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*An unpublished picture of Mataji taken in 1936 in the grounds of the
Yogoda School at Ranchi.*

Courtesy : Sri Daya Mata, President, S R F.

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

Mātri Vāni

While one is in the midst of *māyā* it is difficult to understand from where *māyā* arises. Aspire to the knowledge of Him. Truly, to know oneself means to know Him. Having found one's Self all problems are solved. So long as there is *māyā* it is difficult to know what *māyā* is.

* * *

The path which the Guru has pointed out, that path you must try to follow. Do not stay idle ; make an effort to go forward. And if you feel inclined to do work, do it in the spirit that everything is an expression of THAT. Service may be of the country, of one's wife as the presiding goddess of the home, of one's children as Gopal and Kumari, of one's husband as the Lord—for it is the ONE who appears in many guises. Do not pass your time merely with eating and sleeping. The invaluable boon of human birth must not be wasted in vain thought. Dwelling no longer in the traveller's inn (*dharmasāla*), make an attempt to go to your own real home.

* * *

Due to the non-observance of the one *Brahmacharya Āśrama*, the rules and regulations of all the other *āśramas* are not carried out as perfectly as they should be. Just as a house can be built only on a solid foundation. 'Āśrama' means absence of toil and weariness (*śrama*). Yet, with the sole exception of God everything is indeed fraught with toil and weariness. Consequently, how can there be rest and ease (*viśrāma*)? Even in the householder's *āśrama*, if service is performed with the conviction that all are manifestations of the ONE, one is actually living the life of an *āśramite*.

* * *

Rather than being a master in this world, one should become its servant. The very fact of being a master creates troubles and complications. But if one can regard oneself as a server, there will be no more clash. Perfect ease ! "This world belongs to God and I am merely His servant. Following His injunctions, I shall engage in service only." If this attitude of mind is maintained at all times, no new ties will be formed, although one is living in the family ; one will merely exhaust one's *prārabdha karma*. He Himself will put everything right.

* * *

So long as one has not found God, sorrow will not depart. If He is to be realized, one has to practise the repetition of His name, His contemplation, His worship, singing His praises — no other path to man's Supreme Welfare exists. The company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, religious gatherings and the study of Scriptures are also helpful on this path. This body ever stresses one thing : sense enjoyment is poison and gradually delivers one to death. Therefore this body always emphasizes : endeavour to be engrossed in Him as much as you possibly can.

* * *

You have been blessed with birth in a human body, which is so difficult to obtain. Let not a single moment be wasted. Plants, animals and birds also, after remaining in the world for some time and producing more plants and animals of their species, leave this world. If you too do nothing more than this, what difference is there between you and them ? Everyone should make a strenuous effort not to have to leave this world with a 'return ticket'.

Sad Vāni*

Bhaiji

Translated by Atmanandaji

Foreword

There is nothing in the world that can be called new. Revolving ceaselessly on the wheel of time, the old appears again and again clothed in ever new forms. This is even more obvious concerning the dissemination of Supreme Wisdom (*Parama Tatva*). Time after time, expressed in many different ways, there have been numerous attempts throughout the ages to proclaim the Eternal Truth of the ONE in the many. This ancient Truth (*Satya*) has ever purified and enlightened the human mind. To this category belongs the teaching set forth in the 'Sad Vāni.' May it bring Supreme Joy to all its readers !

Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma, at whose Holy Feet I sat, listening to her words collected in this small book, has said : "The search after Truth becomes easy for one who can be completely one-pointed and firmly concentrated under all circumstances, no matter what path may have been chosen." It is well to remember this. That to which the mind is attached, ever appears delightful to man.

—Bhaiji.

1

In the field of action, people's minds become crippled by the lack of freedom to proceed in their own way. The same is true in the sphere of religion. If the aspirant does not find scope for a wide extension of his search in keeping with

* *Sad Vāni* was first published in English translation by Sri Hari Ram Joshi and N.N. Das Gupta in 1935, long before the foundation of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, and has been out of print for many years.

his individual temperament, his efforts will stagnate in narrow grooves. The path that has been chosen must be pursued with great vigour, in order that purity of mind and heart may be developed. When the goal is ever before one, and has become a living reality all that is needful will come of its own accord.

2

To be attracted means to become transformed. Whenever you feel drawn to anything, be it a person, an object, or an idea, you have to sacrifice something of yourself. In the exact degree that you give up, so will you receive. This is an axiom of life. To gain everything, without letting go of anything, is never possible for the simple reason that two things cannot at one time occupy one and the same place. That is to say, without sacrifice nothing can be achieved. The more the heart becomes filled with the love of God, the fainter will grow the appetite for material enjoyments. The moment you become charmed and therefore transformed and inspired by Him, your mind will be stilled. True, it is not possible to be fascinated by Him unless His pull is felt from within; yet determined effort and constant alertness are essential. As a business man always keeps himself informed about the market rates, so should one remain ever occupied with thoughts and discourses concerning Him.

3

In the midst of limitation, if one line of approach is selected and steady progress made in that, the bonds of limitation will fall away as soon as one becomes fully concentrated on the goal. Then the One will stand revealed as the many, and the many as the One. In order to be blessed with the power to reach Infinity, one must begin by labouring within the finite.

So long as the body has sway, it is necessary to submit to the rules and prohibitions set forth in the Sacred Texts. This requires patience and endurance. Nature although

itself in constant flux, never accords help to a restless wavering pilgrim.

4

(This is in verse in Bengali and loses all its charm in a translation. It has therefore been omitted).

5

Without experiencing the anguish inherent in the mechanism of life in the world, the desire to become acquainted with the Great Mechanic (*Yantri*)* Who causes the cosmic machine to revolve does not arise in the human heart. Disease, grief, privations, remorse and the like, are very necessary for man. Just as fire burns away all dross and rubbish, so the three-fold suffering (*tritāpa*)† purges man's heart from all impurity and results in a growing single-mindedness in his search after Truth. When he becomes deeply conscious of his weakness and tormented by the thought of his undesirable impulses and distressing characteristics, when afflictions like poverty, bereavement or humiliation make him feel his life is futile, then and then only does he develop real faith and religious fervour, and becomes anxious to surrender himself at the feet of the Supreme Being. Suffering should therefore be welcomed. Never does the soft moonlight appear more soothing than after the scorching heat of a summer day.

6

You all say : "I want to find God, I want to find God". But are you really seeking Him with your whole heart and mind, with your whole being? Just watch and you will see! If you are in dead earnest you are bound to find Him. Do you know by what signs a true seeker can be recognized?

* Play upon words : *Yantrā* machine and *yantrana* anguish,

† *Tritāpa*—Suffering in all aspects of our being : *adibhautika*, *adidaivika*, *adhyātmika*.

If you pine for Him as a shipwrecked traveller longs for the shore, as a mother yearns for her dead child; if you desire Him with such eagerness you will find that He is with you every second, day and night.

You pray to Him for the good things of this world, and this is why He bestows on you riches, family, friends, position and so on, which make you forget the real treasure. Seek Him solely for His own sake and you will certainly find Him.

7

There is nothing in this universe that may be treated with disregard or contempt. He acts His Divine Play in infinite ways, through infinite forms, and in an infinite variety of settings. Without appearing as the many how can this Play be staged? Do you not see how light and darkness, joy and sorrow, fire and water, are inextricably linked together in one unbroken chain? Remember that spiritual endeavour must be coupled with purity of heart. To the extent that we harbour unkind or narrow thoughts, we increase the cause of evil in the world. What necessity is there to pay attention to what others have or have not? Far better be intent on your own improvement. If you can develop inner beauty, and enshrine Him, the ever Beautiful in the glorious temple of your heart, you will then be able to perceive beauty in everything.

8

People who come to see me, sometimes say: "I hope my visit is not putting you to any inconvenience?" It is because they wish to keep apart from me that such questions come readily to their lips. Just ask yourself whether this sort of consideration enters your mind when you wish to see your father, mother, brother or sister? You feel at ease in their loving company, and even should your visit cause them some inconvenience, they will not notice it. If you understand that this body is here for you all, such hesitation will not

arise in your mind when you come to me. Wherever you go at any time, go with your whole heart and soul, and nobody will seem as a stranger to you. It is a great joy to see all of you who are manifestations of the One Joy Supreme.

9

Since everything in this universe is the creation of the one Great Father, all are kith and kin. Just as the sons and daughters of one large family choose a dozen different professions whereby to earn their livelihood, just as they settle and build homes of their own in a dozen different places, so all human beings, although one in essence, are grouped in various ways and under various denominations, according to the demands of their multifarious lines of activity.

For the cure of the ailing body many systems of medicine exist, such as Allopathy, Homoeopathy, Ayurveda and others. Each person makes use of the method that is best suited to him. Equally, to cure man of the diseased condition that causes the perpetual recurrence of birth and death, there are elaborate prescriptions to be found in the *Śāstras* and many rules and regulations to be learnt directly from sages and saints, yet all have the same purpose. The diverse paths followed by Hindus, Mohammedans, Vaiṣnavites, Saktas etc., all ultimately lead to the threshold of the Eternal.

At the entrance to a railway station, there is much agitation and noise, much pushing and jostling ; but once the correct platform has been reached all confusion ceases for everyone's destination has been settled.

10

The Master and the servant, though separate embodiments, are essentially one. When the Master in His infinite mercy, descends into a physical body, He becomes the Servant. Just as there can be no servant without a master, so also the Master is dependent on His servant. Thus there is an eternal mutual relationship between the two, so much so

that the one cannot exist without the other. The Master is the sole object of the servant's self-dedication. On the other hand the Master must rely entirely upon the servant for service. The One Who in His fulness, in His totality is the Master, He Himself when appearing in division becomes the servant ; in other words, the servant is but a partial manifestation of the Master.

You boast so much of doing service. This is just idle talk. The real servants were Hanuman, Garuḍ and others like them, who identified themselves so wholly with their masters that they had no longer independent existences. Complete subjection of oneself in service, is what is required. He who is incapable of unreservedly offering to his Lord, his all, his wealth, family, friends, mind, heart and body, cannot become a servant of the Lord, that is to say he cannot claim to be recognized as His true servant.

11

This world may be likened unto a drum, with only one player. The rhythms it gives forth depend on His Will.

When kirtan is performed, have you not noticed how many people dance and sing to the rhythm of the music ? But do any give a thought to the instruments or their players ? Those who in happiness pass their days on this earth, although their happiness is only a tiny fragment of the real Joy, are not interested in knowing Him, the Source of all delight. Seek Him Who is the Fountainhead of everything. This is real *tapasyā*,* this is real *sādhana*.†

12

One often hears people say that while living the life of a householder it is impossible to make spiritual progress. Is this really true ? How many opportunities are offered to a

* *Tapasyā*—To undergo hardships with the definite object of attaining to the spiritual.

† *Sādhana*—Any spiritual practice for the purpose of arriving at Self realization.

householder for practising religion in daily life ! Parental affection, the fondness between brothers and sisters, the love between husband and wife, the reverence and devotion of children for their parents, the companionship between relatives and friends, the blessings of dependants and of the poor and suffering, are all potent aids towards a life that ultimately aims at Self-realization. Think it over and you will understand ! Tossed about incessantly between the ordeals and pleasures of family life, the spirit of renunciation sometimes awakens in man together with a desperate yearning for God : Where this is so, the householder has a better chance even than many an anchorite who has left home and family.

13

What is the good of saying : "I want to turn my mind to the Eternal, but I am unable to do so." When anyone in your home has just an ordinary illness or indisposition, no matter how preoccupied you may be, you at once consult a doctor and run here and there for remedies ; or if anything goes wrong with your worldly affairs, think of the amount of trouble you take to put it right. But when you find a difficulty in concentrating on God you at once give up, fold your hands in your lap, saying : "I cannot", and wait for His Grace. Does this befit a *Karma Yogin* ? If once you rouse yourself to enthusiasm you will be able to concentrate well enough. You spare no pains to make your body healthy, strong and beautiful ; if you try equally hard to educate your mind, you will see how wholehearted, how fervent your aspiration will grow. Merely to sit down and philosophize will not take you anywhere ; it is necessary to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and to engage in *sādhana*. To be one-pointed in all you do, will of itself teach you the secret of how the goal can be attained through action.

14

Restlessness, agitation and the like are certainly objectionable ; yet it is the search for happiness that lies at their

root. Like a child, thoughtlessly flitting here and there, not discriminating between good and evil, the mind ever seeks joy. But the evanescent pleasures of this world that come and go, cannot hold the mind for long. Loving attention and reprimand are both necessary for the education of a child. In a like manner the mind has to be trained. By frequenting the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, by harbouring only pure and noble thoughts and emotions, by listening to religious discourses, and by reading books of wisdom, will be provided the right sustenance for the mind, inwardly as well as outwardly. Gradually you will be freed from all worries until at last you find your rest in the Supreme. On the battle field one has to lay stress on the means of self-defence rather than on provocative attack. Similarly one should take special care to keep oneself protected within the entrenchment of discrimination and intelligent reasoning re-inforced by consecrated activities that make the mind God-centred, so that the outer enemy in the form of craving for sense pleasures may not be able to intrude. The mind is its own friend or foe, the mind itself has to destroy its own ignorance. The easiest and most effective means for purging the mind is to associate with saints and seekers after Truth and the ceaseless invocation of God's Name (*Nāma Kīrtana*).

15

People seek only outer opportunities and conveniences. They fail to realize that so long as they are merely concerned with success and failure they simply remain on the surface of things. Unless one looks within and without simultaneously, God cannot be found. The body, worldly possessions, one's home and people belong to the external; meditation on the Self and the endeavour to let one's thinking be permeated by Him are inner processes. To run after physical and mental comforts will only strengthen attachment to external pleasures, and rust will collect inwardly. This is why life after life has to be spent in cleansing the mind from all

accumulated dross and impurity. So long as one cannot make a clean sweep of outer attractions, one should at least aim at directing one's attention within as well, by seeking the Essence of things, and meditating on him, who is Bliss Eternal.

Gradually the glorious moment will come when one's whole being will be united in single-minded contemplation and the inner and outer welded into one.

(To be continued.)

"God is the breath of life, the Heart of hearts, the Self. To find Him means to find oneself."

—Ma Anandamayi

A Few Days with Mother

MADAN MOHAN MISRA

The *Dasera* of 1945 (October) will remain memorable in the history of Rai Bareilli. In most towns of the U.P. this festive season witnesses the usual *Rāma Līlā* celebration lasting for nearly a fortnight, culminating on *Dasami* in the burning of the effigy of the demon Ravana. But this year the people of Rai Bareilli had the rare good fortune of having the holy Sri Sri Anandamayi Mata in their midst during the *Dasera* week and also of witnessing the celebration of *Sri Durgā Pūjā* with all due eclat and ceremony, probably for the first time in the history of the town.

I awoke to the fact of the holy Mother's presence in our town by the sight of a large number of her devotees bustling about in the streets day and night, stirring its usual quiet. My curiosity was aroused and I resolved to go and see what was happening.

Arriving at the mango grove in front of "Nain House", I found that a beautifully decorated spacious *shamiana* had been set up and under it the image of the Goddess Durga with her companions and satellites had been installed. It was indeed an impressive sight.

The whole grove was crowded with people of all classes, rich and poor, men, women and children, including visitors of high social status from different towns—judges, lawyers, doctors, all agog with excitement and eager for the *darśana* of Mother. Motorcars, buggies, tongas thronged the place as in a *melā* or exhibition. A group of *pūjārīs* were reciting the *Sapta Sati Durgā Pātha*. The whole place throbbed and hummed with life and activity of various kinds. The melodious chanting, the perfumed smoke of incense and the hubbub of the people gathered there, filled the atmosphere and infused even in the most matter-

of-fact person a spirit of devotion and enthusiasm. But the attention of the beholders irresistibly moved between two poles of attraction. On the one side there was the splendour of the artistic image enhanced by all the accessories of *pūjā*, flowers, incense, blowing of conches, and so forth, and on the other, the glory of that real and living figure, holy Ma Anandamayi. People were seen rustling towards both with eager steps.

I approached the tent where Mother was seated surrounded by a respectful crowd of men and women. Mother favoured me with her characteristic affectionate glance. I felt I also was an unwor'hy son of hers. It is quite possible that every beholder of Mother who believed in her had a similar idea. The universal motherhood of Mother was amazing in its effect. The mere sight of Mother with her radiant face with its hālo of eternal bliss and her sweet speech made the heart throb with immense joy and created faith in the Divine.

A desire was aroused in my heart to invite Mother to my house and to worship her there with all ceremony. But I was informed that she did not go to the houses of *grihas-thas* (householders). I did not feel much disappointment at this, because I had the firm conviction that if my faith was genuine, Mother would fulfil my wish somehow or other.

The readers will be surprised to know that the very next day the silent prayer of my heart was mysteriously acknowledged and granted by Mother. She came to my place of her own accord, not inside the house but into the compound. My joy knew no bounds. My wife and children were happy beyond measure. I realized what a special favour Mother had done me by this gracious visit of hers.

The Puja took its due course. For these few days joy and devotion flowed in the hearts of the people assembled as it had never done before. When the Puja was over,

Mother departed from the town and with her departure there was an exit of visitors who had flocked with her. Now the town wore a deserted look very noticeable by contrast.

After a few days, hearing that Mother had gone to Vindhyachal, I decided to pay a visit to her during *Divali*, though it was difficult for me to leave my family at the time. But the only figure that was enshrined in my heart now was that of Mother. I came to have a firm believe that if there can be incarnations of God, Ma Anandamayi was surely one of them.

When I reached the Vindhyachal Ashram, I found Mother surrounded by devotees watching approaching visitors from the upper storey. They were trying to guess the identity of the new arrivals from a distance. Rai Bahadur Satish Chandra Gupta, Government Pleader from Mymensingh, was mentioning my name as a probable visitor when I reached the place. I approached Mother and prostrated myself at her feet with a feeling of great happiness. Mother asked me to rise and seated me near her with great affection. I felt I had become free from all bonds and attachments. My time there passed very happily. I went and saw some ancient temples in the neighbourhood, such as *Asta Bhūja Devi*, *Kali Gufa*, *Sitakunda* etc.

I heard that Mother was going to Benares soon. We too all went there by train. I very much liked the Benares Ashram, a fine three storied building on the banks of the Ganges and I experienced there a happiness that I had never felt elsewhere. I lodged myself on the uppermost floor in a room adjacent to Mother's. But I was asked by a devotee to move down and occupy a room on the lower floor along with others. I obeyed reluctantly disliking the idea of being far away from Mother. Late at night, Sri Gurupriya Didi came to me saying that Mother wanted me to stay in the room upstairs from where I had brought down my bedding. Needless to say I was overjoyed not only at

the prospect of being near Mother but also at this new token of Mother's kindness and affection.

Next day I payed a visit to *Viśvanātha* temple. Although I had been there several times before, yet everything seemed to pass so smoothly and I met with such facility at every step that I could not help noticing it and attributed it to the kind protection of Mother. While returning I bought a garland and worshipped and garlanded her to my heart's content. Even the fact that Mother retained my garland for some time filled me with a childish satisfaction.

The idea of returning home appeared unbearable but I was compelled by circumstances to do so. When I took leave of Mother, she said : "Go and come again some time !" As I put a garland on her and prostrated myself at her feet prior to my departure, she put her hand on my back and blessed me, saying : "*Nārāyaṇa.*" Mother then asked Didi to give me something to eat before I started. I was served food with great affection by several sisters as if I were actually a member of their own family and then given a send off. All this took quite a long time and I was afraid I might miss the train but on reaching the station I learnt that the train was late by an hour. My journey home was unexpectedly very comfortable in spite of the great rush.

Ya-Ta !

RAMANUJAM

**This verily is That
In the fire of this realization
In the power of this incantation
Dwells that Mystic Anandamayi
Dwells the Maiden of the Ganges**

**Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita**

**In the drum-beats of the pulse
In the silence of the heart
Upon the seat of Space uncumbered
Upon the breath of Time unnumbered
Dances the Mystic Anandamayi
Dances the Rapturous Anandamayi**

**Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita**

**Within the blue of inward skies
Within the Void in the blue
Within the lighting in the Void
Shines the Mystic Anandamayi
Smiles the Mystic Anandamayi**

**Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita**

**In the darkness of a secret
In the light of revelations
In the waking of a doubt**

In the slaking of a thirst
Weaving in and weaving out
Threads the Mystic Anandamayi
The loom of the Mystic Anandamayi

Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita

In the beauty of an upraised skull
In the grace of a curving sword
In Feet that beat a rhythm
In the resounding ashes of creation
Is the laughter of Anandamayi
The laughter of the Mystic Anandamayi

Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita
Om maha prajna paramita

Varanasi, Feb. 3, 1970.

Self—Surrender*

SWAMI PARAMANANDA PURI

[Srimat Swami Paramananda, who was the youngest of the disciples of Swami Vivekananda and received *sannyāsa* from the great Swamiji in 1900 at the age of eighteen, was highly regarded and deeply cherished by the great disciples of Paramahansa Sri Ramkrishna. Swami Brahmananda called him affectionately *Basanta Kokil*, Spring Bird, for the joyousness of his spirit which always brought such blessing to those around him. Swami Ramakrishnananda, personal attendant to Sri Ramakrishna and himself a great teacher, said of him : "Paramananda lived with me for five years, in daily, hourly contact, and I was never able to find a single fault in him."

In 1906, while still a very young man, Swami Paramananda sailed for the U.S.A. where in time he founded the Vedanta Centre of Boston and the Ananda Ashrama in the mountains of Southern California, bringing, in his own radiant way, the light of Vedanta, the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna to the west. Led today by Mata Gayatri Devi, his community, now sixty years old, still strives to live by the great ideals of devotion and service with which he infused it and into which he poured his heart and soul.

At his passing in 1940, Swami Virajananda, then President of the Ramakrishna Mission, said of him, ".....radiant with spiritual wisdom, he moved among men as a little child of the Divine Mother." The truth of these words is more than evident in the following pages—reprinted here with the kind permission of Mata Gayatri Devi. Aflame with his illumined devotion and his earnest yearning that his spiritual children should learn to lay themselves at the Feet of the Mother in complete, unreserved dedication, they cannot help but bring inspiration and renewed consecration to all bhaktas].

The true devotee is always conscious of the power that works through him. Otherwise he is nothing ; he does not want to be anything independent of that Divine Power. He knows that the Mother does Her own work, that he has no

* from "The Path of Devotion", Boston, 1940; available from Ananda Ashrama, P.O. Box 555, La Crescenta, Calif. U.S.A. and Ananda Ashrama 1, Naktala, Calcutta 40.

right to take any credit or blame upon himself. Everything is all right as long as we do not forget Her. Egotism makes us forget Her ; It is our worst enemy. So we must fight and kill it. Let us pray that we may do a little service to Her children, remaining always a true instrument in Her hands. Otherwise this life has no value. We have only the right to live a true and pure life and serve, as much as we can, all Her children.

Sometimes the task appears very hard, as if there were no way out of it. But nothing can remain permanent in this world ; the clouds vanish and again life becomes hopeful. We must therefore stand like a rock under all circumstances. Let everything come and go, but try to remain always unmoved. Be bold and face the truth. If you have an Ideal, give your life for the realization of it. We must sacrifice our lives for our Ideal. That is the only way to worship the Ideal. Not weakness, not hypocrisy, but sincere love and strength will make us worship Him truly.

Move on and do not look back to see what happens to anyone. Thousands like me may die at this moment, but that will not do any harm to this vast world. Truth is deathless and That will shine forever. Worship the truth and die for it. Remember always that the present life is the result of past thoughts and deeds; the future is going to be according to the present. So our future depends entirely upon us. The past will be washed off by the present life.

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That which has been offered to the Ideal, at the feet of the Master, we have no right to use for our personal satisfaction or happiness. He who has truly given his life, soul and body, to the service of the Master must not think of his own will, but should sacrifice his own will at the command of the Master. This is called true self-sacrifice. Otherwise, as long as we can fulfill our own desires by serving the Master, we serve him ; but the moment it interferes with

our selfishness, we do not ; this is not self-resignation. On the contrary, it is mean selfishness. One must be bold and determined enough to conquer this unworthy weakness and must use the power of discrimination.

The path of renunciation is very hard. Complete self-surrender at the feet of the Master is a very hard thing but without that, spiritual growth is impossible. The disciple should always be ready to go to the mouth of a cannon or before a tiger at the command of the Master without asking why. This is what is called true devotion.

Another thing necessary is to have no attachment for earthly things. The mind must be free from lust and greed. "He who, even here, before he is separated from the body, can resist the force of lust and anger, that man is really wakeful, that man is happy." Try to realize this and you will be free at once. Crush down egotism and say, "I am lower than even a blade of grass." Then you will see that all impurities will vanish, you will become divine. Then you will have the right to take the Blessed Name of the Lord. Egotism stands between us and the Lord, our true Self ; so destroy it and say, "Not I, but Thou." Bring out the real strength and destroy all weakness. Know that *Atman* (the true Self) is never realized by a weak person.

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Let us therefore conquer all weakness. People take advantage when we are weak. We must know how to preserve our dignity, especially when we are among people of the world. We must "hiss" in order to protect ourselves from the wicked, but we must never try to do any actual harm. When we try to do harm we drop to the level of the evil-doers whom we oppose, and really hurt ourselves. In order to remain true to our principle, however, we must sometimes show a spirit of resistance in the form of a hiss, but never should we be actuated by a desire to injure anyone.

Stand like a rock in your faith and devotion and let

the Divine Mother hold your hand. When we hold Her hand there is some danger of our loosening our hold, but when She holds there is no more fear of falling down. So we must make ourselves free from every danger by always trusting in Her Divine Will. Do not allow any other thing but Herself to occupy our pure heart. Do not be depressed by any foolish thought, fear, or anxiety. Know that nothing is impossible for Her. Have intense faith and feel free.

Let Her will be done in everything, then all must come right. We must not question why or what, but must follow Her will patiently and quietly. If misery comes, accept it as a blessing from Mother. Who knows in which way She forms our characters. One thing we should always remember, that worldliness and holiness are two different things. If one goes towards the north, the other goes towards the south. So you cannot expect justice from the world.

We must be bold, strong and fearless in our every action. When miseries or difficulties come, say : "All right, come on," and stand up like a hero. They will run away from you at once; that is the only way to conquer them. Be bold. Be bold and fearless. Even one word of boldness brings strength ; so try to keep your mind bold and cheerful.

It is a great and unselfish work to be happy, strong and cheerful for the sake of your ideal. By working with such unselfishness you will gain every day more and more purity and strength. But this can be done only through constant thought of the Ideal and earnest prayer. The Mother will not fail to fulfill the prayers which are said from the heart with unselfishness. She will always protect you and give strength and guide you. Will She make you unhappy when you try to serve Her always with your whole heart and soul ? She will not, for She is an ocean of mercy and cannot make Her children unhappy. No fear, if any misery comes, Her heart will always be ready to share it with you.

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Then why so often do our prayers remain unanswered, you ask? We cannot know. We are only children. We should not wish to know much. She knows, the Divine Mother knows. This is Her world. She will take care of Her children. We should hold the thought, "I am only a child, a simple child; I am the servant of all Her children." There is some happiness in serving Her children unselfishly, so let us always try to serve them. But here also we find difficulty because we do not know what real service means. Out of our foolishness we hurt those whom we intend to serve. In this way we make mistakes and cause unhappiness to others. Life is very hard without the power of proper understanding.

But still let us try to depend upon Her entirely. Although clouds sometimes gather so darkly about us, we must stand and be patient. Let us walk on steadily without being afraid of anything. Never mind the results. Know that good will always produce good, it cannot be otherwise. It may not show outwardly; still, this is the only true and desirable path to follow.

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Her Divine Will, we are all guided by Her Will. Let us fully depend upon Her and say sincerely, "Let Thy Will be done." We remember this, yet sometimes a little sense of anxiety comes into the mind. But we must shake it off. We must live here boldly, have purity and strength of character, then face everything fearlessly, all the difficulties and dangers. Whom to fear? We are children of Divine Mother; our Mother is the Ruler of the universe, the whole world belongs to us. Have that kind of life-giving faith.

Bring out the life, the strength, the purity and unselfish love which you possess within yourself; they are your birth-right. Come up, come up bravely. There is no death for you. Throw off all impurities; old superstitions. They do not belong and never belonged to you. Know that you are free,

free from all bondage. The little feelings of jealousy, hatred, envy, name, fame, are all mere superstitions. What are you to do with them? Drown them all in the ocean of wisdom without having any mercy. Do it quickly and realize that you are free. Free! Wherever you go, you are free. No more bondage! No more fear! Let fools talk nonsense. Pity them, they do not know any better. Move on and never look back to see what is going on behind you. Let them talk, let them do whatever they want. Say nothing, but walk on silently and steadily.

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O Mother, everything is done by Thy will. Not I, not I.

This is true wisdom. One becomes free after realizing this. Vanity is ruinous, is the worst enemy of mankind. Kill it, kill it forever. Then will shine the sun of wisdom. Think, "Who am I? Why should I quarrel or dispute with anyone? I am a child of God. I am free from praise, blame, sorrow, misery, pleasure, pain." That is freedom. Only foolish people wish to be regarded as great by others, try to get praise from others. If they do not get it, they are unhappy and miserable. Nonsense! Do you care for such nonsense? A foolish play of five minutes. What is the reality in this world? We must use the power of discrimination. No use in living like slaves.

Why should we be guided by our senses and desires? We have plenty of work before us. The work is hard, but it must be done. It must be worked out before we can be free. If we neglect it or do not do it out of fear, then it will take more lives and cause more suffering. Through the blessings of the Lord the path lies open. Walk steadily, being fearless and cheerful. It is a very hard task to carry a burden, and still harder for the one who removes it. How can one repay this debt? Only by living a pure and true life according to his teachings. There is no other way,

there is no other way. Material help and service are nothing.

Cast off all slothfulness, therefore, and move on. Know that you are not the body, you are not matter, but you are Spirit, the pure, divine, holy and spotless soul. Hold this great ideal always in your mind ; then nothing will ever dare to disturb your peace.

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Mother will always protect you. Without Her grace no one can do any good work. Let us not forget that, then we shall always be on the safe side. Man is in danger when he forgets his Mother and runs after earthly things, regarding them as great and substantial. It is through Her grace that one gets light and non-attachment to worldly pleasures. Let us sing Her Divine glory as long as we live. Never mind whether we are in happiness or in the midst of misery. Let us be absorbed in Her thoughts ; let us become mad in Her divine love. The world will at once drop off from our minds naturally. What is there in human praise or blame, love or hatred, jealousy and other narrow things of the world ? Let us forget everything and worship Her and Her alone with all our heart's love and devotion.

Mother will scatter all around us peace and blessings. We are Her loving children and She will never fail in giving Her motherly care. The waves come and go, the waves of pleasure and pain ; they are very good for our spiritual growth. Stand firm. Let everything come and go, but stand like a rock and have always faith in yourself and in your Ideal. It is through faith and self-surrender that one realizes the truth, and never through useless arguments or power of human intellect.

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Human friends and foes are nothing. Mother is everything. She is all in all. Every moment must be spent in Her worship ; all else is false, whether good or bad, all illusion,

māyā, ignorance. Truth is one without a second, and it is She. She is the foundation of the whole universe. Without Her Will nothing can be done. She is our Mother, Mother of all. When Mother is near no evil can touch us. Have faith, strength and courage. Know that Mother can make everything possible. No one can harm him who takes shelter at Her Divine feet. A fearless child he becomes.

Pray to Mother and take shelter at Her feet sincerely, then fear, care and all weakening thoughts will cease to exist. Say "*Jai Ma Anandamayi*," "All-Blissful Mother, victory to Thee!" Repeat it with force, all evil will vanish. She is the only destroyer of evil and She is ever the Protector of Her good and innocent little children, who know none but Mother. What else is there in this world to talk of? Everything is useless and unreal except the glory of Divine Mother, who is the source of our existence, the source of eternal peace and bliss.



of *samsāra*. There cannot be any fear for him. He does not listen to the praise or blame of the world, but he remains ever intoxicated by drinking the nectar of the Mother's name.

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Mother is the goal. She is the only place of rest and peace. Pray to Her. Pray to Her and think of Her and Her alone. She is the real protection. She is the source of all happiness and bliss. Let us dive deep in the ocean of Her divine love and be mad. This world will drop off from our minds at once. Everything that is unworthy of Her will be forgotten in a minute. "*Jai Ma Anandamayi.*" All fear will vanish, everything will become blissful in Her presence.

Pray to Her like a little child and She will protect you. We are all Her children. Why should we fear anything? Mother will take care of us. Our duty is not to forget Her in the turmoil of this miserable world. What else can I say except that we must worship the Mother Divine always, under all circumstances; that is all one must do in this life. There is no higher or greater duty than this.

Pray to Her, "O Mother! give me true love at Thy feet. I do not want anything else. Take everything else from me, only give me pure love at Thy feet." Pray day and night, and weep for pure devotion and pure love. This is called true worship. Be absorbed in this grand worship; then the world will slip away from you and you will always live in peace and bliss.

Remember that everything is done through Her Will. She can do whatever She likes. She can make the most impossible possible. Who knows Her glory? Who can sing Her glory? Ours is to give up all egotism and say, "*Nāham! Nāham? Tuhu! Tuhu!*" "Not I, Mother, not I. It is all Thou." Give me only true love at Thy feet, so that I may never forget Thee. O Mother! Thy name is so sweet; give me intense love and faith in Thy name. Mother, O Mother, take

me in Thy arms. I do not want to stay here ; this is not my home. Thou art my home, my refuge ; Oh let me come to Thee ! Thy work must be done. Let me do it truly and faithfully, with unselfishness and purity. Let Thy will be done ! Give us strength and give us light, and may we say truly and sincerely, "Let Thy will be done."

"Mother, grant unto us peace and blessings."

FOR THE DEVOTEE WHO MAY HAVE SEEN
ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS OF
MA ANANDAMAYI

ELWOOD DECKER

You have the memory of a Goddess
With Infinite Power to Save and Bless,

By Her generous, motherly Grace
You have seen Her compassionate face.

For you the *Sahara* of sense life
May become wonderfully free from strife.

Like wearing in a ring on your hand
A colorful grain of its gleaming sand.

Her Eternal Bliss you will always find
By keeping Her memory first in mind.

MA

Sri Sri Muktananda Giri Maharaj

SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDA GIRI

(Continued from the last issue)

I had put some questions to Sri Giriji, now I shall try to give the answers I received.

Question : Please tell us some of your experiences regarding MA.

Giriji : Arrangements were once made for Kālīpūjā at Shahbag, Dacca ; your 'MA' was to perform the *Pūjā*. Mataji first offered sindur to Kali and recited verses in her praise, then she sat down and began the *pūjā*. After offering some flowers her *bhāva* underwent a change and she told Bholanath to put some flowers in her hand. After receiving the flowers she tried to offer them to Kali with her left hand but being unable to do so, she said to Bholanath : "You perform the *pūjā* and I shall sit." Saying this she sat down to the left of Kali with a smile on her face. When about to start the *pūjā*, Bholanath, observing the strange *bhāva* of Mataji, asked all those present to close their eyes. Everyone complied except the gardener's wife, who was standing at a distance outside. Mataji said : "Sukhadia (the *malin*) is still gazing." Sukhadia was then asked to either close her eyes or to leave the place ; so she left. We opened our eyes when Bholanath started performing the *pūjā*. It was learnt later that the covering garment had slipped. As soon as the *pūjā* was over I went out to get the *pūrṇapātra*. As I was going to the other room someone exclaimed : "Look at MA !" When I went back and saw Mataji, I discovered that her face had assumed a bluish hue and the elongated tongue was hanging out. I saw at a glance this changed appearance of Mataji and turned away.

Question : Why did you turn away ? Were you overcome by awe ?