "Father, I have come

to You. You have brought me here. Do now as You will."

We next went to the Devi temple, also a very big one with beautiful figures of goddesses with different poses.

Kumbhakonam, 7th & 8th Nov.

We set out for Kumbhakonam on 7th in the morning via Srirangam (Trichinopoli) and Tanjore, a distance of 175 miles from Arunachal. At Kumbhakonam Mother stayed in the Hari Om Ashram on the bank of the Kaveri. It was a very quiet spot with plenty of cocconut trees and banana plants. In these parts one often comes across places where these plants stretch as far as the eyes can reach.

In the afternoon we visited the temple of Saranga Pani. There was a big gathering at the daily Satsang.

Next morning we went to the famous temple of Kumbheshwar, where the image of Shiva was of a peculiar shape like that of an earthen vessel

placed upside down. We also went to the temple of Sri Rama where we found large images of Rama, His brothers and Hanuman in black stone. In the front were gold images which are taken out in procession during festivities. In the afternoon we went to the temples of Vishnu and Shiva at Mayavaram 20 miles off.

In the evening Satsang, a girl put the question to Mother, "Mother, the body grows old; but why does not the mind remain young and childlike?" Mother—"Do not wish to be like the ordinary child of the world. Be a child who never grows up. The only reason why the childlike state does not last is desire".

Q—"How to acquire the childlike state?"

Mother—"Seek the company of the pure and the godlike and obey the Guru and the elders. This will lead to the spontaneous unfolding of the true childlike state."

FAITH AND DOUBT

Vijaianda (Dr. A. Weintrob)

Shraddha, faith—faith in the *Guru*, faith in the scriptures, faith in the efficacy of spiritual practices—is a qualification which every aspirant on the spiritual path must have. For the great majority of *sadhakas* this faith is centred in the *Jnana murti*, the physical aspect of the *Guru*.

But this confidence must not be mistaken for what is called “blind faith”, that is a belief based on the convictions of other people—parents, teachers, friends, etc.—with the resolve not to abandon it even if it does not tally with actual facts or is against sound *reasoning*. Nor can faith be founded only on reasoning, on the processes of the intellect; *Buddhi*, intelligence is the creator of our whole mental world and its creations are based on delusion and are liable to break down like a house built without a strong foundation. The faith which comes through direct perception is no doubt the real one, but of course far beyond the reach of the *sadhaka*.

The faith we have in the *Guru*, in *Mataji*, has for most of us begun with some intuitional experience revealing

to us the supernatural in Her. This experience is usually the starting-point, the seed of the ‘tree of faith’. In some cases this first experience is so overwhelming that it immediately gives a firm intuitive conviction, against which the doubting processes of the mind are quite powerless. For others, this experience, although having given a strong impulse to the mind, has not silenced the doubting processes nor the critical attitude. For a third category of aspirants, the first contact with *Mataji* has nothing spectacular, but simply awakens the interest in further inquiry. For such persons it takes a very long time, sometimes years, until their faith matures; nevertheless it penetrates and permeates the mind slowly but steadily.

In fact, whatever the approach, there are three elements that must combine so that the average *sadhaka* may be established in *Shraddha*. The first and most important one is the intuitional experience. No matter what be its nature and intensity, it is based on the recognition of our real nature, reflected through *Mataji*'s

physical aspect. Generally it is 'Kshanik' (momentary) "as a twinkling of an eye" and cannot be expressed on the discursive level of the mind. Sometimes it may even be forgotten. But as its source lies in the Eternal, it can never be wiped out and remains very powerful in the subconscious depths. The second element is supplied by our emotional nature which tries to translate the inexpressible and unique experience into terms of our experiences of the past. This is why the intuition of the Real gives rise to the attachment we have for Mataji, as a mother, a Guru etc. Thirdly, the discursive mind furnishes the cementing element in this building up of our faith, for we can finally accept only what is reasonable, has been thoroughly thought out and is not contrary to what we have heard and learnt from elders and by personal experience.

Everything in the manifested universe moves under the sway of the "dwandwas", the pairs of opposites and the three *gunas* (the three qualities of nature). In other words the growth of faith is subject to fluctuation, depending on one of the three *gunas* predominant at a particular time. That is why doubt—the opposite of faith—will arise automatically and test whether our faith is built on

unshakable foundations. If it is not, it must break down; but if it is genuine it will stand storms and trials and emerge ever stronger.

When our mind delights in *Sattwa* (harmony) doubt has no access, for everything is then clear and self-evident; doubt comes only while we are under the influence of some emotional (*rajasik*) impulse or our understanding is clouded by the stupor of *tamas*.

An old diary written in 1951-52 (*I had my first darshan of Mataji in February 1951*) gave me the idea to write this article. That diary was written with the spontaneity with which one converses with one's own self, when one can be certain that nobody else will read one's effusions. I have now translated some quotations from it from French, trying to remain as true as possible to the original. I feel it may serve as an illustration—among thousands—of how our faith in Mataji awakens, has to pass through severe storms and cross-fires of doubt and finally emerges victorious.

"Pondicherry, 22nd Jan. 51.

"I have decided to start from the Ashram on Thursday morning and travel via Calcutta, Banaras, Almora, Rishikesh, Agra, Delhi, Bombay, Kanhangad, Madras to Colombo."

(There was no preconceived idea as regards Sri Anandamayi Ma).

“Patna, 10th Feb. 51.

“This diary has been interrupted for over a fortnight. I take it up again at Patna... .. What happened to me on February 2nd is far more interesting than anything I may have written about before.

“I was coming from Calcutta intending to pass through Banaras hurriedly, to stay for a few days at Sarnath and then if I had time to visit Rishikesh or else leave straight via Bombay, Kanhangad for Colombo, from where I had to sail back to Europe on February 21st..... My guide took me to the Sri Anandamayi Ashram. It is a wonderful site right on the banks of the Ganges.....”

Ten minutes later Sri Anandamayi Ma appeared at the door of Her room. She speaks only Bengali and Hindi. I could understand Her only with the help of an interpreter.....She was standing at the entrance of Her room. I can still see Her focussing Her eyes on me with that gaze I have come to know so well now. That gaze seemed to embrace my whole destiny..... At about 9-30 p. m. the Kirtan was over. Mataji said that She could give me private interview immediately.

“B. S. acted as an interpreter. I

was supposed to ask some questions, but as a matter of fact I had nothing to ask, I only wished to make a spiritual contact. It appeared as if Mataji had divined my thoughts. She Herself asked the questions. They were clear-cut and precise.....and it seemed as if She had guessed what I wanted to know. The interview took about 20 minutes. I went back to Clark's Hotel in a strange state. I began to understand what this wonderful being had infused into me: it was divine love, a love which from now on would bind me by indestructible ties—the love one has for the *Guru*.....

“.....But I was afraid that this feeling would not last Mataji had to leave for Vindhyachal, then Patna. I asked Her permission to accompany Her.”

(In this case the intuitional experience was very powerful and the intellectual doubting process was therefore silenced. But doubt is bound to raise its head sooner or later.)

“Banaras, July 25th, 1951.

“.....Sometimes a terrible doubt gets the better of me

“This immense love, is it really so different from the love one feels for a woman? Of course there is no room for any unclear ideas. It is an absolutely pure love—and yet it is still personal and limited. Nevertheless,

sometimes as a perfume emanating from its phial, it seems to pervade on all beings and merges into the quest for the Absolute..... How far have I deviated from the firm resolutions of my earlier life, which had until now been the main principles of my behaviour : absolute freedom in oneself, to be one's own refuge, one's own law..... *

"This freedom I have lost. I have become the disciple of the most wonderful of all *Gurus*, but a disciple all the same....."

"Sometimes a longing for the mountains gets hold of me again and I feel like going to a solitary place in the Himalayas and concentrate my mind on the pure Absolute to the exclusion of everything else....."

"But at other moments the certainty of being on the right path is so conclusive that no question can arise. All the same there are all states of mind and I have decided to write them down so as to become clear about myself."

(Here is a good example of faith and doubt alternating according to the fluctuations of the

gunas. When Sattwa prevails there is evidence of being on the right path and questioning seems an absurdity. When rajas gets the upper hand, the ego raises its hood and laments at its lost freedom. When tamas dominates one doubts the degree of purity of one's love for the Guru.)

"Bhagalpur, July 29th, 51.

".....My love and veneration for Mataji are so great that I should like Her to be like a perfect diamond, that may be examined through a magnifying glass from every angle, without one's being able to detect the minutest flaw. But who am I that I dare to judge this giant of spirituality? Only a *jivan mukta* is able to judge a *jivan mukta*; and alas! I am very far from that....."

".....One day when I was under a spell of doubt, Mataji said in reply to someone else's question (*I myself had not expressed my doubt nor asked any question*) that it was impossible for the *shishya* to judge his Guru, just as a student is not able to judge the learning of his professor. I feel sure that She is right."

"Hazaribagh, Aug. 1st 1951.

(Sometimes the Guru, to test how far we have progressed brings about circumstances that shake the mind violently right down to its foundations.

* When I came to India I was following

the Buddhist *Theravadin* path, which lays admit the necessity of a Guru.

These lines had been written at the end of the storm.)

"I am beginning to think that the whole of this inner tempest has been willed and created by Her, like the great magician that She certainly is. The ego has such subtle devices for winning back the command that has been snatched from it. Only the *Guru* can release one from the clutches of the ferocious tiger which the sense of I-ness is.

"Banaras, 13th Aug. 51.

(Again the clouds of tamas have darkened the horizon).

"I have witten to S. My resolve to go away beomes more and more firm....."

"In fact I am like a pilgrim in the mountains suddenly enveloped by heavy mist. I do not know anymore whether I am on the right path and whether I may not be pushed down into a precipice. This path is indeed as perilous as a razor's edge."

"Banaras, 14th Aug. 51.

"Doubt is a terrible thing. It has raged in me or about three weeks—a very long time. If I cannot regain confidence, it will be better for me to go away....."

"Banaras, 17th Aug. 51.

"The crisis is not completely over.

In fact what exactly is the matter? Some incidents frequently repeated make me doubt whether Mataji really is what I believed Her to be—namely my *Guru*, someone nearer than one's own heart.

"Alas! where have fled the complete surrender, the absolute faith which possessed me only just one month ago?"

"Banaras, 25th Aug. 51.

"The crisis of doubt has entirely disappeared as if by magic, without any special event happening.

"For, in reality there is something, which when it occurs—and it occurs quite frequently—does not leave any room for doubt or argument. It has the unquestionable evidence of things experienced by direct perception. What I speak about here is difficult to describe, in fact, undefinable."

(The guna has changed : Sattwa has chased away Tamas and with it all its mists and obscurations)

"Vindhyachal, 22nd Oct. 51.

"Again doubt assails me....."

"This rope in which I had full confidence, with the help of which I was going to try to cross over the abyss, I shall test its strength; I shall

pull and pull and see whether it breaks—and if it does break I shall have escaped from a great danger.

“If the tie that binds me to Mataji is the one which links *Guru & Shishya*, then it is indestructible and will resist all attacks, storms and cyclones.....

“For one cannot be separated from one’s own Self.”

“**Banaras, 30th Oct. 51.**

“When doubt appears it signifies a downfall, a descent to the plane of discursive thinking. If I ever keep my consciousness in the present, doubt will not be able to arise.”

“**Rajgir, 18th Dec. 51.**”

(*Again Tamās.*)

“I just read what I wrote on Oct. 22nd—I could have written it to-day, for it exactly pictures the state of mind at this moment.

“All this is very difficult to understand. I am moving like a blind man stumbling in the dark, ever in danger to fall down.”

“**Rajgir, Dec. 25th, 51.**

“Whenever it seems to me that the tension is so great that I shall have to leave Mataji, it somehow is put right again, as if by magic.”

(*The change of the guna which rules the mind for a certain period of time modifies the mind completely : quite different aspects of the personality come to the surface at every change.)*

“**Rajgir, Dec. 27th, 51.**

“Mataji’s love, is it not pure Divine Grace and nothing but that ? This Grace is a rare thing to obtain, one cannot gather it like a fruit from a tree, one has to become worthy of it. Once it has been received one has to learn how to hold it, to sustain it and watch over it like a precious jewel: for it can be easily lost and may be stolen by the demon of doubt in an unguarded moment. A mere glance back towards worldliness makes it fly away like a frightened bird.”

“**Puri, 26th Jan. 1952.**

“When I read my diary I realise that it gives the impression that I am doubting Mataji most of the time and am ever on the point of leaving Her. But actually doubt comes fairly rarely, as an exception, so to say,—the rule being periods of intense faith and love. But during those spells of deep happiness I do not feel the need of writing ; usually I write only when I am depressed, doubting or despondent.”

“**Anandakashi, April 20th, 52.**

“When I read these notes I ask myself: how was it possible that I should have been so greatly deluded by blindness and stupidity ?

“Her influence cannot be explained in any other way: She is Divine Grace, the Lord Himself.....

“But when one sees the sun shine constantly, one is apt to forget that it is he who gives us light and warmth; that it is he who makes the plants grow and grants us life; that every creature on earth depends on him. Sometimes one even gets annoyed with the sun for sending its burning rays and making us feel hot and perspire, or worse than that, through one’s own carelessness one may even get a sun-stroke. But when the ice-cold nights of winter come, then one

understands how stupid it has been to blame even for a short while the giver of life and well-being.

“What I owe to Mataji cannot possibly be expressed in words. She gives everything out of pure generosity, without ever a motive. To give boundlessly, without ever expecting anything in return—this is Her nature.

“If blindness and foolishness should ever again succeed in veiling my understanding, may I read these lines and remember. Then I shall wait calmly until the black clouds blow over and the sun shines again.”

From the Life of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Dr. Bithika Mukerji M. A., Ph. D.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)

Shahbagh and Siddheshwari.

From the year 1926 visitors began to take up much of Mataji's time. Impressed by the sincerity of the people, Bholanath would repeatedly request Mataji and prevail upon Her to come out of Her retirement and talk and mix with them. As already written above, Mataji, always tried to obey Bholanath to the best of Her ability. Even so, She once warned him lightly of the consequences of this sort of behaviour. She told him that once She came out of Her retirement it would no longer be possible for him to deny access to anyone who came, irrespective of caste, creed and position. That is, he would have to make up his mind to welcome the whole world as it were, that their lives would become public and they would have to put up with all the disadvantages which this entails.

Bholanath however did not worry about this aspect of the matter. Who could know better than he that Mataji's personality was not meant to be hidden within the four walls of a private house.

Among the host of regular visitors at Shahbagh we may mention the names of the following persons, who later became Mataji's almost constant companions in Her ceaseless travels throughout the length and breadth of India. Firstly, Sri Shashanka Mohan Mukherji, retired Civil Surgeon of Dacca. He was an old gentleman of a fiery temperament, held in great awe by the Dacca Medical School. Yet in Mataji's presence, he was like a tongue-tied child. His is an untarnished record of selfless devotion to Mataji from the moment of his first '*darshan*' to the moment in which he breathed his last. Although he was an old man when he first met Mataji, yet the rigorous *sadhana* that he performed may not be equalled by many a younger man. People have watched him sitting in *sadhana* for 86 hours at a stretch, his whole body black with mosquitoes.

Later, in accordance with Mataji's wishes he was initiated into the life of a '*Sanyasi*' by Sri Mangal Giri Maharaj of Hardwar and thence forth his name became Swami Akhandananda Giri.

Didi Gurupriya Devi is Swamiji's

second daughter. When she first saw Mataji in 1926 she was in her late twenties. From her early childhood she had been very reserved in her behaviour. She divided her time between helping her mother to look after the big household and reading books. Mataji's first words to her were: "Where have you been all this time?" Since then Didi has been Mataji's most constant companion to this very day.

Then of course there was Bhaiji or Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy, who has also been mentioned in previous accounts. About two years after meeting Mataji, he had a severe attack of tuberculosis in the beginning of the year 1927. His condition deteriorated fast and the doctors gave up all hope of curing him. One day in the heat of May Mataji went to see him. Bhaiji complained that he was suffering great inconvenience because he was not allowed to bathe. Mataji came again the next day at midday. She said, "Why don't you go and take a bath in the pond?"

Now the pond was a little distance away and Bhaiji was not supposed to leave his bed at all. Besides he had a relay of attendants watching over him day and night. But strangely the attendant (his little daughter) was fast asleep and Bhaiji with Bholanath's help walked the short distance to the

pond; after his bath he felt refreshed and more cheerful. People would have found this incident hard to believe, that is, that Bhaiji could survive a strain like that, but for the burrs that were found stuck on his clothes and which he could only have acquired on his way to the pond.

His illness soon took a turn for the better and he gradually regained his health.

Thus, a large number of men and women were beginning to gather round the little family at Shahbagh. Although, conceding to Bholanath's requests Mataji now mixed more freely with people, She always seemed to be living in a world of Her own. If not spoken to, or made to answer questions, Her body would settle down in a statue-like stillness and She would seem oblivious of Her surroundings. Even in the middle of conversations sometimes, She would acquire a far away look and would have to be recalled to the present. But Mataji's own particular winsome smile was never absent for very long and so She was never unapproachable. Didi used to wonder at first that the deep concentration of mind which is the aim of all sadhana as it were, seemed to be a natural state with Mataji.

At this time manifestations of

