

# 16 Facts About Ānandamayī Mā

## 1) She surprised by Her wisdom and behavior those who received Her darśan (saw Her)

**Rādhānath Svāmī, member of the Governing Body of ISKCON:** “She appeared wise and sober, like a universal mother, and yet she also radiated the exuberance of an innocent little girl. Although her demeanor was as soft as the flower she held in her hand, one could feel that she possessed an indomitable willpower.” (From the book “The Journey Home” by Rādhānath Svāmī)



**Gopīnāth Kavirāj, a pandit who wore the honorary title of “Mahāmahopādhyāya” (The Greatest Teacher, or “Great Teacher of the Great”:** “The visitors would... ply Her with questions... Mother tackled all these questions with the same ease and spontaneity and without requiring a moment's reflection to deal with even the most abstruse and knotty problems brought before Her. Her replies were as a rule very pertinent, going straight to the heart of the questioner, couched in a language remarkable for its terseness and expressiveness. Every word that fell from Her lips carried weight; and humour too was not wanting when occasion demanded it... It was interesting to observe that She maintained an attitude of strict reticence in regard to

questions, which were not bona fide in nature but were either academical or intended to elicit opinions likely to hurt the feelings of others.” (From the article “Mother Ānandamayī” by Gopīnāth Kavirāj, from the book “Mother As Seen by Her Devotees”)

## 2) She transformed people's lives

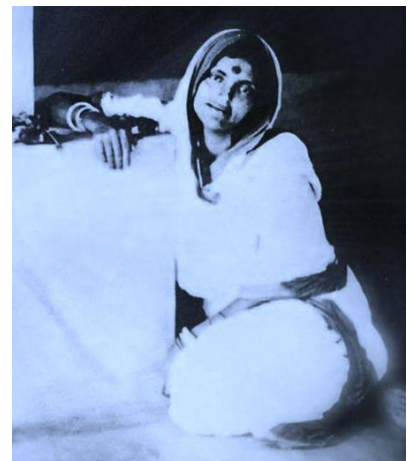


**Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India:** “Ānandamayī Mā was the living embodiment of devotion and love. Just with a glimpse of Her, countless problems are solved. She considered service to suffering humanity Her true religion. Her spiritually powerful personality was a source of great guidance for all human beings. I offer my homage to Her!” (From the book “Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)” by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, “Prologue”)

**Siddharth Sharma, a renowned pandit in Varanasi told me,** “Her gaze was amazing. If you looked at her, it was as though you were looking at something divine. All the thoughts inside you when your eyes met ceased. You were one-pointed in gazing at her. In her

presence all anger and lust would subside and you would be in a state of divine happiness.”

**Other stories** refer to Mā's look as an “x-ray look,” with



which she sees everything inside. One devotee said, "Just one look was sufficient in order to spend twenty-four hours in *ānanda* (bliss)." **Two brahmacharini devotees** separately described being small children around Mā and having her "stare nonstop" at them. Both said they found that they could not move and wanted to stare back forever; they ended up pursuing a lifetime vow of brahmacharya. **Two devotees** described the powerful impact of Mā's look from her picture. **Tara Banerji** told about a European woman who was watching a television program about holy people in India. When Ma's picture came on the television, She felt that Ma was coming out of the television toward her. She was so impressed by her look that she could not forget her. The picture haunted her. She drove to India in a van, searching all over for Ma. She found out where the ashram was located and Ma was just waiting there for her. She went to Ma and fainted." (From the book "Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)" by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 5 "Ānandamayī As Guru")



**"Melanie, already a devotee of another Hindu guru, met Ma in 1978 in Brindavan.** She said, 'She looked over at me with one of her looks that just melted your heart and I burst into tears. And then every once in a while she would just look back over at us and smile this very gentle smile and it was like her whole heart would open and you would feel her enter you with this beautiful caress that was sweet, sweet, sweet. She would just open and she would enter instantly into you. I felt this melting, melting into a puddle of love. I

guess unconditional love like that I'd never seen in a woman before. . . And we left and we were in a very, very beautiful state'. Since that time she has seen Ma's face in meditation" (From the book "Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)" by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 5 "Ānandamayī As Guru")



**Svāmī Vijayānanda from France:** "To sit at Mā's holy feet was not only a source of peace and bliss, it was also a powerful *sāadhanā*. Her very presence purified the mind, loosening age-long fetters. Without telling a word she could open the way of the *nādis*, granting one in a few minutes what would have taken many years of hard strenuous *sāadhanā*." ("Miracles Still Happen" by Śrī Vijayānanda. "Ma Anandamayee Amrit Varta", Vol. XIV, No. 3, July, 2010)



**Svāmī Turīyānanda about his experience in 1944 after which he joined the ashram a few years later:** "I had a job at the time. But I was in the habit of having the *darshan* of saints and reading books on the saints. I selected Mā's book. And by just reading it I was full of yearning, to know that there is something more, to know the Absolute. In three days Mā was coming to Bombay. You may call it coincidence but the time was right. It was five o'clock in the afternoon. There was heavy traffic. When I got to the station, I inquired about her tram. I saw some people, I was running. I found the compartment. There was Ma. I had her *darshan*. She looked at me — her look was full of compassion. Something you cannot describe. And that started transforming my world, my inner being. She just looked at me. For some months I couldn't take food or water. I was thinking that my *samskāras* (impressions from past lifetimes) and inner things were breaking away just like a river can break away part of a mountain. I was

feeling something that I cannot describe. I lost fifteen to twenty pounds. I was full of



consciousness. I had no other thoughts other than thoughts of the Absolute.” (From the book “Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)” by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 5 “Ānandamayī As Guru”)



**A woman who has lost a 12-year-old daughter.** The European Ātmānanda describes in her diary the incident of September 22, 1949, when a woman from South India arrived in Kishenpur āshram with a small group of people from Rishikesh. She was crushed by the death of her husband and then her 12-year-old daughter. After a conversation with Mā, the woman left. “Several months later the same lady came to Varanasi for Mataji’s darshan. She looked younger and happier. ‘I had got over my grief,’ she told us. ‘I am now reconciled to my fate. When Mataji said, ‘I am your child,’ Her voice was my daughter’s voice. My hair stood on end and I had an extraordinary feeling, which I cannot put into words. From that moment the wound in my heart began to heal. I

have gained an inner conviction that my child is happy where she is. I am finding ever greater peace and am able to attend to my meditation. Now I am planning to go on pilgrimage to Badri and Kadernath. I only wish all bereaved mothers would have the chance to be comforted by Mataji as I have been.” (“As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance”, Diary Leaves Part I: 1947-1954, “Satsang at the Kishenpur Ashram” 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1949)



**Saved from death in a car accident.** “He (pandit Kapindraji) then related that when he and five other persons had left for Delhi by Jeep at midnight on the 11th, he himself drove. As he was rather sleepy, the Jeep got out of control and fell into a ravine, 50 ft. deep. However, as if by miracle, nobody was hurt and even the Jeep remained intact, so that they could proceed to their destination. His daughter began to shriek with fear and then shouted: ‘Ma has come!’ Kapindraji said: ‘Yes, Ma is here.’ He could see Her distinctly standing in front of him, only She seemed much taller than usual.” (From the book “That Compassionate Touch of Ma Anandamayee” by Narayan Chaudhuri, Chapter 4, 20)

**Aparna-Di, a householder devotee in Kankhal ashram. about how she was influenced by her first trip to Mā:** “It was a very

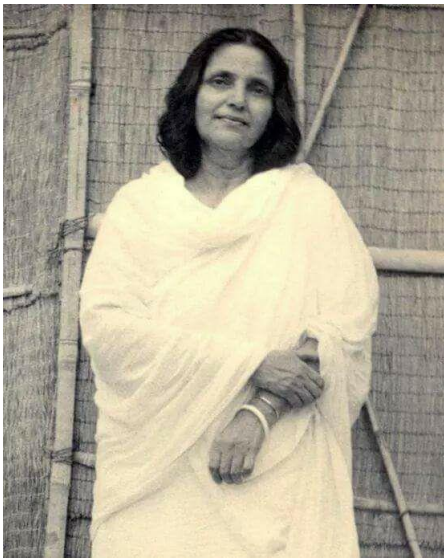
difficult trip. Crossing the Ganges was alright, but on the other side it was not a proper road. The last seven miles were by bullock cart. It was bumping and lurching. I thought I would fail. I was thinking, ‘Such a hard trip. I am having pain. Is the *mahātma* that great?’ Then I noticed a lady walking in the front of the cart. She was holding onto the cart, steadying it with her hand. As soon as we reached the proper place, no lady was there. I had only seen her from the back.

Mātāji gave me time at 11 A.M. I went to her and she asked me, ‘You want to talk about something?’ I didn’t have anything to say, but in my heart she told me to say, ‘Yes, Mother, I want to say something.’ When I started to talk, she said ‘Come in the back room.’ She turned and asked me to follow. When I saw her from behind,



I recognized that she was the lady who had steadied by cart. I said, 'Mā, I saw you from behind, catching my chariot.' She said, 'Did you see that?' I said, 'Yes, you are the same person.' I began to cry and I said, 'I have seen you catch my cart. Did you?' She said, 'Yes. How did you recognize me?' Tears came to my eyes. There were only tears. I was feeling very pure and fresh. Then Mother said, 'Are you staying here for some time?' I said, 'Yes, some days.' From that day I never liked comfortable living. I only wanted to reach there to be with her." (From the book "Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)" by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 4 "Ānandamayī Mā As Saint")

### 3) She taught how to find eternal happiness



"Whatever you may desire that is of this ever-changing world will bring you sorrow, even though momentary happiness may be had at times. To seek THAT in which no sorrow is and all is found, is man's sole duty." ("Mātri Vāni", Vol. I, 20)

"In the world there are the twin brothers: happiness and pain. They are inseparable. As long as you are after worldly happiness there must be sorrow as well, since there is constant change. Happiness can only be temporary, never permanent. If you want lasting peace you must turn to Him. Just as a child who is hurt cries for its mother, so you must cry for Him who is your own." ("As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance", Diary Leaves Part I: 1947-1954, Varanasi, Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>, 1948)

"First of all, sorrow comes from the sense of 'I' and 'mine'... But who are you? Find out who you are!... As long as

you are identified with the body, there must be pain, it is inevitable...

Then, there is another thing to be learnt. All sorrow is due to the fact that one keeps apart from God. When you are with Him, all pain disappears; let your thoughts dwell on Him...

Then again, on the level where there is only One Self, there is no question of birth and death. Who is born? Who dies? All is One Self.

The mind that identifies itself with the body can be turned towards the Eternal and then the pain the body experiences will be a matter of indifference. Since the body is bound to get hurt at times, there must be suffering as long as one is identified with it. This world oscillates



endlessly between happiness and sorrow, there can be no security, no stability here. These are to be found in God alone. How can there be both, the world and the ONE? On the way there, seem to be two: God and the world; but when one has arrived there is only ONE." ("As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance", Diary Leaves Part I: 1947-1954, "Satsang at the Kishenpur Ashram" 22nd September, 1949)

"When transcending nature's delights, which are fleeting, man tastes of the delicious flavour of his true Being (*Svabhāver rasa*), of Supreme Delight (*Param rasa*), then the excruciating anguish of the poison of mere worldly enjoyment is destroyed.

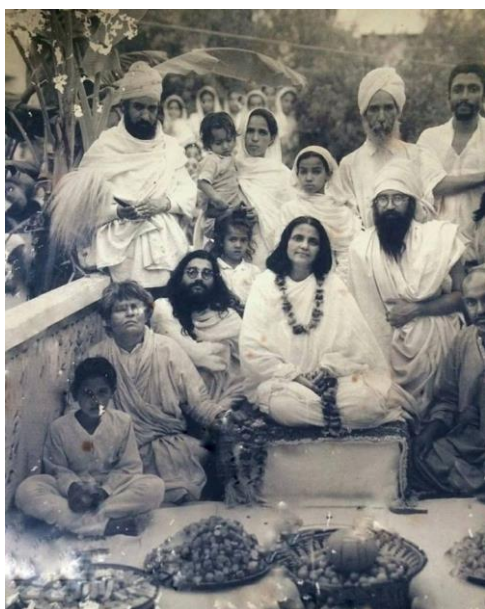
Beyond bodily pleasures, such as eating, sleeping, moving, about and so on, lies Joy Supreme. Don't you recite, '*Brahmānandam Paramasukhadam*,' 'Absolute Bliss, Supreme Happiness.' HE is Happiness Itself, Happiness is His very essence. Earthly happiness has its opposite –



sorrow. But where happiness is in its essential form (*Ānanda Swarūpa*), unconditioned, there the opposites – joy and misery – find no place; where solely Sva Rasa is, there can be no question of a-rasa, (of the sense of dryness, of emptiness, of the anguish of God’s absence). He is the Fountain of Joy – Joy and Joy alone is His being. A state exists in which there is only Bliss, Beatitude, Supreme Felicity. At your level, joy has its opposite; you speak of the joys of heaven and of the torments of hell. But where Eternal Bliss is, bliss in its own right cannot be expressed, it is entirely beyond words. THERE – what is? What is not? To speak means to float on the surface; what language can express that which is neither floating nor diving deep?” (“As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance”, Diary Leaves Part I: 1947-1954)

“After happiness gloom is bound to follow. The realization of the Brahman is a state beyond joy and dejection. Just as when you see a wet earthen vessel from a distance you presume that it is filled with water because generally an earthen pot full of water looks wet; similarly knowers of the Brahman give the impression of being steeped in joy; but this is not the ordinary joy of happiness. What that state is like cannot be described in words.” (*Mātri Vāni*, Vol. II, 153)

#### 4) The Universal Mother



“Her teaching was directed towards an extreme variety of individuals. In her entourage were 'sadhakas' who practised the Vichara marga (the path of knowledge), bhaktas, shaktas, karma yogis, people, who lived in the world and practised a spiritual discipline, spiritually advanced sadhus along with people learning the ABC of the spiritual path, Hindus, some Jains, Christians, Jews, Europeans and Americans. She was before everything else, the Mother, and she did not limit her teaching to some individuals, but wanted to save as great a number of people as possible.” (From the book “Some Aspects of Mā Ānandamayī’s teachings” by Vijayānanda, CH. II “Mā Ānandamayī – An Introduction”, (IV) “Her Teaching”)

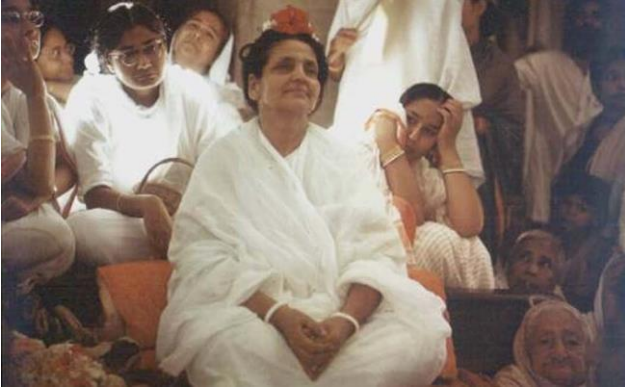
“In 1984, two years after Ma’s *mahasamadhi*, when her devotees took a pilgrimage to Kheora, they were welcomed by Muslim devotees who said, ‘Although Ma was born into a Hindu family, She is also the Ma of the

Muslim. She is our own Ma.” (From the book “Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)” by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 2 “The Story of Ānandamayī Mā’s Life”)

“In the evening we again sat in her room, while she was dictating replies to letters. One of them was from South Indian Christian, who asked whether it was true that Christians were not liked much in Mataji’s Ashrams. Ma said: ‘Write to her: Under whatever name anyone may seek God, this little child most heartily welcomes him.’” (From the article “From the Diary of a European” (by) Melita Maschmann, from “Ānanda Vārtā”, Vol. 13, No. 3)



## 5) She embodied in response to the desires of people



**Ānandamayī Mā says:** “You have brought down this body to the physical plane for accomplishing your work here below, for your spiritual uplift.” (From the article by Ganga Charan Das Gupta, M.A., “A Call from Above”, from the book “Mother As Seen by Her Devotees”)

“This body has not come into being to reap the fruits of past karma... You all have wanted it and you have it now. So play with this doll for some time.” (From the book “Mother As

Revealed to Me” by Jyotish Chandra Roy)

“I have no fixed aim.” (Ibid)

“Whatever action takes place in this Body occurs only to serve your collective needs.” (From the book “Mother Reveals Herself” by Jyotish Chandra Roy)



**She considers people as parts of Her.** “In the twin temples of Shiva near the lakes in South Calcutta, Mother sat in the S.E. corner of the Temple hall one morning; then the Ekdalia Ashram was not built. A crowd assembled in the small hall to celebrate the Holi festival with Mother. A large number of ladies pressed hard round Mother's body. Mother sat almost bundled up. The temperature was high, the rush of people was too tense for Her. Many persons sitting round Mother were profusely perspiring. It was felt that the pressure of people had become almost oppressive and

suffocating to Mother. The following questions, to Mother and the answers they elicited from Her are given below:

Question: Mother, why do you allow these people to crowd round your body?

Answer: Perhaps this body draws them so close to it. It is not their fault.

Q. Don't you find it highly oppressive and disgusting, Mother?

A. No. It is a great pleasure to me to find them pressing so close to me.

Q. Ma, we feel it awfully boring to have such a crowd pestering us with tales of their domestic troubles and worries.

A. Because you feel that your own body and theirs are distinctly separate. As you do not feel the weight of your head, of hands and feet, of so many fingers and toes, of legs and thighs, to be a burden nor a heavy load upon yourself because you feel they are but vital parts of your own body, so do I feel that these persons are all organic members of THIS BODY; so I don't feel their pressure nor find their worries weighing upon me. Their joys and sorrows, problems and their solutions, I feel to be vitally mine. Their acts and awards, too, are essentially mine, I have no ego-sense, nor conception of separateness. Each one of you have the 'height and depth of eternity' in me equally.' (From the article by Ganga Charan Das Gupta, M.A., “A Call from Above”, from the book “Mother As Seen by Her Devotees”)

**She forbids devotees to prevent anyone from coming to Her.** “In May 1948 Mataji's birthday was being celebrated in the garden of Dr. J.K. Sen's house, at New Delhi. A large crowd attended the Satsang three times daily. Sri Haribabaji Maharaj graced the function with their presence.





One morning in the middle of the meeting, a weird looking man entered the garden. He was dressed in a queer fashion and his face bore a look of insanity. He was obviously disturbed. He walked straight over to the women's side and spoke to each woman whose head was uncovered, 'Cover your head, be a Devi!' No one heeded him. This seemed to annoy him intensely. He was obviously getting more and more desperate. Finally, he approached Mataji and repeated his request to Her as well. She at once complied with his wish and motioned to the girls sitting near Her to do likewise. Every

woman in the assembly followed suit. The stranger was visibly pleased at his sudden success, and with a triumphant smile walked across to the men's side and sat down quietly. After some time however he got up, announcing in a loud voice that he wanted to leave. Mataji handed an orange to someone to give to him. This for some reason infuriated the stranger and he threw the fruit at Mataji with violence. He aimed well, it hit Her. A wave of indignation surged through the crowd. Two of Mataji's bhaktas caught hold of the intruder and tried to lead him out of the garden. At the gate he freed himself from their grip and attempted to return to the Satsang. One of the devotees hit him, and with difficulty he was finally turned out into the street.

After the meeting Mataji called the two young men who had dealt with the stranger. She wanted to know all the details. On hearing them, She said, "You are not to prevent anyone from coming to this body<sup>1</sup>, moreover you must not beat anybody. To atone for what you have done keep a fast tomorrow, and you have hit the stranger may not even drink water." "But how could we allow him to throw the orange at you?" protested the young men. "There was no knowing what he might have done next." "Never mind," said Mataji, "he wanted to return to me, you should have let him do so."

The next morning the stranger came again. This time he was decently dressed like everyone else. The insane look had vanished from his face. He did not concern himself with the women's bare heads, but straight away sat down quietly with the men and remained throughout the Satsang. When it was over he went up to Mataji and talked to Her. She invited him for lunch and he stayed with us until after the meal. We found him an educated, cultured and amiable person.

Afterwards, we learnt that throwing the orange at Mataji had caused him such deep remorse that he was healed of his mental disturbance. He had been unbalanced and was restored to normality by Mataji's Grace.

This surely is an incident to be pondered over. Mataji sometimes says, *'If you must be angry, be angry with me, for you will not be able to keep it up for long. If you focus your anger on me, it will soon evaporate.'* ("As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance", Diary Leaves Part I: 1947-1954)

**She pays attention to everyone.** "Usually when people return from a journey they greet their family more or less briefly, and only after refreshing their body by washing, bathing, eating and drinking, they attend to all other business. Not so Mataji. First of all Her family does not only comprise the whole of humanity; all sentient beings as well as so-called inanimate things receive Her loving attention with one exception – Her own body. So when She arrives She has a smile, a kind word, a garland, a flower or a tulsi-leaf for everyone who has come to welcome Her. At once the whole place is lit up with joy and a sense of fulfilment.

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<sup>1</sup> Mataji spoke of Her own person as "this body."

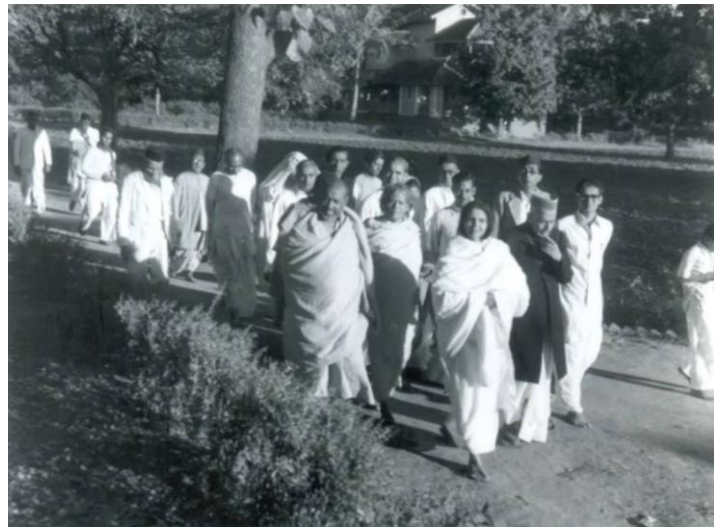


Next to human beings, She lavishes Her grace on plants. She takes keen interest in every tree, every creeper, plant, shrub and flower. She often stokes and caresses them affectionately and not only gives minute instructions as to how they can be made to grow better, but also sees to it that what She suggests is carried out then and there.

She inspects the kitchen and the dining-rooms, the Satsang hall and the rooms that have been got ready for visitors, inquires about every little detail, gets a carpet moved here and a picture changed there; has a phone-message conveyed to one person and a note sent to another; scrutinizes those who has been ill when She last saw them and those who are in indifferent health at the moment, and speaks words of comfort and advice.

When at Varanasi, She also goes to greet the cows and calves, each individually. Then She may recount some incidents from Her recent travels, tell of old bhaktas or new people She has met. In fact, everything imaginable is being attended to for an hour or two or longer until at last one of Her

attendants succeeds in getting Her to retire to Her room. I noted all this down when Mataji arrived at Varanasi some time ago. But of course, there are instances when Mataji behaves quite differently. At times She seems utterly distant, Her eyes look far away. She is obviously deeply preoccupied with some thing that we cannot perceive. There is a hush in the atmosphere and everyone present just gazes at Her in mute awe and wonder. She is entirely unpredictable – all possibilities are contained in Her.” (“As the Flower Sheds its Fragrance”, Diary Leaves Part



I: 1947-1954)

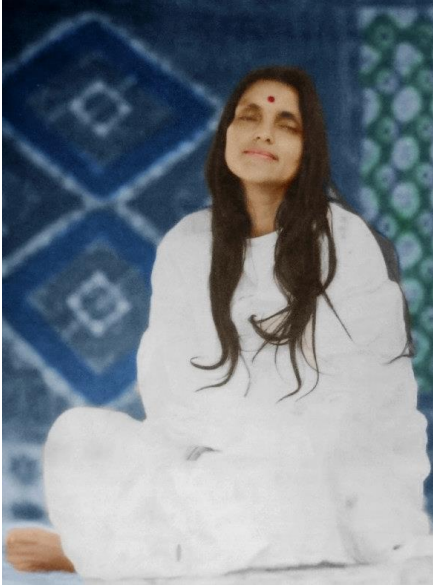


## 6) She is guided by kheyāla (spontaneous upsurge of the Divine Will) in Her actions

Ānandamaḃī Mā says: “This body has no predetermination. That is why there is no tendency towards things like (giving) initiation etc. However, it may have happened that this body was sitting on its own, and many a time, all of a sudden bija mantras or the mantra of sanyas spurt out from the mouth. Someone might have heard these at that time. Again, perhaps some other might have got (mantra) in different ways and took it (as initiation). Many such incidents are occurring by which a common man has the conviction that surely all those were predetermined. But, in fact, there was nothing like this. What had to happen is happening. Do you want to know how? The soil is there. A fruit fell from the tree and a (new) tree grew out of it. But nobody planted the seed. Just as a tree may



grow from planting a seed, a similar tree can also grow from a seed that dropped by itself, and this tree will bear similar flowers and fruits. But this was not due to anyone's intention or resolve. It is like that." (From the book "Ma in Her Words", 302)



**Gopīnāth Kavirāj recalls one of the moments of their first encounters with Ānandamaṃyī Mā:** "Different kirtan parties vied with one another in singing daily before Her the glories of the Divine and His Name. Individual devotees with a melodious voice considered it a distinct honour to themselves to be permitted to regale Her with their songs.

On such occasions generally, when the music flowed spontaneously out of the deeper feelings of the singer's heart, and also on other occasions when in the course of conversations a crucial point was reached, it was observed that Mother's appearance became aglow with bhava and the normal gave way to the supernormal.

It seemed as if Her usual personality with which Her bhaktas were familiar was replaced for a while by an altogether different one. At such moments various unusual phenomena were observed. Stotras and mantras of an extraordinary kind used to gush from Her lips with a rapidity that made it practically impossible for anyone to record them.

The language of these utterances was unique; it was not, strictly speaking, Sanskrit nor even any of its derivative vernaculars, though there were a few Sanskrit words here and there. Several words were unfamiliar and even the so called Sanskrit words did not perhaps convey their usual sense. Besides, very often - monosyllabic 'bijas', known or unknown, were interspersed. The pronunciation was so perfect that even a conjunct sound, made up of several consonants without any inter-vocalic linking, was distinctly audible. Sometimes on these occasions Mother melted into tears or ejaculations, or even would become rigid and pass into a trance-like condition.

The trance-like state was also induced in those days when bhaktas offered flowers at Her feet or in other ways tried to propitiate her. The response was immediate." (From the article "Mother Ānandamaṃyī" by Gopīnāth Kavirāj, from the book "Mother As Seen by Her Devotees")

**How one day Mā responded to a devotee's call.** "In a spiritual gathering at a school in Varanasi, Ma was once listening to kirtana (sacred singing) then going on in full swing. Suddenly she got up from the dais for reasons best known to her and hurriedly proceeded towards the gate leading to the public road. Two devotees, N and A, followed her. A motorist who was driving to the gathering was met at the entrance. Ma unceremoniously asked him to give her a lift to the railway station which he did. On arrival at the station, he was asked to purchase three railway



tickets to Sarnath for Ma, N and A. The gentleman pointed out that no train for Sarnath would be available till the next day. Still Ma insisted and the gentleman procured three tickets for Sarnath, knowing full well that there was no point in doing so. Within minutes a train steamed

into the station and Ma with her two companions hurriedly stepped into an empty compartment. The gentleman murmured that the train, being a mail train, would not stop at Sarnath. Ma paid no heed to his remonstrances. The train whistled off. The motorist went back to Varanasi to inform Gurupriya Devi about Ma's latest kheyal (act of divine will) and eventually brought her and some others to Sarnath.

Now, N and A had almost an uncanny experience. Unexpectedly the train suddenly stopped, presumably because there was no 'all clear' signal. At once Ma alighted from the train and told N and A: "Come down, come down quickly." A jumped from the train. N was incapable of such an athletic feat. While N was hesitating, Ma helped him get down. And within a few seconds the train started. N and A found themselves under the protecting wings of Ma at Sarnath, thus carried by a mail train not scheduled to touch such an unimportant station. The chain of events was mysterious enough so far. At Sarnath the mystery deepened. The evening was dark and the locality desolate. Ma asked her companions whether they could lead her to the newly built Birla Dharmasala. Their answer was in the negative. Ma then assumed the role of a guide and started walking in a particular direction without any hesitation. N and A followed her silently. The party at last reached Birla Dharmasala - a big house with a porter posted at the gate. Without caring to make any enquiry Ma walked past many empty rooms and finally entered straight a particular room occupied by a lady who happened to be an ardent devotee of Ma, Maharattan by name.

Maharattan's experience was also very wonderful. She had come from far away for Ma's darshan at Varanasi. Misinformed that Ma had gone to Sarnath, she forthwith rushed to Sarnath in a tonga (cart) and learnt, to her dismay, that there was no question of Ma's visit to that place. In the meantime, the tonga driver had left and there was no train for Varanasi. So Maharattan was stranded. She shuddered to think of the dreadful prospect of spending the night all alone in an empty dharmasala situated in a lonely locality far away from human habitation. On top of this she was unwell and was running a temperature. The helpless lady was in a terrible plight. She then completely broke down, crying 'Ma, Ma!' At this juncture Ma physically appeared before her and exclaimed: "Here am I, here am I .... don't cry any more."

After some time the motorist who had escorted Ma to the Varanasi railway station brought Gurupriya Devi and others to Sarnath. Ma was now revealed in wonderful spirits - she went on talking and laughing and cutting jokes at the cost of Maharattan. The whole party had prasad rather late at night and then they all slept on the roof of the building with Ma lying near to them." (From the book "Anandamayi Ma: the Mother, Bliss-Incarnate" by Anil Ganguli)



## 7) She always was the same

**In response to Paramahansa Yogananda's request Ānandamayī Mā tells about herself:** "Father, there is little to tell." She spread her graceful hands in a deprecatory gesture. "My consciousness has never associated itself with this temporary body. Before I came on this earth, Father, 'I was the same.' As a little girl, 'I was the same.' I grew into womanhood, but still 'I was the same.' ...And, Father, in front of you now, 'I am the same.' Ever afterward, though the dance of creation change around me in the hall of eternity, 'I shall be the same.'" ("Autobiography of a Yogi" by Paramhansa Yogananda, Chapter 45)

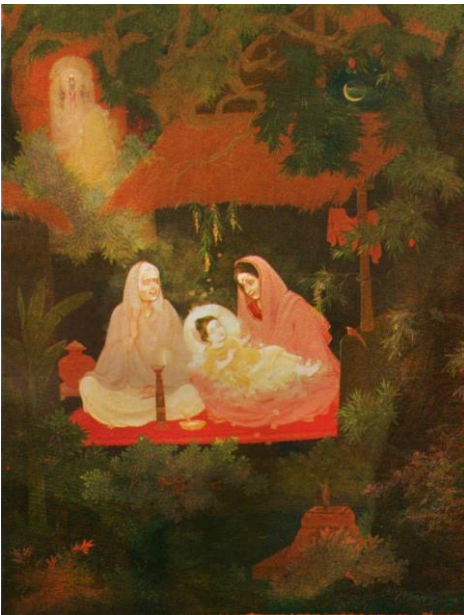




“Look, in the case of a sadhaka there is aspiration towards a goal. But here meaning herself], there is no question of goal or no goal, of aim or aimlessness. Every artery, vein and nerve, their functioning and vibration are clearly seen, just as when somebody in a dark room holds a lamp in his hand and throws light on objects one by one—exactly like this. But, for the sadhaka who is still on the path, it is impossible to perceive in this matter. He has to advance by overcoming various kinds of obstacles... Here, there is no question of this. Here, the artery is myself, the vein is myself, the functioning myself and the observer myself. Of course, when saying "myself," it is because some word has to be used. . . . Here change or changelessness, concentration or abeyance of activities—there is simply no question of all these... Here everything is perfectly open and unconditioned.” (From the book “Anandamayi Ma: the

Mother, Bliss-Incarnate” by Anil Ganguli)

**A few episodes from Her childhood:**



“Reflecting on the time prior to Ma’s birth, Didima reports, ‘Your Ma was to make her advent in this body, but even two or three months before that, such was the concurrence that I very often saw many Incarnations (*avataras*) in various forms, numerous deities and gods come near me in a vision – what a glorious manifestation! I could feel an indescribable environment... I would, with an inexplicable inner experience, welcome and extend ceremonial reception (*varan*) to them with reverence.’ The birth itself was an unusual one. Didima did not suffer much pain in labor, and the baby was born after only ten minutes of labor. Those present at the birth were concerned when the baby was absolutely quiet after her birth. Later on, when Ma was asked about this, she replied, ‘Why should I have cried? I was watching the mango tree through the apertures in the cane matting at that time.’” (From the

book “Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)” by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 2 “The Story of Ānandamayī Mā’s Life”)

“One day she was digging in the sand for several hours. Didima asked, ‘Why do you stay in the sun for so long?’ Nirmala replied, ‘There is Shalagrama Thakur [divine image] in the *Thakurghar* [shrine of the image] and present in it are Krshna, Radha, and Rama Narayan and all such forms – so you were telling me, were you not Mother? Now in this heap of sand, too, are present all those forms and there are also still more forms, innumerable as they are.’

Again, when Nirmala was very tiny, it was *Vaisakhi Puja*, an auspicious time to offer a ripe mango to the deity. Didima, being extremely poor, was unable to buy a mango, and the tree outside the house only had green mangos, except for one ripe one at the very top of the



tree. Little Nirmala, who had the habit of conversing with trees, went outside and came back with the ripe mango. Didima was angry at first, assuming that the child had taken it from someone's else's tree. But Nirmala insisted that it fell from the top of the family tree, saying, 'As you give me, so does the tree.'" (Ibid)

"Although Nirmala had received only informal religious instruction from her parents, she displayed an uncanny knowledge of religious matters. Once an older female relative of Nirmala's took *diksha*, or initiation, from a guru. Soon she forgot the details of the required *mudras*, *nyasa*, and *asanas*, but she was afraid to ask Didima for help, so she mentioned it to young Nirmala. Although the child had never seen anyone initiated, she gave her all the details. Nirmala explained, 'Hearing the words of [my Aunty], all that just occurred spontaneously in this body.'" (Ibid)

## 8) She showed Her devotees an example how to perform their duty



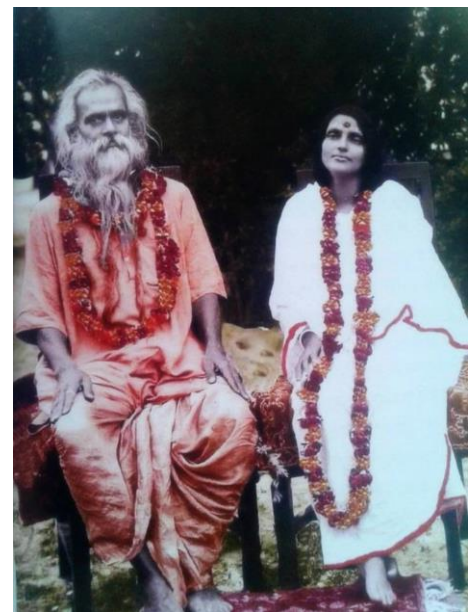
**Ānandamaṃī Mā says:** "From childhood this body would at times fall into a 'bhav' for short periods during which She was conscious of Her earthly body being defused everywhere. At times there were moments when Her temporal body ceased to exist. As heard later from those who witnessed it, this would sometimes become visible to others, striking them with amazement. If this happened while this Body was engaged in some household work, everything seemed to go out of order. It never occurred to Her to tell anyone about those states.

Due to the lack of understanding of these phenomena, this Body was subjected to many adverse comments. As often happens in households, She would sometimes be blamed for mistakes She did not commit. Without protesting She would listen, not uttering a word. Invariably everyone realized the truth later, but in any case nothing made any difference to

this Body. It was Her custom to listen silently to whatever was said about Her while continuing to do Her duty meticulously and cheerfully. This Body knew this was the nature of this world.

Look, the earthly life is called 'sang sar', (a pun of which means the act of a clown); but instead of acting our roles as an actor on the stage of the world, we regard it as real by considering trivial and transitory events as the most important things in one's life. That is what causes all the sorrows and troubles. One must continue to work throughout one's life with the detachment of an actor playing different roles which are preordained in order to be relieved of one's karma." (From the book "Mother Reveals Herself" by Jyotish Chandra Roy)

"I have not had that sort of renunciation, which you understand by the term in its ordinary sense. For this body has lived with father, mother, husband, and all. This body has served the husband, so you may call it a wife. It has prepared dishes for all, so you may call it a cook. It has done all sorts of scrubbing and menial work, so you may call it a servant. But if you look at the thing from another standpoint you will realise that this body has served none but God.





For when I served my father, mother, husband and others, I simply considered them as different manifestations of the Almighty and served them as such. When I sat down to prepare food I did so as if it were a ritual, for the food cooked was after all meant for God. Whatever I did, I did in a spirit of Divine service. Hence I was not quite worldly, though always engaged in household affairs. I had but one ideal, - to serve all as God, to do everything for the sake of God.” (From the article “A Page from My Diary” by A.K. Datta Gupta, M.A., B.L., from the book “Mother As Seen by Her Devotees”)

## 9) She engaged in a sādhanā as līlā (game)



**Ānandamayī Mā says:** “First of all let Me tell you: this Body is exactly the same now as It was in childhood. There is no such thing as an initial or a subsequent stage for this Body. I am saying this while sitting on the banks of holy Ganga! (Everybody laughs heartily) Nevertheless, a play of sādhanā did take place for this Body: for some time it assumed the role of a sādhanā and all the conditions and stages that are traversed by a sādhanā were fully manifested in this Body.

Do I not repeatedly say: ‘I must now go and see how Nani is?’<sup>2</sup> Am I not aware of her condition while sitting here that I

have to go upstairs to see her? But although knowing fully well how she is, I do go again and again to see her; My sādhanā took place in a somewhat similar fashion...

I can say that the Ātmā is in fact the Guru, in other words, this Body is Itself this Body’s Guru. Furthermore, about pūjā I always say that when a particular Deity is to be worshipped, this particular Deity emerges from this Body and after being worshipped disappears again into this Body. Thus you can infer something similar in the case of the Guru.” (From the article “Śrī Śrī Mā Self-Initiation” by A.K. Datta Gupta, from “Ānanda Vārtā” of April, 1981, No. 2, Vol. XXVIII)



“A few months after coming to Bajitpur, while sitting on the northern bank of the pond, this Body had a kheyāl (spontaneous thought) which brought about certain questions: How does a human being seek God? How does one realize Him? I would have to enact the play of sādhanā (spiritual practice). Another day a thought came up, what is ‘dīkshā’ and how does it come about? Accordingly, the meaning of dīkshā (initiation) and the process by which it occurs were manifested distinctly within... the kheyāl regarding dīkshā began to manifest itself within this Body as a kind of līlā (divine play).” (From the book “Mother Reveals Herself” by Jyotish Chandra Roy)

“The kheyāl (spontaneous upsurge of the Divine Will) was that I was the worshipper, the tantradhārak (associate priest), the deity to be worshipped, the seeker, the spectator, and the

<sup>2</sup> Nani was the wife of Sri Sudhir Chakravarti. She had come on a visit from Calcutta and fallen ill.”

listener. These different bhāvs developed in an uninterrupted sequence, acquiring full prominence and perfection in the Body, day after day.” (Ibid.)

## 10) She successfully went through different types of yoga



**Ānandamayī Mā says:** “I may tell you that this body has not followed only one particular line of sadhana, but has covered all the known lines. It has passed through all the different varieties of practices referred to by the sages of ancient times. This body has successfully gone through nama sadhana, hatha yoga with its various asanas and through diverse other yogas. One after another, in order to attain to a particular state along one of those lines of sadhana an ordinary individual may have to be born again and again; but in the case of this body it was a matter of a few seconds...Moreover the different forums of sadhana that this body has been to practice, were not meant for this body, they were meant for all... When you relate your spiritual experience to me, I often say that this body had those experiences and this is why it know what they are. Not only

that: if anyone disclose to this body a special line of sadhana, it can describe in minute details the various stages of that very line.” (From Amulya K. Datta's diary, quoted in the book “Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)” by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 6 “Ānandamayī Mā As Avatāra and Divine Mother”; and also in the book “Some Aspects of Ma Anandamayi's Teachings” by Vijayananda, Chapter XI “What Mother is not”, Subheading “Mother's Universality”)

## 11) She was forbidden to worship anyone



**Ānandamayī Mā says:** “When the different stages of sādhanā were being manifested through this Body, what a variety of experiences I then had! ...One day I distinctly got the command: ‘From today you are not to bow down to anybody.’ I asked my invisible monitor: ‘Who are you?’ The reply came: ‘Your Śakti’ (Power). I thought that there was a distinct Śakti residing in me and guiding me by issuing commands from time to time. Since all this happened at the stage of sādhanā, Jñāna (Knowledge) was being revealed in a piecemeal fashion. The integral knowledge which this Body was possessed of from the very beginning was broken, as it were, into parts and there was something like a superimposition of ignorance... After some time I again heard the voice within myself which told me: ‘Whom do you want to make obeisance to? You are everything.’ At once I realized that the Universe was all my own manifestation.

Partial knowledge then gave place to the integral, and I found myself face to face with the ONE that appears as many. It was then that I understood why I had been forbidden for so long to bow down to anybody... Let me tell you that what I am, I have been from my infancy. But when the different stages of sādhanā were being manifested through this Body there was something like a superimposition of aja (ignorance). But what sort of ajñāna was that? It was really Jñāna masquerading as ajñāna.” (From the “Page from My Diary” by A. K. Datta Gupta, from the book “Mother as Seen by Her Devotees”)



## 12) She was transformed before a devotee into a person dear to him or his beloved deity (Iṣṭadevatā)



Śrī Vijayānanda says: “The most striking miraculous power displayed almost daily by Ma was her astonishing skill to attract people through her love and transform unbelievers into religious people and sinners into religious men. Her power of attraction was indeed legendary. She would at once find the dominant effective feature of the individual and appeared to him in the aspect dearest to him. To some, she was the mother, to others a daughter or a close friend, some again would see her as *Ishta*, *Krishna*, *Durga*, *Shiva*, etc..., or their *Guru*. But to the great majority of people, “*she was our Ma*,” the all-powerful loving Mother ever ready to help and protect Her children whatever race or creed they may belong to.

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



Sometimes, on special occasion like during *Kali-puja* and *Janmashtami*, etc., her feature, her behaviour, her *bhava* would be so transformed as she had become the embodiment of the deity worshipped. I had myself the great fortune of witnessing such transformation. It was *Janmashtami* (the birthday of *Krishna*) at night and the *Kanyapeeth* girls had dressed Sri Ma like *Krishna*. She was in a small room in the upper storey of the *Kanyapeeth* building and we were allowed to go up and have her *darshan* (usually males are not allowed in this building). I went rather reluctantly feeling rather annoyed that Ma had been dressed in what, I thought, was a disguise. But when I entered the room, I stood in awe, before bending to make *pranam*. There was no question of disguise. Her feature had

a majestic luminous beauty almost masculine. Her attitude, her way of sitting conjured those of a royal sage receiving us with his benign smile. She was really identified with *Krishna*.” (From the article “Miracles still Happen” by Sri Vijayananda, from “Ma Anandamayee Amrit Varta”, Vol. XIV, No. 3, July, 2010)

Śrī Vijayānanda saw Her in an all-pervading body: “During the celebrations, as the *Ashram* was overcrowded, I had been accommodated in the small *Kutia* down, adjacent to the *Patal Devi Mandir*. After Ma’s departure I had to shift in one of the *Ashram* rooms, and was taking my belongings up to the small path leading to the *Ashram*. My mind was in very gloomy mood bordering despair, Ma has gone and so many days are going to pass without her *darshan*. The bracing climate, the majestic beauty of the mountain peaks, what is it without Ma’s

*darshan*, I was thinking while looking sadly towards Kasar Devi, a small mountain above Almora.

All of a sudden, sometimes extraordinary happened. How can I describe a vision which is not seen with the eyes? Ma was before me, Her subtle body permeating the space. It was a form permeating the space. It was a form almost melting in the formless, Her long black hair fling along the mountain ridges and Her wonderful smile filling my heart with inexpressible peace and joy. She was outside, but also inside of me. "Why do you lament, fool," she was telling me without words. "I am ever with you, very near to you". (Ibid)



**Jyotish Chandra Roy saw Her as a Goddess.** Jyotish Chandra Roy, who, through devotion (bhakti), gained the nondual experience of "I and Mā are One," writes: Still man's natural impulse to see some material embodiment of divine powers in human life, prompted me one day to enquire from Her, when I found Her alone: I asked, 'Mother, pray, tell me, what are you in reality?' She laughed out loudly and said with all affection: 'How could such childish queries arise in your heart? The vision of gods and goddesses appears in accordance with one's inherited dispositions (samskaras). I am what I was and what I shall be; I am whatever you conceive, think or say. But it is a supreme fact that this body has not come into being to reap the fruits of past karma.<sup>3</sup> Why don't you take it that this body is the material embodiment of all your thoughts and ideas. You all have wanted it and you have it now. So play with this doll for some time. Further questions will be fruitless.' I said, 'These words of yours, Mother, do not satisfy my yearning.' Hearing this, She spoke with slight

vehemence, 'Say, say, what more you desire' and immediately a dazzling flood of heavenly light shone forth from Her face. I was struck dumb with awe and wonder. All my doubts were laid at rest.

About fifteen days later, I went to Shah-bag one morning and found the door of Mother's bedroom closed. I sat down in front of it some 25 to 30 feet away. The door opened all at once. I found to my bewilderment, the figure of a divinely beautiful goddess as genially bright as the sun at dawn, illumining the whole interior of the room. In the twinkling of an eye She withdrew all the radiance within Her body and Mother was there, standing and smiling in Her usual manner." (From the book "Mother As Revealed to Me" by Jyotish Chandra Roy)



### **13) She is called the Mother who permeates and transcends the universe**

**Ānandamayī Mā says:** "When this Body was nine months old and was staying in Bidyākūt (paternal home), a lustrous figure in the form of a yogi suddenly appeared near this Body. Didimā came and stood behind, looking. He

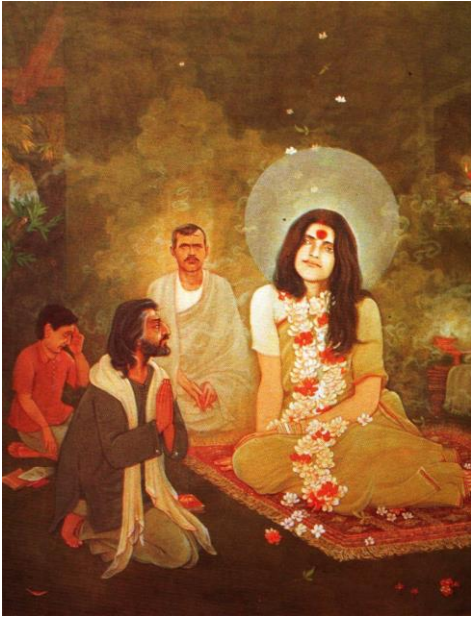
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<sup>3</sup> Prarabdha or the results of actions of past births about to mature in this life.



gazed at this Body from Her feet to the tip of Her hair, then composed himself in a meditative pose. Thereafter he took this Body on his lap, caressed and touched Her limbs with devotion and veneration and sat this Body in front of him and performed pūjā while chanting mantras. Thereafter he did pranām to this Body in complete surrender. Finally, casting a strange glance and enveloped in a stream of light, he said to Didimā, 'She (pointing to this Body) is not only the Mother among men and women but permeates and transcends the entire universe. You will certainly not be able to keep Her bound in family ties. She will definitely not remain there'. Saying this he became invisible." (From the book "Mother Reveals Herself" by Jyotish Chandra Roy)

## 14) She revealed Herself as Pūrṇa Brahma Nārāyaṇa (Supreme Being with qualities, without them and beyond)



Ānandamayī Mā tells: "On a Monday, seven days after dīkshā, I sat down as part of My domestic routine for the morning prayers. There was no significant sign of any kriyā. After performing a few rites I got up, but as My limbs were unsteady - as if in a state of intoxication, I started the day's cooking while being seated. After everyone finished lunch I sat down again to do the sandhyā.

During the day while at pūjā I usually kept the door partly closed. After a while Bholānāth and Nishi babu, My maternal cousin, entered the room. I continued to sit, veiled and absorbed in pūjā. Nishi babu said to Bholānāth, "Don't you say anything? Indulging in such rites before initiation is not good. Why don't you ask Her what She is doing sitting like this?" So saying he left the room, but then returned and said to Bholānāth, "Ask Her what She is doing." By then the yogic kriyās had begun and I kept sitting in the same absorbed manner. My cousin was

unaware of the kriyās taking place in My body and, while sitting on My right with Bholānāth, he kept urging, "Go on, ask Her!"

This Body heard this clearly and then suddenly, without changing position, I turned My head towards them and said, "What is it that you want to ask?" So loudly and forcefully had I spoken and such was My demeanour that it startled and frightened Nishi babu, who drew back hurriedly and with folded hands asked in an awed voice, "Who are You?" (Evidently the questioner believed Mā was possessed and wanted to identify the entity possessing Her! ) But in that instant this Body had returned to Her calm and smiling self, saying, "What! Are you frightened? No, no, do not fear, do not fear, do not fear!" and the right hand went up forming an abhaya mudrā - gesture of protection and reassurance. After this the Body, while still in the same āsana, turned from a north-facing to an east-facing position.

My cousin was older than Me and I called him Thakur bhāi. According to the prevalent norms, I never spoke to Bholānāth in his presence and always kept Myself carefully veiled. However, at that moment My sense of modesty seemed to have been blown away like the wind blowing clothes and I was hardly aware that My clothes were in fact in a state of disarray. This Body seemed to be observing Herself from the outside as if She were a different entity.

When Thakur bhāi and Bholānāth asked, "Who are You?" Slowly the words emerged, 'Pūrṇa Brahma Nārāyan' (The Supreme Being, with and without attributes and beyond.) With the two of them earnestly discussing between themselves whether or not a feminine form should be Nārāyanī and their repeatedly asking Me "Who are You?", the words came out one after another: 'Mahādev, Mahādevī, Nārāyan, Nārāyanī and so on.'

Bholānāth asked Me, "If You are indeed Pūrna Brahma Nārāyan and all else that You say You are, why are You speaking in this unnatural manner?"

The answer came, "At present this Body appears to be in a human form as perceived by You, so the behaviour is in accordance with that."

Again Bholānāth asked, "What were You doing?"

To which I responded, "I was engaged in sandhyā pūjā."

Bholānāth objected, "But You have not been initiated!"

Again the answer came, "From your point of view that occurred on the night of the last Jhulan Pūrnimā."

Bholānāth then queried, "Who am I?"

The answer came, "You are That - Mahādev." (A correlation may be established with the installation of Shiv-linga at the Siddheswari holy spot in Dhaka by the name of Mahādev)

"When will I have my initiation?"

The answer came, "In the month of Agrahāyan."

Bholānāth asked, "On which date?"

The answer came, "On the 15th" (Friday, December 1, 1922)

All the details were given in answer to his questions. Both Thakur bhāi and Bholānāth then asked, "Who will give the initiation?"

This Body pointed to Herself, saying, "I".

They then consulted an almanac to find that it not only corroborated these details but that it was also a very auspicious day for initiation. The two of them again consulted one another and Bholānāth asked, "Well, tell us what will be the star on that day?" The answer to that too came out instantly, but since he was not conversant with the names of all the stars, Bholānāth did not quite grasp it. So the words then came out, "Janaki babu, who lives next door, has not yet left for work, go and ask him." They were still debating whether or not to fetch him when this Body made as if to go Herself, saying "So shall I call in Janaki babu?" Fearing that She would go out as She was, with Her clothes in such disarray, Bholānāth hastened out and brought Janaki babu back with him.

On his arrival, Janaki babu confirmed that the star She had named - Rohinī - was correct. Hours went by while the three of them discussed, deliberated, and asked questions. At one time, they asked this Body, "What is the Rohinī star?"

The answer given was, "Whoever Rohinī is - I am the same."

Janaki babu asked once again, "Who are You?"

Slowly and calmly came the reply, "Pūrna Brahma Nārāyan."

Janaki babu then said, "You are shaitān (the devil)!" Much later he repeated, "You are shaitān, shaitāni (female devil)!"

This Body then started laughing aloud and uttered the words, "What I have said is correct. Whatever you may all say, you are just testing Me."

Then they said, "What is the proof that You are indeed Pūrna Brahma Nārāyan?"

"You want to see?"

On speaking these words, a wonderful change came over this Body. Thakur bhāi and Janaki babu continued to talk earnestly some distance away. This Body asked Bholānāth to come and sit nearby and when he did, while reciting a mantra She touched the crown of his head with Her hand. Immediately, with the sound of 'Om' on his lips, Bholānāth became absolutely motionless while sitting in an āsana on the ground. Having lost all sense of the outside world, he sat with eyes upturned and half opened, so totally motionless that Ashu, returning from school and finding him in that state for quite sometime, started crying. This Body sat quietly and amusedly observed these events.

Thakur bhāi consulted Janaki babu. Soon Janaki babu came up to Me in an agitated manner saying, "Now please bring Ramani babu (Bholānāth) back to a normal state, we beseech You." A little later this Body once again touched Bholānāth on the crown of his head and gradually he



more or less returned to the condition that they desired. Bholānāth said, “I cannot describe where and in what a blissful state I was all this time.” The day was drawing to an end and, donning once again the sense of modesty and arranging Her clothes, this Body reverted to Her household duties.

At this point Mā was asked about the state She had induced in Bholānāth, “Was this the real thing?” Mā replied, “This was merely a touch, a step towards self-realization. But the experience was certainly not a mere illusion or a magic show.”

Then Mā continued to narrate, “Continuously weeping and earnestly requesting with folded hands, they pressed Me repeatedly to bring Bholānāth back to normal. Although this was done, was he able to express fully what his demeanour seemed to indicate? Everything cannot be expressed. The Supreme Being is inexpressible, indescribable, and perfect. Don’t think that this was only a transitory experience. Remember that this entire creation, in whatever condition, is wholly under His control.

Janaki babu was Usha didi’s husband, a man of simple and peaceful disposition. I learnt later that it was in order to vex Me that he had repeatedly called me a ‘she-devil’. He apparently had thought that I was possessed by some supernatural spirit. This belief of his later vanished completely. This Body had never before appeared openly before him. That was the first time that we met and conversed. Afterwards he would come to meet this Body in the āshram at



Dhaka and laugh over his delusion. Apparently he had been surprised and startled by Her moods and trances. He later developed a deep regard for this Body and profound faith in Her.

The question was put to Mā in great earnest, “Mā, the words ‘Pūrṇa Brahma Nārāyan’ that You uttered, inevitably brings to mind the question whether this is a state attained by sādhanā or are You that Ultimate, Absolute Self?” When pressed for an answer, Mā replied, “Oh! this Little Girl is what She is and so also Her revelation. Is this state achievable by sādhanā? Are you thinking only of the four-armed form (As per the traditional iconography of Lord Nārāyan)?” Soon after She said solemnly, “Try to know Me - where there is no doubt or controversy. Is it possible to transcend doubt with this mind of yours?” (From the book “Mother Reveals Herself” by Jyotish Chandra Roy)

## 15) She described Herself as Puruṣottama (Supreme Divine Personality)

**Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta writes in his diary:** “(Thursday, October 17, 1935) In connection with Mā’s use of the terms ‘khaṇḍa’<sup>4</sup> and ‘akhaṇḍa’ I asked, ‘Mā, when you are in your all-comprehensive form, can you have cognizance of us?’

The question made Mā subside into a fairly solemn mien. She said, ‘These are the matters that I do not divulge to all, they do not come out of My lips in the presence of all. But I shall tell you. You have asked the question and the answer is coming out of My lips. It is so perhaps because you shall understand it:

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Khaṇḍa’ can be translated as ‘discrete’, ‘finite’ and ‘akhanda’ as all-comprehensive’, ‘infinite’ – Translator’s note.)

"I am neither khaṇḍa nor akhaṇḍa you spoke of, but I take in My strides both these aspects. I am neither limitless nor confined to limits. I am simultaneously both. To call me khaṇḍa is to circumscribe Me and if you call Me akhaṇḍa you do the very same thing. But I have no limits, no bonds. On the other hand, I exhibit all the bonds. I am khaṇḍa and finite in so far as I eat and sleep. At the same time I am infinite for I have no need of these things.



When children come to Me, I joke with them and become one of them. Again when the great men come to Me I speak with them at their own level. Many souls – I do not speak of good souls only – many bad souls also approach Me and I meet them on their own terms and fulfil their need. I am the universe in its infinitude, including the ephemeral worms and insects. You ask Me whether you are within my ken when I am in My all-comprehensive Self. My answer is, not only you, even those who have never seen Me or heard of me, swim into My vision the moment they need Me and I do the needful for them."



I: Then You can see us when we think of You.

Mā: Yes, when you think of Me, your form flash across my vision just as objects become visible when the torch-light is focussed on them...

I: Judging by Your words, You are self-revealed, the real essence. There was no time when You did not exist, and never a time will come, when You will cease to be. Now, if it is said, that You are Mahāmāyā, Kālī or Durgā incarnated as a human being, it would be unduly investing You with a limit. It would not be Your real identity. For You are at once finite and infinite. How can One who is self-revealed have a revelation? How can such a One be defined either? Is it not so, Mā?

Mā smiling said with a fair amount of emphasis, "What you have understood is the Truth itself."

Hearing Mā, a pulsation of joy shot across my mind and I was overpowered by a feeling I could not identify. I thought merit accumulated over myriads of successive births must have gone into bringing me in contact with Her, giving me the rare fortune of calling Her 'Mā'. Mā's description of Herself seemed to be in some sense akin to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's self-revelation to Arjun. In this connection, I said, 'Mā, is it not 'Puruṣottama Bhaba' — the one You spoke of?'

Mā said, 'That is for you to judge.'

On my return to Varanasi I told the whole thing to Gopīnāth Kavirāj and said, 'Do they net refer to 'Puruṣottama Bhaba?'

Gopīnāth Babu said, 'What else but Puruṣottama?'" (From the book of "In Association with Śrī Śrī Mā Ānandamayī" by Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta" Volume I, Chapter Two, pages 102-108, subheading "Mā's Self-Revelation")



## 16) She continues to guide devotees after Her mahāsamādhi (leaving Her body)



“Swami Samatananda maintained that since Ma's samadhi people have been "having many experiences" from looking at Ma's picture; "Ma's photograph is working wonders." (From the book “Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)” by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, 5 “Ānandamayī Mā As Guru”)

**Ashok Baba Kulkarni** once prepared to perform the Bhāgavata kathā and came across various interpretations that did not look convincing. He tells:

“I continued to read but one time, being alone at home, I sat before my temple for Thakur and Ma's picture was in front and just as there is a chowki here, there was a chowki on which I sat. Whatever I knew I was explaining to Ma. And whilst explaining those doubts were in my mind.

One day it so happened that those doubts which I had, Ma was explaining them to me. I was surprised to hear Ma's voice. She explained in detail the meaning of the words in different contexts. She was explaining for more than a year... For more than a year. I was explaining to Ma and whatever doubts I had, Ma would explain it fully. Sometimes She would explain a word. Sometimes Ma appeared to be seated in front and She spoke just as we are talking now in the same way and sometime it just came to my mind.” (From the interview on February 7, 2013 at Bhimpura Ashram, part 1: <https://youtu.be/eqa-5pFfNOA?t=2123>)

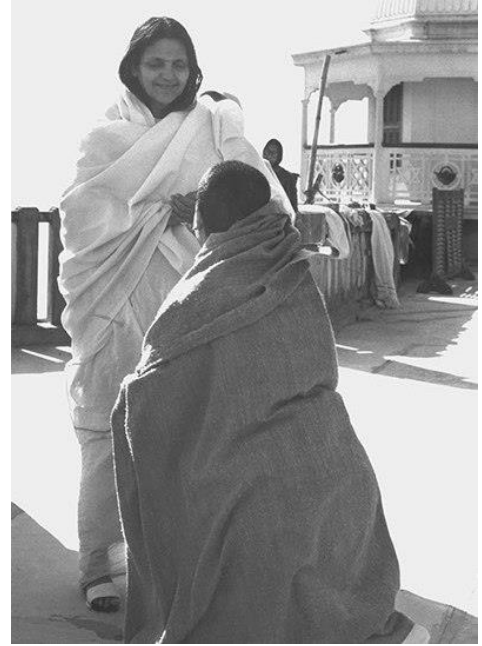
### SUMMARY

“The *Devi Mahatmya*, echoing the promise of Lord Krishna, says, “Thus does the Devi Bhagavatī, although eternal, manifest herself again and again for the protection of the world, O King.” According to her devotees, Ānandamayī Mā is the divine Absolute come to earth to tend to her children, a fulfillment of their desire to know and be known by God. Mā did not deny her divinity; in fact, she confirmed it. She made herself available as the focus of her close devotees' *sādhana* and of their lives. While she may have recommended different paths for different people, she positioned herself at the beginning and the end of the path as the all-knowing Mother. Ma articulated a *sādhana* in which one becomes “as a little child,” a child who understands that no matter what Mother may tell them, it is for their own good. Depending upon the person, the path of surrender to Ma involved varying degrees of egolessness and self-discipline, and varying degrees of self-effort were required to fulfill her expectations. Yet, throughout each devotee's *sādhana*, Mā was there to guide and comfort and, ultimately, to decide what was the best next step. The challenge was surrender of the “I,” but the reward was unconditional love and freedom from personal responsibility.

The *sādhana* of surrender to the divine that Mā favors has been more challenging for devotees since Mā's *mahāsamādhi*. While before they could sit before her and receive her comfort, correction, and direction, now they must remember her words and try to hear her voice within. For some devotees this has been a very painful transition. For others, Mā is eternally there. Swami Samatananda speaks of the way devotees approach Mā since her *mahāsamādhi*.

‘The individual practices are different, but the goal is Mā. Mā is the goal means that we think that by meditating on Mā we can reach whatever we can think of. If we catch hold of Mā's hand, then Mā will lead us to whatever is needed for us. So we do not form a beautiful idea in our head about the light of consciousness or I'll become this or that. We think, "We will meditate on Mā and we will love Mā and she will show us. Whatever is good for us she will give us. In this life she will give us, and if not, then in the next life we will get it. When Mātājī thinks it is fittest for us, she will give us." So we do not hanker after *vidyā* or *mukti* or anything, because we do not know what is good for us. We pray to you, we love you, and we do not have any type of worldly attachment. This is the way we approach Mā.’

In conclusion, in spite of Ānandamayī Mā's insistence that she was just “a little child,” she allowed herself to be worshiped as the Divine Mother, as the Mā of all. On the basis of Mā's behavior and her statements about her identity, her devotees related to her as God, whether Bhagavān, Brahman, or Devī, who, having descended age after age to destroy the wicked and protect the righteous, descended once again in Kheora, Bengal, for the sake of His or Her devotees.” (From the book “Mother of bliss: Ānandamayī Mā (1896-1982)” by Lisa Lassell Hallstrom, from “Summary” at the end of chapter 6 “Ānandamayī Mā As Avatāra and Divine Mother”)



***oṃ ānandamayyai namaḥ***

***(Om. Obeisance to Her who is the Blissful one)***

Compiled by Andrew Derevyanko