

In Association With
Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

VOLUME III



AMULYA KUMAR DATTA GUPTA



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Translated by R. K. Banerjee



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Preface

Ananda-Varta was started in May 1952, and the first few years saw a single volume incorporating Bengali, English and Hindi articles.

Meanwhile, Prof. Amulya Datta Gupta had published his 2 volumes in Bengali from Dhaka, the first in 1938, and the second in 1940.

With the coming into being of Ananda-Varta, he naturally started publishing articles in Bengali in it. The first few articles were isolated, but important in their subject matter, while his 3rd vol. in Bengali first started appearing from the May 1954 issue.

The English translation of his illuminating articles commenced appearing from July '79. It is this series of articles in English up to date that are being published now in book form, naturally as Vol.III .by Sri A. K. Datta Gupta, since it is hoped that Vol.I & Vol.II of his original books will be published in English in the near future.

In the English translations, more stress has been paid on Ma's actual spoken words than on mere reconstruction of events, but all important episode, such as Ma's Diksha, the passing away of Bhaiji or Baba Bholanath etc., have been translated in full.

It is hoped that the reader will gain an invaluable insight into Ma's wonderful life, particularly relating to those events which are not fully covered by Didi Gurupriya's faithful Biography in Bengali due to the writer's ill health or absence from site.

Calcutta
March 10, 1986.

Publisher.

A Sleepless Night

Ramna Ashram, Dacca,
Saturday, April 20th, 1946.

I had heard that the ladies would sing kirtan for the whole night in the presence of Sri Ma. But from Ma's attitude I understood that inspite of the kirtan, Ma would also converse with us. Consequently, instead of loitering in the Ashram compound that evening, I went home early for a quick meal and then returned to the Ashram. There were several others already present there, including Jatin, Manmohan, Birenda*, and others.

On arriving at the Ashram, I found Ma sitting on the veranda of the Smriti Mandir with Birenda and others seated below Her. I went and sat down on the steps close to Her. Various subjects came up for discussion. It was Birenda who was doing most of the talking. At this juncture a relative of mine, Jatindra C. Majumdar arrived. Ma pointed to him, saying: "This Babaji has a problem" and simultaneously glanced towards me, I said "Yes Ma, Jatin's question is: Does everything happen by predestination in this

*Sri Birendra Chandra Mukherji was the eldest brother of Sri Gurupriya Devi. He was then Principal of Haraganga College at Munshiganj, Dacca Distt. Later he became Principal of Jagannath Kishore College at Purulia. He is now no more.

world or is God free to act independently?"

Birenda said: These are the perennial questions of philosophy. If we do not acknowledge that everything is predestined we do injustice to God's sovereignty, again if we own that everything happens according to destiny, where is God's absolute freedom? So there is really no solution to this problem.

Mataji: There is a condition in which one sees that everything happens as pre-ordained. Then there is another level of existence where it is perceived that nothing is predetermined. Here the abounding mercy of the Lord upsets every rule. It all depends on the stage at which one happens to be at any particular time.

Birenda: Quite so. There is no state of existence that can be considered as permanent.

Mataji: Some people term whatever we perceive in this world as *maya*. They refuse to accept the variety and diversity found in the world. They assert that only the eternal *Brahman* really exists and that everything we behold is due to *maya*. But others look upon the variety and diversity of the universe as different manifestations of the Lord. Yet others maintain that the parts and the whole both exist side by side.

Birenda: I refer to all this as due to different states of existence. So there is nothing permanent about it.

Mataji: But you cannot maintain such a stand, because your own Sastras speak of a state where there is no conflict and no contro-

versy. When attaining to a state where these disappear completely, there cannot be any hidden conflict or doubt within you. In truth, there is indeed a state of existence where all confusion automatically vanishes. This is a permanent state.

Birenda did not appreciate these highly philosophical discussions. I could notice this from his attitude. He was not permitting Ma to enlarge on any subject. We know that if we enter into an argument with Ma, She stops speaking. This is exactly what She did this time also--She remained sitting in silence.

Birenda continued: "Ma, our days are getting numbered. Our faculties are weakening, our eyesight is failing. This is bound to happen; it is nothing to feel sorry about. Time will surely cause our bodies to age. We have nothing to look forward to. Our only enjoyment now is to remember the past. So I am recollecting the days in Shahbagh. What a wonderful time we spent there! Days and nights passed in ecstasy. We paid no heed to storm or rain. All the twenty-four hours we could think of you only. Of course, you yourself induced such a state. But today? I cannot imagine what a condition I have now reached! Your memory seems to be on the point of extinction within myself. Formerly I had never touched your feet when doing *pranama*. Even when offering flowers at your feet, I placed them on the ground. This was my habit. But this same 'me' touched your feet the other day although this is now strictly forbidden. This shows how my

previous remembrance has almost lapsed.

I recall today my first meeting with you. My father wrote to me, "We have now chanced upon a wonderful Mother who is the Mother of the Universe in person." In reply I wrote to my father, "Happy to learn you have succeeded in finding a Mother. But World-mothers cannot be spotted so easily." However, before going to Dacca I bought a *sari*, so that I could offer something to the Goddess Mother. After reaching, I started for Shahbagh with the *sari*. My brother Nandu, my sister Khukuni (Gurupriya) and my father were then staying in Shahbagh. Nandu wanted to return home. On reaching Shahbagh, I saw something marvellous. Nandu was holding one of your hands and Bholanath the other; and you were laughing hilariously and trying to jump into the pond nearby. Afterwards I heard that on seeing me approach, you were trying to hide in the water. Anyway, I duly presented the *sari* to you, then bathed in the pond and sat down for my morning prayers. By that time you had left. In my prayers I could no longer concentrate on my *Ista* because you had usurped his place. On finishing my meditation, I came to the foot of the stairs of the dance hall and did *pranama* to you. You then said something to me which I remember to this day, namely: At that time you saw what there was to see, later you did not see it anymore, and now having come here, you see it again. Everything in the world thus comes and goes. As if She had penetrated

my innermost thoughts, Ma then continued: "Baba, know for certain that the Almighty may occasionally place you into difficulty and danger, but never does He allow you to sink entirely."

Sri Sri Ma had been listening to all these recollections with a smiling face and sometimes nodding in agreement. Birenda's mode of speaking was delightful, one could not help being amused.

Birenda started again: "I was then as if intoxicated. After a light meal in the morning, I used to leave my home and go to Shahbagh. The main meal there was just boiled rice, potatoes and a little ghi. We used to offer this to Ma and then partake of the *prasada*. One morning I was sitting in front of the boiled rice with my eyes shut, offering it to Ma. On finishing I opened my eyes, only to behold Ma standing in front of me with Her hand outstretched. With a wonderful smile, She said: "Baba, will you not give me a little?" So I fed Her. What a delightful time we had in those days!"

After resting a while, Birenda continued: "I shall now relate an incident that took place in Raipur (near Dehradun). I had gone there in my holidays. Ma's health was not good at that time. Naresh Chakravarti then stayed in Raipur. One day Ma pointed to me and said to Naresh Babu: "This is your Guru from a previous birth." On hearing this the simple-minded Naresh Babu drove me nearly crazy by addressing me as "Gurudeva, Gurudeva." I looked at Ma and noticed

that She was laughing and I realized that Ma was enjoying a joke at my cost. So I started looking for an opportunity to retaliate. It soon occurred.

We were all sitting before Ma, who was on a raised dais while we were below, Ma's feet were hanging down. At this juncture Naresh Babu went to offer *pranama* to Ma who immediately withdrew Her feet and sat crosslegged on the dais. The incident was over in a split second. Naresh Babu felt somewhat frustrated because he had not succeeded to touch Ma's feet. I thought this was my golden opportunity to take revenge on Ma. I said to Naresh Babu : "My son, don't you understand why Ma withdrew Her feet? Simply to let you know that your place is not at Her feet but on Her lap!" In childlike faith, Naresh Babu exclaimed: "Is this so Gurudeva? May I really sit in Ma's lap?" I gave him permission; and Naresh Babu with his bulky body went and sat on the lap of Ma who was not well. So you can well imagine Ma's condition! I mentally kept on telling Her: "Will you again fabricate disciples for me and embarrass me like this?" Finally I realized Ma's predicament and so I said to Naresh Babu: "My son, enough is enough, now come down from Ma's lap!" On hearing Birenda's story, Ma broke out ringing laughter, not to speak of our own merriment.

These and similar conversations had taken us to about 4 a.m. Meanwhile the ladies were

continually singing the holy name in kirtan-room. Without taking any rest they had sung non-stop practically through the whole night. Even though Ma was not in their midst, there seemed to be no lack of enthusiasm on their part. The heavens above were resounding in tune with their singing. Ma said: "Now let me go to them!" We at once whole-heartedly agreed since they had come to sing kirtan all night to be in Ma's presence. We did not consider it right to withhold Ma from them any longer, so we went outside and stood in the field while Sri Sri Ma went inside to sing with the ladies.

The night was coming to an end. Fleecy clouds were chasing one another in the sky. A cool morning breeze was blowing over our bodies. We stood in the field in semi-darkness. Birenda said: "I was not keen to discuss metaphysics today, so I deliberately switched on to old incidents which had a homely touch. How sweet was the Matri Lila we enjoyed in those days! And nowadays what a high metaphysical posture has been adopted by Ma! I find it intolerable to listen to these transcendental topics, and I no longer enjoy the sweet and gentle motherly touch."

"I shall relate to you the events of another day. We were then travelling from Simla to Solan where the Raja of Solan was performing a *Nama Yajna*. We had been invited and were accompanying Ma to this place in full strength. It grew dark by the time we reached Solan.

On arrival, the Simla devotees at once started singing the holy name. I was asked to arrange for food to be served to the devotees. The dining hall was at some distance from the place where the kirtan was being performed. Throughout the night the devotees were singing and I was taking them in small batches to have their meal. In this way nearly all who participated had been fed. At the end only the elders were sitting in the dining hall. By that time it started raining in torrents. Sri Sri Ma was seated on Her *asana* in the kirtan. Due to the violent storm raging the devotees in the dining hall were unable to return to the kirtan after their meal. To pass the time I was relating old incidents of Shahbagh. The Simla devotees had only recently met Ma. Consequently, while I was telling various stories illustrating Ma's omniscience, they seemed unable to appreciate what I said. One of the new devotees exclaimed: "Biren Babu, I shall believe all you are trying to tell us if Ma appears here in our midst just now." His words hurt me deeply. I at once retorted: "If I have been speaking the truth Ma will certainly arrive here at this very moment." No sooner had I uttered these words then we all saw Ma who had arrived in spite of getting soaked in the torrential rain.

Facing Birenda, I had been listening with rapt attention all this while. I suddenly happened to glance aside and noticed a lady with Her face hidden by her veil, standing at some distance.

Her face was not visible because of the veil. Moreover the light in the field was too dim to recognise anyone. But I started looking intently and it seemed to me that it was Ma who had come. I shouted loudly, "Birenda, Ma has come!" At my words everybody's attention became focussed on Ma and they started exclaiming joyously. We knelt on the ground to perform our *pranamas* to Ma. She did not speak a word but at once re-entered the kirtan room and sat on the raised dais. All of us went and stood at the entrance.

How extraordinarily beautiful Ma looked in the electric light of the room! She was clad in a saffron sari with embroidered borders and ends. The saffron colour round Her face was being reflected on it, causing Her to resemble a bright flame emanating from a smokeless fire. Ma sat in front, and rocking gently from side to side was singing with an utterly sweet and melodious voice "*Krishna Kesava, Krishna Kesava pahi mam, Rama Raghava, Rama Raghava raksha mam.*" Greatly inspired all the ladies repeated each line in chorus after Ma. From their flushed faces and the joyous sound emanating from their throats, it appeared as if by dint of their night-long devoted singing, they had succeeded in invoking into their midst the Lord of the *yajna*, Narayana Himself. Indeed, Ma's divine countenance and voice did not appear to belong to this world. We kept gazing at Ma with unblinking eyes and listening entranced

to Her singing. Any regret that we were harbouring over the fact that we could not behold Ma in our midst as in olden days was wiped away and effaced in a moment by the tender mercy of Ma's lila.

Soon after, the morning dawned. The kirtan ended. On former occasions Sri Sri Ma had usually bathed in the pond together with the ladies after an all night session. But this time, as the water was not quite clean, Ma devised a new scheme. She put some water into a brass vessel, immersed in it leaves from the five trees of our Panchavati and asked all present to be sprinkled with the water. Ma remarked that this water was equal to Gangajal. She also said that whatever water remained after sprinkling on everyone's head and body, should be poured into the root of the trees of the Panchavati, so that nobody's feet could touch the water. This was done. After receiving some *Prasada* we returned home. In spite of having kept awake all night, none of us felt even the slightest fatigue or weariness.

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Although I had heard from various people about what had transpired in connexion with *diksha* (initiation) on the occasion of the last *Gurupurnima* day, I was most keen to learn of this first hand from Ma's own mouth. Consequently when the reading of the Scriptures ended today

at 11 a.m. during satsang, I asked Her point blank: "Ma, I have not yet had the chance of hearing from your own lips about the events that took place during the recent *Gurupurnima*."

Ma (laughing): Oh, you refer to all that? It is nothing very special. One night, two or three days prior to *Gurupurnima*. I noticed that some persons had arrived and were standing behind me. I was busy conversing with others in front of me, but I was well aware of these new arrivals. One of them was this body's (Ma's) elder paternal cousin. He had died long ago. He used to be a doctor and was very serious-minded. When he married for the second time, this body (Ma) must have been about eleven or twelve years old. I did not even know him very well. That night he approached this body, saying: "Please, give me something", that is, he meant: "Give me initiation by mantra." I told him: "This body does not normally initiate any body." In reply, he pointed to the people present before me and said: "If any of these persons who are here with you will write a mantra on a bel leaf and will let you touch it, this will be quite sufficient for the purpose." Thus he himself explained of his own accord how exactly this could be accomplished. This body at once uttered the words, "very well!" Thenceforth this body has been carrying out just what has been described above.

Someone writes the name of Hari on tulasi leaves then strings a garland out of these leaves

to present to this body; this garland is usually given away to someone else. Abani Sharma Baba often writes seed mantras on bel leaves and places them on this body's head or hands; these leaves are then given away by this body to certain people.

However that may be, I explained everything to Didi and said: "I seem to have committed myself. So you must remember to bring this to my kheyala on *Gurupurnima* day. Also do something else. Write seed mantras of Siva and Sakti with red sandalwood paste on bel leaves and Visnu mantras with white sandalwood paste on tulasi leaves."

Although I did not specify which particular mantras to write, Didi had previously heard several seed mantras from me so she decided which mantras to write on bel leaves.

That same day I saw that some bel leaves had been carefully set aside in one place and some tulasi leaves elsewhere; further-more the kumaris of the Ashram were preparing sandal paste. Also Didi was writing with red sandalwood paste on bel leaves. Then she got hold of some tulasi leaves, cleaned them carefully but could not make up her mind what to write on them, so she left them as they were and went away. But all this I perceived on a subtle plane, not in the physical. -

In the night before *Gurupurnima* I was lying in bed but could not go to sleep. I was merely turning from one side to the other; I had had no

inclination to sleep for the past few nights. My cot had been placed out in the courtyard. I lay there for some time, then went upstairs to lie down on the first floor. Shortly after I heard the girls sing kirtan, so I understood that it must be early morning.

It had been Didi's desire to dress this body up and do puja on *Gurupurnima* days. But in the morning when I came downstairs, I told her this was not to be. I also entered the newly built Viraja Mandir and told Bishu the same thing and then went upstairs to sleep. When Didi realized her aspiration had no chance of being fulfilled, she arranged for the worshipping of the outlines of my feet of which prints had been taken some time ago, and then went to the kitchen to cook. Because on that day a considerable number of people had been invited to partake of prasada. She thus completely forgot what I had requested her to remind me of (concerning the diksha of certain disembodied beings).

Meanwhile I was lying on my bed in the morning, when I noticed that my paternal cousin had arrived. This time his wife was with him. As soon as I saw them I sent Udas to fetch Didi. The amazing part of the story is that no sooner had I had this kheyala then Didi remembered my previous instruction and ran to contact me even before Udas could reach her. Thereafter I went with her to the new mandir.

Didi quickly wrote with red sandalwood

paste a Siva seed mantra and a Sakti seed mantra on two bel leaves. When she had done this, she asked: "What shall I now do with these?" I also echoed: "Yes, what shall we do with them?" Didi remarked: "It will be better to place these leaves on the waters of Ganga." I said: "Yes, this is all right." Thereafter Didi started cleaning tulasi leaves, but her mind became restless. She was worried that some of the food she had put on the stoves for cooking might get charred. Just then someone came to call Didi. She placed the tulasi leaf into Bishu's hands and went away. On receiving the leaf, Bishu asked me what seed mantra he should write on it. I told him: "You worship Narayana, so you may write some such seed mantra on the tulasi leaf." He complied and then placed the leaf in my hands. I returned it to him.

This same Bishu had received three seed mantras from this body six years ago in a dream. He remembered two of the mantras but the third he had entirely forgotten. He used to speak of this to this body from time to time, but as I had no kheyala to reply, I had not explained anything further to him. Once, when he raised the subject again at Vindhyachal, this body instructed him to continue his japa of the two seed mantras he remembered. Up to date this was what he had been doing. Today when I returned the tulasi leaf to him, he suddenly intuitively knew the mantra written on the

tulasi leaf was identical with the third seed mantra he had dreamt of. He asked me for verification. I confirmed this. His face lit up with inner joy.

There now remained the two seed mantras written on the two bel leaves. So far this body had no kheyala who should be the recipients of these. But when Bishu had been given the tulasi leaf then this body had the kheyala that Mona baba (Sri Monmohan Ghosh) who had been the architect of the new temple (Viraja Mandir) should be presented with a bel leaf. So he was called and one of the bel leaves was handed over to him. There now remained one more bel leaf. Thereupon emerged another kheyala, namely if any uninitiated person should now approach this temple, it would be allotted to him or her. This may seem to you like a lottery! (Laughter). At that moment I noticed that Gopal Baba's (Dr. Gopal Das Gupta) wife was standing just outside near a window. I called out to her: "Wouldn't you like to come inside?" She at once entered the temple and did pranama to me. As she was going back, I asked Bishu: "Shall I give the bel leaf to her?" Bishu replied: "Very well, why don't you?" Three times I asked him the same question and each time he gave the same reply. So the bel leaf was presented to Gopal Baba's wife. This is what transpired on *Gurupurnima* day.

I: Two days before *Gurupurnima* when your paternal cousin came to you in his subtle body,

you had remarked that some other persons in their subtle bodies accompanied him.

Ma : So it was.

I : Were they all deceased ?

Ma : They were not.

I : Then who were they ?

Ma : Why, cannot those that are alive also come in their subtle bodies ?

I : Of course they can. Were they also supplicants for diksha ?

Ma : They were.

I : Were those that later received bel leaves from you in the physical among those that appeared to you then in their subtle bodies ?

Ma : Why else should they obtain the leaves ?

I : Can I then look upon this incident as initiation ?

Ma : Whatever you wish to believe.

I : But what would you say ?

Ma : I can only repeat : "Whatever you choose to believe."

I : Suppose I do consider this as a diksha, then from whom did they receive initiation ?

Ma : (laughing) From God.

I : Suppose I maintain they received their diksha from you ? Then ?

Ma : I have just declared : "They received it from God."

Swami Sankaranandaji : This amounts to the same thing !

I : Well, you had said to your paternal cousin : "This body does not normally initiate

any body." Suppose I consider this as your limitation, in other words : Diksha is the one thing you cannot perform.

Ma : (Laughing) Even if you hold on to this so-called limitation, you will not be able to keep it up.

I : Why not ? If a certain rule is never broken, surely this is but a form of limitation !

Ma : This body does not ordinarily give diksha in the manner in which it is usually done amongst you. Nevertheless certain mantras have indeed emanated from these lips and others have accepted them. Therefore in one way or another the mantra has indeed been bestowed. Besides, I have often remarked that some persons repeat their mantras incorrectly. A few of them approach this body from time to time, saying : "Ma, it does not seem that the way I am performing my japa is correct. Should I then carry out my japa in such and such a manner ?" They thus themselves express the desire to change their way of doing japa which corresponds to this body's kheyala.

I : Ma, you say, you do not ordinarily give initiation. This assertion has no meaning. For instance Bholanath and Bhaiji have obtained their mantras from your own lips. Moreover you yourself assert that when you present devotees with flowers, garlands and so on, this amounts to transference of power. Communication of power is called diksha. One way to describe diksha is transference of power.

Ma : (Laughing) Why only flowers and garlands? Even when sweets or other things are given to people to eat a similar effect can be obtained.

Narayana Swami : Did your paternal cousin obtain what he asked for ?

Ma : Yes, he did.

I : Did he receive it in the new temple ?

Ma : Yes, not only he ; his wife, his younger brother ; all of them were recipients.

Sri Sri Ma visits Calcutta and Dacca.

After the month of Jaistha (June) 1937, I did not meet Ma again until over a year later, on Oct. 16th, 1938. During this long interval, many memorable episodes had occurred round Sri Sri Ma. Towards the end of Jaistha in 1937, Ma left for Kailash from Almora with Baba Bholanath, Jyotish Babu, Swami Akhandananda, Gurupriya Didi and the eldest son of Sri Pran Kumar Bose, etc. I heard many interesting details about their travels from Baba Bholanath and Didi. Jyotish Babu was seized by an intense spirit of renunciation on reaching the shores of *Manas Sarovar*, so much so that he entered *Sannyasa* spontaneously. Ma thereafter named him Maunananda Parvat.

On the 10th of Sravana, Didi had written to me from Dharchula (on the way back) that Jyotish Babu was very ill, but that the rest of the party had returned hale and hearty from Kailash. In such a serious condition Jyotish Babu

was brought back to Almora, and on the 2nd Bhadra (mid-August), at the feet of Sri Sri Ma, he left his body, uttering the name of Ma with his last breath. He had requested everybody present to sing the name of Ma around his death bed, and had himself initiated the tunes so far as he could. This report of his demise could serve as an example to be emulated by the foremost *sannyasis*.

Sri Sri Ma's condition had changed perceptibly from the day after Jyotish Babu's death and She gradually lapsed into a deep *samadhi*. When She regained outer consciousness after two or three days, they all started with Her for Dehradun. On reaching the Kishenpur Ashram, Ma for several days took only a few sips of water, later She had fruit juice and finally a little rice.

The next event within Ma's orbit had been the death of Dadamashai (Her father) in Calcutta on the 1st. of Paus (mid-December) 1937. Ma had arrived in Calcutta a few days earlier for a short visit and returned to Tarapith. At the exact moment of Dadamashai's death, Ma was in a train en route to Kashi.

A few months later Baba Bholanath left his mortal frame. In April 1938, Ma was in Hardwar to attend Purna Kumbha Mela. Many of Her devotees gathered there and took part in bathing with great joy. Baba Bholanath used to take out kirtan processions daily.

After Kumbha, Ma went to Dehradun but within a few days Baba Bholanath returned to

Kankhal for the initiation into *Sannyasa* of Swami Akhandananda, brother, Sri Kunja Babu. Probably it was during this period that the virulent poison of small pox entered Baba Bholanath's body. When he returned to Dehradun the disease was well advanced. At this juncture, Ma sent Didima, Didi and others away from Dehradun. Sri Bhupatinath Mitra, Jogesh Brahmachari and a few others remained with Her. At Bhupati's advice the well-known Kaviraj and devotee of Ma, Sri Siva Sankar Sen was summoned from Dacca by telegram. But all his treatment and Sushila Masima's devoted nursing proved of no avail. Baba Bholanath left his mortal body on Friday, the 23rd Vaisakh (May) 1938. At the time of his passing Sri Sri Ma's merciful hand was resting on Baba Bholanath's head.

I further learnt that four or five days before his death, Baba Bholanath had started addressing Sri Sri Ma as "Ma" and had also prayed to Her, saying, "Ma, please forgive me!" He had been initiated into *Sannyasa*, so in accordance with the practice prevalent for *Sannyasis*, his body was consigned to the holy waters of the Ganga at Hardwar.

The news of Baba Bholanath's death reached Dacca during Sri Sri Ma's birthday celebrations. A pall of gloom descended on Bholanath's disciples and devotees. All of them felt that they had lost one of their very own and been deprived of his protection. Even though Baba Bholanath's external behaviour had sometimes appeared

abrupt, his nature was truly artless and tender. Whenever he saw anybody afflicted with grief or sorrow, he used to feel anxious and coaxed Ma to relieve the sufferer. So far I have never noticed anybody ask any favour of Ma directly. This task was always left to Bholanath. In our difficulties and tribulations it was he who used to reassure and comfort us. In times of distress we never were deprived of his sincere sympathy. Thus, by his departure we were plunged into a dismal abyss.

During the Puja holidays in 1938, I was staying with my family in Calcutta. On enquiry from Sm. Bhramara Ghosh, I found out that Ma would reach Calcutta on Sunday, Oct. 16th, and was likely to take up residence at the Deshbandhu Girl's School on Russa Road. Sm. Bhramara was the Principal of the school and had taken the Secretary's permission to provide accommodation and food for Ma and Her party in the school premises. As this was very near our residence, this arrangement proved a great boon for me.

On Oct. 16th, Ma reached by the Delhi Mail. A large crowd had gathered at the Station to welcome Her. The devotees smothered Ma with garlands inside the train and thunderous shouts of "Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma ki Jai" rent the air. I just could not squeeze through the crowd to get near Ma but mentally from a distance silently tendered my homage to Her.

On reaching the school, Sri Sri Ma had

a wash and sat down in the 1st floor hall at about 10 a.m. Ma asked me when I had arrived in Calcutta, how long I was going to stay, and so on. At about 11 a.m. Ma was taken away for a rest.

Since Ma's health had been indifferent for some time, the retired Civil Surgeon Dr. Pant had accompanied Her from Hardwar. In consultation with him the times for Ma's darsana were fixed from 8 a.m. to midday and 4 to 9 p.m. daily. Without a doubt such an arrangement was very necessary because thousands of people wanted to see Ma and offer their *pranamas* at Her feet. Faced with their agitated persistence, Ma would at times ignore the limits set by the doctor and run outside to meet people.

Adhivasa Kirtan by Simla Devotees.

At about 5-30 that afternoon Ma attended a programme of recitations of stotras but before the end-Ma was taken for a drive. On returning, Ma sat down near the Kirtan Mancha (altar). The courtyard of the school had been specially decorated. Above was spread a canopy in all the colours of the rainbow. Every pillar was wound with bright silk ribbons. At one end of the courtyard was Ma's dais and at the other end a less high altar on which pictures of Sri-krishna, Sri Gauranga and Sri Ma were artistically displayed. In the middle, facing Sri Sri Ma's seat, were the dual images of Srikrishna and Sri Radha.

Several well-known Kirtan singers had become Ma's devotees, accompanying Her from Simla. It was due to their initiative and enthusiasm that this *Nama Yajna* was being performed in Calcutta.

As soon as Ma took Her seat, the *Adhivasa Kirtana* started as a prelude to the continuous kirtan to be performed the next day and night. At the start the devotees burnt incense and lit a 5-wick oil lamp in front of the deities, put garlands round their necks and sandal paste on their foreheads, and commenced singing: "*Sri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda, Hare Krishna Hare Rama Sri Radhe Govinda*," while perambulating round the *mancha*. At this stage the crowd became so dense that not all present could catch a glimpse of Ma, so She stood up on Her *asana*. Ma's face was radiant and full of bliss. There was a wonderful glow on Her countenance and a beautiful garland round Her neck. An inspiring sight! Ma clapped Her hands in rhythm with the music to encourage the participants who became carried away by enthusiasm and danced around, singing kirtan. After sometime, Ma was taken to Her room and the kirtan died down.

Nama yajna and Sri Sri Ma's Bhoga.

The next morning I arrived at about 9 O'clock. Ma was still in Her room. Didi took me to Ma. I performed my *pranama* and asked: "Ma will you not go on to Dacca?" Ma replied: "It is you all who will have to decide that. This

body is at your disposal." She pointed to Dr. Pant, and added: "You can talk to Pitaji about going to Dacca." Then She turned to Dr. Pant and said: "Having come to Calcutta from so far, if we do not go to Dacca, people there will be most disappointed."

Dr. Pant inquired from me about the weather in Dacca and about facilities during the journey. I understood from Ma's demeanour that She would definitely visit Dacca.

Thereafter Ma went to the kirtan. *Bhoga* had been fixed for midday in the hall on the 1st floor. Six *asanas* had been spread, one for Ma, the other five for Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda, Srinivasa, Gadadhara and Acharya Advaita. Before each *asana*, *bhoga* had been placed consisting of 16 different items. On each *asana* was placed a garland; a incense five-wick oil lamp and camphor were being burnt. *Arati* and kirtan for *bhoga* were started to the accompaniment of cymbals and mridanga (drums). The ladies frequently blew conch shells and uttered auspicious sounds. Ma kept sitting on Her *asana* with Her head bent sharply and appeared to smilingly observe everything without actually looking. At the end of the *bhoga arati* She was full of praise for the efficient arrangements made by the Simla devotees.

After *bhoga* Ma was taken away for a rest but as the crowd invaded even Her bedroom, She was removed for privacy to a nearby park. Ma returned at about 5 p.m. and after a while

sat down once more near the kirtan altar. A large crowd had by then collected for Ma's *darsana* and to offer *pranama* to Her. The singing had continued non-stop from the morning. Whenever Ma approached, the enthusiasm of the assembly rose to a crescendo. Since many were unable to catch a glimpse of Ma She stood up on Her *asana* for some time. Then suddenly Ma Herself joined the singers and, swaying from side to side and clapping Her hands in rhythm with the music, She commenced circling round the altar with everybody. The entire congregation were charmed by Her serene smile and the vigorous movements of Her hands, feet and body, and started coming closer and closer. To save Her from being crushed, Swami Akhandananda, Didi and a few others formed a cordon around Ma by joining hands, and after a while Ma was taken out of the crowd. But she could hardly walk. On the way from the school courtyard to the main road, she sank down limply. Everyone felt anxious. There was still a substantial crowd round Ma and hardly room for us to penetrate within. So at the last resort a hand fan was pressed into service and nearby devotees started singing kirtan softly. After a while Ma recovered somewhat, sat up and was taken out for a drive.

Sri Sri Ma's Unsolicited Mercy.

After dinner that night, at about 9-30 p.m. my elder brother expressed a desire to visit the kirtan so I accompanied him. On arriving at

the school, Sri Brajen Ganguli, the well-known exponent of kirtans, was singing very melodiously. We sat for a long time listening. At about midnight we had just come out into the main road before returning home, when we heard the sound of kirtan emanating from the 1st floor of the school. On looking upwards, I beheld Ma standing on the balcony adjoining Her room. By the light of someone's torch shining on Ma, I perceived that She was dressed as Sri Krishna with armlets, garland and crown made of flowers.

On seeing me, Ma laughed and exclaimed: "See how they have dressed me up! Now, if bashful modesty assails me from right or left, what am I to do?" We all started laughing loudly. Ma then took off the ornaments one by one. The crown from Her forehead She flung towards me. Before it could hit the ground, I caught it, touched my forehead with it, and considered myself very blessed indeed. To devotees singing on the 1st floor, Ma threw Her flute, also made of flowers. Near us an aged person was slowly proceeding along the road. On noticing Ma, he cried out: "Ma, I have to take my leave now, I have not been able to have your *darsana* even after waiting for so long!" Ma threw a flower armlet towards him and said: "Take this, it will suit you admirably well!" The gentleman obviously did not understand the significance of Ma's words. The armlet hit his body and fell to the ground. I picked it up and gave it to him, saying: "Ma has presented this to you." The gentleman's

face lit up with inner joy. He said loudly, "Ma, have you really given this to me?" So may I put it on? I shall return to-morrow wearing this." Ma asked him: "Tell me, why did I say it would suit you admirably?" The gentleman replied: "Will you please enlighten me?" Ma said something that none of us could grasp. Then Ma addressed the old man once more saying: "You see we are all women meant to serve. There is only the one *Parama Purusa*.* Is it not so, Baba? Ma left the veranda and entered Her room and we all returned to our homes.

* This reference of Ma is well illustrated by the following anecdote in connection with Mirabai who in her later years took up residence in Vrindaban to savour Krishna lila fully. Mirabai had heard of the wonderful love and devotion to Sri Krishna preached by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his followers. Rupa Goswami, his leading exponent, was then living in Vrindaban and Mirabai expressed the desire to meet him, who was then living as an austere ascetic on the shores of Radhakunda. He said: "I am a Vaisnava *sannyasi* and cannot meet any woman whatsoever". Mirabai, on hearing this, exclaimed: "Oh, does then Rupa Goswami consider himself a *Purusa*, when Sri Krishna is the *Parama Purusa* in existence? In fact we all without exception are only His gopis, meant to serve Him in our various capacities."

Needless to say, Rupa Goswami at once nobly rectified his error by meeting Mirabai personally.

**Conversation of Ma's devotees behind
Dr. Pant's back."**

Calcutta, Wednesday 19.10.38.

Yesterday we had heard that nobody would be allowed to see Ma this morning, but that She would meet the general public in the evening. So there was no particular urgency in going to visit Ma in the morning. After completing my shopping I proceeded slowly towards the Deshbandhu Girl's School. As the door of Ma's chamber was still closed, I entered into a conversation with Sachi Babu and Bhupati Babu. At that time Sm. Bhramara came to tell us: "The doors to Ma's room will soon be opened; would the three of you please sit in front of the three doorways, and take care that nobody enters the room and touches Ma. Everybody can have Ma's *darsana* from the hall, where kirtan will be sung continually." In response to Bhramara's request, I went and sat in front of one of the doors, Bhupati Babu sat near the second, and before the third Charu Babu from Simla was already seated. Because of work in his office, Sachi Babu declined to act as a custodian, saying, "Once I sit near this enchantress, I shall never be able to depart."

Shortly after, the door of Ma's room were opened and both men and women sang Ma's name in union. The kirtan went on for about an hour with ever increasing fervour. At the end Ma said: "Dr. Pant has forbidden me to

speak, but I have the *Kheyala* to talk. (Looking towards Charu Babu) Baba, will you say something. You can speak well. You may remember something of what you say when you recite the Bhagavata. Do say something." So Charu Babu started talking. There was a continuous din in the hall. I was so far away from Charu Babu that none of his words were audible to me. I tried hard to understand what he was saying, without any success, and gave up my endeavour. I said to Khukuni Didi, "I just cannot hear anything." When didi reported this to Ma, She made Atal Babu (Bhattacharya) exchange places with me. Now I was able to sit nearer to Ma, but then there was no more talk.

Some moments passed in silence. Then Ma said to Sri Ramtaran Chatterji: "Baba, will you now speak?" Ramtaran Babu was full of humour. In a joking manner he asked: "Ma I am coming from Madhupur, when will I return there?"

Ma (smiling): You are still in Madhupur (a pun on the word meaning a place full of sweetness. Everyone laughed).

Ramtaran Babu: The tenure of my return ticket is not long--at the most five years. Whatever has to be done must be done now. If you want to accomplish anything thereafter, you may not find me.

Ma: It is said, "For Brahman one moment is equivalent to 60,000 years for humans." Is your life limited to the next five years?

Is there nothing before and after?

Ramtaran Babu: If you reckon in this way, life could stretch to infinity.

Ramtaran Babu's question was most personal; in the guise of carrying on a conversation, he had in fact prayed for Ma's special grace. Possibly for this reason Ma did not pursue this topic any further. After remaining silent for some time, Ma again said, "Don't sit with your mouth empty. Keep something in your mouth" (i.e., Ma wanted Satsanga to be continued).

Ramtaran Babu: Do please get well very quickly. This Lila of yours of playing the role of a patient is not at all pleasing to us.

Ma (smiling): A daughter's ailment is due to lack of care on the part of her parents. If the parents fail to look after their children, or do so with insufficient care, it is only then that the children fall ill. It is due to lack of care on your part that this daughter is suffering. Occasionally one even hears that a mother has killed her baby by feeding it with insufficient precaution. She did it in such a way that the milk choked the child's throat. Of course, everything is preordained. The baby died because he was fated to die in this manner. Still, someone had to be the direct cause of it. My illness is similar.

A devotee: Ma, If everything is preordained, then what remains as one's duty?

Ma: The notion that people can have no direct liability should be thoroughly understood. Once you realise this fact properly, everything

else is clear. Whenever you say you have no duties, this is due to pure hearsay. It is only in this field (i.e. the field of religion--dharma) that you say you have no duty, while in other spheres you feel strongly liable! (everybody laughs)

Devotee: Ma, I know nothing, please tell me which path to follow.

Ma: Pray to Him to show you the right path. Each day at least for a little while pray to Him thus: "Lord, please show me the way". If you call out to Him, He never forsakes you. How can He desert you? There is no place where He is not. He does not even have room to turn round.

Ma continued to explain: "Don't you say Krishna means attraction? He who attracts is Krishna. Look, everything in this world is attractive, because there is nothing apart from Him."

An old lady had been trying very hard to get a word in edgeways to Ma. Even though Ma was speaking to others, the former's tearful petitions were continuously being aimed at Ma. Since a rule had already been made that this morning no one should be allowed to approach Ma, She for sometime seemed to ignore the lady's petition. But now She relented and went forward to sit down near the lady, saying, "Tell me, Ma, whatever you have to say."

The old lady: Ma, you had asked me to come to you at half past eight this morning. I had sent my grand-son to you, but as he was late in returning, I have been unable to arrive in time.

Ma: Don't bother about that. Tell me what

it is you want to say.

Lady: Ma, what a lot I have to tell you!

Ma: Is there ever an end to this sort of talk? Just as the world is continuously being created, maintained, and destroyed, so is there no end to these topics. Repeat the Lord's name, thereby all your talks and tasks will meet fulfillment. Instead of talking at random, just follow this advice. At all times remember the Lord's name, thus all your troubles and tribulations will vanish.

Lady: I tried so hard to get my daughter married, but could not accomplish anything.

Ma: Let it be. If the girl's fate is to be married she will be, otherwise not. What is the use of worrying about it? Instead, be always immersed in the repetition of the Lord's name.

Lady: What name shall I repeat? May I take the name of Ma?

Ma: You have already received a mantra--just practise japa of it. And if you want to repeat the name of Ma, there is no harm either. You will merely be repeating God's name.

The lady had been trying to touch Ma. But it had been decided that this morning nobody would be allowed to do so. So I had been keeping a strict watch to prevent the woman from touching Ma. But now Ma Herself extended Her hand, and placed it on the old woman's lap. Like a beggar starved from birth, she pressed the hand and fondled it in various ways. Yet in spite of this she did not seem fully satisfied. Ma

continued to smile and exhorted her in loving tones, "Keep on repeating the Name, will you remember this? You won't forget, will you?" Having consoled the woman in this way, Ma returned to Her *asana*.

Ramtaran Babu resumed speaking: "I have heard that not all our prayers reach God. Only prayers that are truly genuine and ardent get to Him.

Ma How true this is -- as you say, certain human desires do not reach God--remember these were destined to die a natural death. How so? Just like pouring water on the earth. Not all water that is sprinkled on the earth's surface can reach the sea. Some may dry up. But often the current of the water is so strong that it cannot stop until it mingles with the waters of the ocean. The desires to carry out certain kinds of work are similar. There are desires that are fulfilled by performing certain actions; there are others for which human beings are compelled to return again and again to this earth.

Devotee: Will there be no results if someone takes the name of the Lord without being initiated?

Ma: Why shouldn't there be?

Devotee: I believe the *Sastras* declare that unless one takes on a Guru, nothing much can be achieved.

Ma (smiling): The Guru resides in your own heart. But ordinary people are unable to rely firmly on their own Self. So they have to take

refuge in an external Guru. But in actual fact the Guru resides within one's own heart. It is He who prompts you to say you can succeed by repeating God's name even without taking recourse to a Guru. On the other hand when the time is ripe, it will be He who will make you say that without taking on a Guru nothing can be achieved. Then you will see how intense your longing for a Guru will become, so that you will run hither and thither searching for Him. The essential fact is that the Guru enthroned in your heart dictates to you what course to follow as and when the need arises. The main thing to do is to follow his advice.

Devotee: Since I am unable to sit in a meditative pose for long while doing japa, I do so sitting on a chair. Is this wrong?

Ma: Why only sitting on a chair? I would go so far as to say, even if you lie down straight, or repeat the holy Name in whatever other posture that is comfortable for you, it is all right. But you must concentrate on the Name, not on the comfort entailed. Consider how children have to memorise their lessons for examinations. Whether they do so while lying down, or running or playing they will certainly pass. It is not compulsory to memorise one's lessons remaining seated all the time. It is exactly similar with the repetition of the Lord's name. Whatever we do without remembering the Lord's name amounts to taking a return ticket. You will come back to where you started

from, i.e., return time and again to perform the same task. That is why I always stress that no task must be left undone. It is said that you cannot be sure of the next breath. What guarantee is there that you will be able to complete the job that you are postponing for tomorrow? If you are unable to do so, then the seed of desire that has been sown will force you to return for another birth. Therefore you must try to accomplish to the best of your ability whatever work happens to be allotted to you. Do not waste your time wondering whether or not it has been done perfectly well. You must keep in mind: "I have done my duty to the best of my ability, now let come what may."

As the clock was striking 11 a.m. Ma laughed and said: "You must now shut me up, so that when Dr. Pant comes he will see that I am resting obediently as he prescribed." Everybody laughed, greatly amused at Ma's words. A devotee cried out: "Ma, is this how you obey Dr. Pant's advice by cheating him?" Ma got up laughing, and we all departed after performing our *pranamas*.

"We are foolish people, so please do not hinder us."

When I returned to Ma in the afternoon, She had not yet come out of Her room. After a while Ma was taken up to the roof on the 3rd floor. It was then past 5 p.m. Ma was seated in a corner of the roof, and arrangements were made to allow all present to file past Her singly and

perform their *pranama*. Luckily I was able to sit not far from Ma's *asana*. There seemed to be no opportunity at all of listening to Ma's words before such a crowd, so I sat quietly scrutinizing the various expressions on the faces of the devotees. Different people performed their *pranamas* in different modes. Some eyes were with tears; in the case of others tears were rolling down their cheeks. On some Ma fixed Her loving merciful glance. At other times it appeared as if She were not noticing anything at all, Her glance was aimless as if Her mind had escaped the confines of this earth to roam on some other planet.

A couple of old women came to perform their *pranama* to Ma. They wore dirty and tattered clothes and appeared to belong to the lower poor class. When they wanted to touch Ma's feet Manoj Mukherjee prevented them. Thereupon one of the two old women exclaimed: "Baba, do not deter us, we are poor foolish folk."

At these words Ma broke out into loud laughter. She beckoned to me saying, listen to what they are saying, "we are foolish people, so please do not prevent us": With these words, Ma got up from Her *asana*, embraced the two women with both Her arms, placing Her face close to theirs, and kept on exclaiming, "Ma, Ma, oh Ma". She appeared as if dissolved in mirth and merriment. On seeing Her laughing so hilariously, many others joined into the laughter. I

was watching Ma's playfulness with wonder. It struck me that it was only by approaching Ma with true humility, as these women had done that one could obtain Her grace to the fullest extent." The two women were overcome by Ma's love. Their sunken eyes filled with tears. They were about to say some words to Ma out of the fulness of their hearts. By this time Ma had regained Her *asana*. Manoj Babu laughingly said to the two women, "There is no more need for you to speak. You had better take your departure quickly. Beholding your exceedingly good fortune my heart is bursting with jealousy." On hearing Manoj Babu's words, we all broke out into loud laughter.

After a short while Ma was brought downstairs, and taken for a drive.

20.10.38

In the morning I learned that Ma was going to Dakshineswar. Khukuni Didi asked me to accompany them. At about 10 a.m. Ma started by car. I boarded a bus together with Bhupatinath Mitra. On arriving Dakshineswar by about 11.30, we saw that Ma had occupied a place in the house where Sri Sri Ramakrishna's wife used to live, and that Ma's *bhoga* was being prepared there. This was the best opportunity I had so far obtained of sitting near Ma and listening to Her discourse.

"Different stage of *sadhana*"

I told Ma, "Sobha Ma, the disciple of Santadas Babaji*, maintains that there are seven levels in the practice of *sadhana*". I now gave a brief description of the various stages, according to what I had heard, and then asked, "Do these seven stages refer to the practice of any particular sect, or are they valid for every *sadhaka*"?

Ma (laughing): Do you mean to say you hope to receive a comprehensive reply on this subject from me?

I: No (everybody laughs). However, referring to these various stages of spiritual practice one hears of, are they different for different sects, or do they hold good universally? If so, please tell us something about it.

Ma: You know very well that not at all places and not to all questions do answers issue from my lips. When it does come, then of course I speak. Anyway, you may discuss this subject, and I shall listen. The more this kind of thing is spoken about, the better.

I: Ma, you know that I never come to you to give a talk.

Ma (smiling): Look, whatever one may hear about the different stages in *sadhana* will always be laid down. Perhaps not all these stages can be found but some at least are sure

* A famous Guru of the Vaishnava sect, and the chief disciple of Sri Ramdas Kathia Babaji Maharaj.

to be described there. And the funny part is that, whatever different people may assert, this body will always reconcile their conflicting views. But mind you, those who are *jnanis*, or those whom you look upon as being omniscient, do not usually have the inclination to reveal Truth. Even if they are willing to do so, and under certain circumstances such a situation does arise from time to time, they divulge to particular persons only as much as is necessary for them. Such an exposition is of course partial. Truth is not revealed in its entirety. This is why it is said that Supreme Truth is never revealed. I have previously talked to you about the different stages of *sadhana** You should understand that this also was partial.

"Being possessed by a Sad-Guru -- and possession by a Spirit"

I: Can a Sadguru reveal basic truth through a disciple?

Ma: Indeed! This is exactly what your Sastras lay down! Don't you often say that the Guru--or God--has given certain directions through a particular individual? This is nothing new!

I: Well, when a Sadguru reveals some truth through a disciple, is the disciple then quite in his normal senses? Is he not as if possessed by some spirit?

*Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasanga; Vol II, p. 100. by the Author in Bengalee.

Ma : Not necessarily.

I : I have read in books that the spirit of a dead person can sometimes take possession of a human being, and reveal secrets about material things through him. But he who is possessed is not conscious of what he is saying at the time. He lies unconscious while he is possessed by the spirit. When this is over he regains his normal self, and behaves like an ordinary person. When a Sadguru reveals Truth through his disciple, is there any change noticeable in the disciple? Does he not lose his intelligence and does he remain normal?

Ma : No. There is a definite difference in the disciple then. But this is very difficult to notice for ordinary people. Also, what you have said about the body being inert when possessed by a spirit, is not always true. There are various stages when possessed by a spirit. Quite often the body is seen to droop down when so possessed. But at other times it is noticed that the body -- in spite of drooping down -- remains almost normal. There is another stage, which we look upon as becoming quite used to being possessed by a spirit, i.e., the body is not incapacitated in any way when possessed. But of course there is a distinct difference between possession by a spirit, and possession by a Sadguru. It is difficult, very difficult, for ordinary persons to grasp this.

Having spoken thus, Ma said to me, smiling gently, "Do not misunderstand me. I have not

referred to any particular person or sect in whatever I have said."

"Can an individual (jiva) become omniscient?"

I : Ma, only a short while ago you asserted that he who is omniscient does not reveal supreme Truth. Well, can a jiva ever become omniscient?

Ma : If you call him "jiva", how can he be omniscient? Can a finite being become infinite?

I : When I refer to a "jiva", I do not mean his state of existence as a finite being, I am referring to his body. The purport of my question is; Can a human being realise omniscience while in the body?

Ma : Yes, it may happen. But this cannot be perceived externally. This kind of omniscience is not intelligible to the average person. Do you not often say you cannot see something with your naked eyes but only when wearing spectacles? This is somewhat similar. Unless special vision has been awakened you cannot notice this omniscience. Somebody may be omniscient but people look upon him as an ordinary embodied human being, although omniscience can exist even in a person with an ordinary body. This is a manifestation of the Infinite within the finite. Do you not hold that even in the tiniest particle of sand, the Brahman exists in its fulness? This is similar.

I : What kind of omniscience is this? Is it perfect omniscience?

Ma : Yes -- omniscience in its entirety.

I: All right. Can one who is omniscient, fabricate an engine?

Ma: When perfect knowledge is referred to, does this not contain everything?

I: So he who is omniscient can build an engine if he so desires.

Ma: This is where you are mistaken! He has no desire. Can there be omniscience where desire or longing is? Because you yourself are bound by limitations, you look at everything in terms of cause and effect. You distinguish between desire and non-desire in everything you come across, and so you cannot have any idea of what omniscience actually is.

At this juncture, Ma was taken from the veranda to Her room for *bhoga* and as Ma would rest afterwards, we all went downstairs.

October 20th, 1938

We came downstairs and were wandering about at random when Nagen called us to partake of the *prasada* of Goddess Kali. So we all sat down on the veranda. Just then Netaji Sri Subhas Chandra Bose arrived to have Sri Ma's *darsana*. He partook of *prasada* along with us.

After the meal, the manager of Dakshineshwar took Netaji to the *Panchavati** and other

* *Panchavati* | -- A grove of five sacred trees, namely *pipal*, *banyan*, *asoka*, *bel*, *amaleki* with a platform in the middle. It is considered a congenial place for meditation. Sri Ramakrishna is said to

places of interest. We accompanied them. It was nearly 3-30 p.m. when we beheld Mataji proceeding to the *Panchavati*. An *asana* was spread for Sri Ma on the platform below the *pipal tree*. We all sat around Her. Netaji tendered his *pranama* to Ma and sat right in front of Her. Some time passed in silence. Neither Sri Ma nor Netaji spoke a word.

Then Bhupati Babu introduced Netaji to Ma who said: "I met your brother at Ahmedabad."

Netaji: So you went to Ahmedabad?

Mataji: Yes.

Again silence.

I indicated to Bhupati Babu to ask Netaji whether he wished to put some questions to Ma. Netaji said he had no questions. Again silence. Sm. Bhramara sat next to me. At her insistence I at last had to introduce some topic. I said: "Ma can one realize God by service to one's motherland?"

Mataji: (to Netaji) Baba, do please tell us whether, God can be found by service to one's country.

Netaji: Am I in search of God? (Everybody laughs).

Mataji: (smiling) So what is it that you pursue?

Netaji: But that question was not addressed to me?

Mataji: It was raised in connection with yourself. (glancing at me) Was it not?

have obtained Realization in this Panchavati.

I : Yes, Ma.

Ma : (addressing Netaji) : Now please reply ! Well, why do you serve your motherland ? What do you gain by it ? If you explain to them the merits of doing so, they will all start serving their country. Nobody does anything unless he profits by it. You give such eloquent lectures, so do now speak, please.

Netaji (smiling) : But I have not come here to deliver a lecture.--I derive great happiness from serving my country, that is why I do it.

Mataji : In this happiness perpetual ?

Netaji : The meaning of the word 'perpetual' is not easy to understand.

Mataji : That which remains all the time is perpetual. There is perpetual happiness in carrying out the dictates of one's true Nature (*svabhava*). If service is performed in the right spirit, lasting happiness may be found. Is this so with you, Baba ?

At this point Sri Ma was interrupted by a lady who started talking about her own problems. I gathered from what she said that she was a teacher of the Calcutta Corporation School. She would from time to time in her dreams obtain glimpses of Sri Krishna and also His instructions. She had come to Sri Ma today also in obedience to His direction. It was her belief that Sri Krishna would perform some work for the world through her. However, off and on she would feel afraid and desperately lonely. So she implored Sri Ma to help her.

Ma said : "Since you are receiving His

instructions, where is the need of help ? If you rely solely on God, everything will be all right." (Addressing Netaji) : "Baba, won't you say something ?"

Netaji : I have not come here to speak, I am here to listen.

Mataji : If this is so, will you then listen to what this little girl has to say ? Will you do as I tell you ?

Netaji : I cannot guarantee, but I may make an attempt.

Mataji : Look, all work performed in connection with worldly affairs is prompted by want (*abhava*). Certainly when this want has been fulfilled one feels happy. But remember, the happiness obtained from accomplishing worldly work merely keeps the sense of want awake. Suppose you feel the need to acquire something and to fulfil this need you start on a certain courage of action. As a result of your efforts you get rid of this want and therefore are full of joy. But along with this joy some other need will arise. This is why I maintain that all action connected with worldly affairs belongs to the realm of want (*abhava*). But by following the dictates of one's true Nature (*svabhava*) perpetual joy will result. You say it makes you happy to serve your motherland. To serve one's country is of course very good. Your heart is noble, very large, try to make it even larger. If you serve your country without enthusiasm,

this will be work prompted by the sense of want and the happiness derived from it will not be lasting. But everybody desires unbroken joy, the joy that is endless. If you follow the dictates of your true Nature (*svabhava*), this will lead to permanent joy and you will become established in bliss. Now you may well retort: "What is the use of bliss for myself alone when the whole world is full of gloom?" The answer to this is that if permanent bliss is realized, it will be communicated to others.

Netaji: What exactly does '*Svabhava karma*' mean?

Mataji: Action as such arises out of want (*abhava*) because without a sense of want there is no action. However, action that leads to permanent bliss can be called '*svabhava karma*,' action prompted by one's true Nature. *Svabhava* is that which is man's own through all eternity. Because the kernel of perpetual bliss lies hidden within yourself you desire this permanent bliss. You cannot want anything that is now already potentially within you.

Netaji: Is everybody's *svabhava* the same?

Mataji: Yes, all mankind basically desires constant happiness. In this whole universe there is but ONE without a second. When people serve others it is ultimately for their own Self. Happiness is derived from serving others because in essence all are one.

Netaji: You say that the true Nature of all is the same, but the Gita states: *Sreyan*

svadharmo vigunah paradharmo bhayavahah. "Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger."

Mataji: What actually is *svadharma*?* The dharma of your true Nature is your *svadharma*. *Sadhana* is performed in order to fulfil one's *svadharma* (one's real duty). This body (Ma) has no learning, so it speaks in an incoherent fashion. The effort to realize your inherent wealth *svadhana* I call *sadhana*. The words of the Bhagavad Gita are infallible indeed. To attain to the dharma of one's *svabhava* is the aim of mankind.

Netaji: But it is also true that different people have different natures. Nobody knows where his real duty lies.

Mataji: Even though people's dispositions and inclinations (*samskaras*) vary, there is one dharma for everyone. Truth is one.

Netaji: But one cannot know by one's own efforts how to proceed.

Mataji: Having started working in this direction, if you continue steadily, everything will fall into place. Then, whatever tendencies (*samskaras*) have been lying dormant in each person are aroused. Look, children do not feel inclined to study. But if for some time you compel

*Dharma--The law of being. It signifies the inner principle of religion. Man's dharma is to realize his innate Divinity.

them to pursue their studies, you will observe that each child does well in a different subject. One may excel in English, another in mathematics. So also when people start on this quest, it is seen after some time that they are advancing each according to their inherent dispositions.

Netaji: But you have not yet indicated a definite path.

Mataji (smiling): You will have to set to work. You must resolve: "I will study!"

Myself: Ma, your reply is still unclear. You say everybody desires uninterrupted happiness. Netaji maintains he finds happiness by serving his country. So should we understand that by serving one's motherland one can attain to perpetual joy and to God-realization?

Mataji: The service must be done with one's whole being. One must see to it that really genuine service is performed.

Netaji: There is a particular method for doing service. It is difficult to find the correct method.

Mataji: The difficulties of choosing the right path are considerable and on the path the maximum toil is required. But just as you acquire knowledge if you firmly make up your mind to study, so if you are totally and completely determined to realize THAT you are bound to find the right path.

Netaji: While groping in darkness it is difficult to find the correct path.

Mataji: Yes, but one has to start walking

in darkness. Don't you call faith blind? Taking recourse to this blind faith one must begin one's work. Later everything will be understood. When children start learning, do they understand anything? Yet by protracted study knowledge supervenes.

Netaji: All the same, if the correct path is known precious time can be saved.

At this stage the lady teacher from the Corporation School volunteered: "If all of you permit me I think I can explain the matter."

Mataji: All right, do!

Now the lady started talking on work free from desire for results as expounded in the Gita. But Ma interrupted her, saying: "Oh Ma, all this is very well known to him." (Subhas Bose).

Whether due to these frequent interruption or for some other reason, the conversation between Subhas Bose and Sri Ma did not gather any momentum today. We all felt somewhat frustrated, so that Jyotish declared that he would try and arrange for Netaji a private interview with Sri Ma.

Before leaving, Netaji asked Sri Ma: "For how long will you be here?"

Mataji: Nothing has been decided. This body has not been keeping good health for some time. Before coming here from Hardwar, the doctor examined this body and said, something or other had become excessive, so travelling was not advisable. Later when the trouble subsided somewhat, the journey to Calcutta was under-

taken. There is some talk now of proceeding to Dacca, but the previous excess seems to have recurred. So I am waiting. They so very kindly take care and look after this body, so I have put the full responsibility on them.

These words Sri Ma uttered like a little girl in broken sentences. How sweet this sounded I just cannot convey.

Subhas Bose tendered his *pranama* and took his departure. A little later Sri Ma also was taken away from the *panchavati*.

Calcutta, October 20th, 1938

It had previously been arranged to make records of Sri Ma's songs and speech *today*. Gurupriya Didi had spoken to me about this project. She wanted to place on my shoulders the responsibility of putting questions to Ma during the recorded conversation, but I did not agree. Instead I requested Didi to ask the questions herself. We also discussed what subjects should be raised. Our sole object was to record faultlessly Ma's own words. However carefully we had been trying to note down the nectar of words emanating from Her lips, we had not the slightest doubt that our efforts were just a poor imitation of the real thing. This is why Didi was anxious to take the help of science to record precisely Ma's own words. However, a lot of people, misunderstanding Didi's true motive, strongly criticised such an action on her part.

When it was time to proceed to the studio

for the recording, Didi asked me and Bhupati Babu to accompany Ma in the Rai Bahadur's car. But as there was not sufficient room for both of us, Bhupati put me into the car and left for Calcutta by bus.

On arriving from Dakshineswar in Bow Bazar, Calcutta, Didi first of all did *pranama* to Ma. Ma laughed and asked: "Tell me, why this frequent *pranama* today?"

I: I suppose Didi is beseeching you again and again to take care that your songs and speech may be recorded in a proper manner.

Mataji (laughing): But nothing is certain with me. Who knows whether words will issue at the required time?

We all went and sat down in a room of the studio. Just then the well-known blind singer Sri Krishna Chandra De arrived. On request he sang a song in front of Ma. Afterwards all present except ourselves were asked to leave the room.

A machine was placed in front of Ma. A mechanic showed Her two electric bulbs and explained that when the red light would go on, Ma should get ready and as soon as the green light was lit, She should start. The song was to continue for three minutes to complete one side of the record. At the appropriate time he would signal for the song to be discontinued. On hearing all this, Ma started laughing and said again and again: "I cannot guarantee that the songs will come at the exact time." But Didi firmly declared:

"Why shouldn't they ? They surely will !" Again Didi continued to do *pranama* to Ma. A test was made to check the reproduction of Ma's voice. It was satisfactory. So, now final preparations for the recording were carried out. Then the red light went on. With expectant eyes we kept looking alternately at Ma and at the lights. The red light was extinguished and the green light went on. We signalled to Ma to start singing. Ma sang :

"Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram
 Patita pavana jaya Siya Ram !
 Jayati Siva Siva Janaki Ram
 Jaya Raghunandana jaya Siya Ram !!"

* * *

"Jaya Radhe Radhe Krishna Krishna
 Hare Rama Hare Hare !
 Oi nam bolo badane sunao kane
 bilao jiver dvare dvare !!"

* * *

Ma sang each line alone and then we repeated in chorus. We were none too experienced in this, we, meaning Sachi Babu, Rai Bahadur Suren Babu, Swami Akhandanandaji and myself. I doubt that anyone of us had ever before sung in public. Fortunately Kumari Buni was with us, otherwise God only knows what a laughing

stock our singing might have been ! Beneath the sweet tones of Buni's voice and guided by her fine sense of rhythm, our suppressed voices somehow did their duty as accompanists.

After three minutes the song was over. A little later, by signalling again with red and green lights, the other side of the record was completed. Herein Ma sang two songs entirely on Her own :

1.

"What is my caste, my name, my home ?
 Nothing is certain, so how can I tell ?
 What else can I say ? I don't belong to anybody
 And in all the three worlds I call nobody my own.

No mother, no father, whether there was anyone
 I don't know,
 Nobody has told me and I have not heard it.
 With a husband full of virtues was I favoured
 What happened at the burning-ghat I do not know.

Forgotten have I all torment, renouncing home
 Forsaking the world, from jungle to jungle I roam.

2.

Who knocked at the door of my heart today ?
 Whose sweet voice have I heard ?
 Listening to his words
 I can no longer remain at peace.

Restless became my heart today,
Made me leave my home.

Having drunk the wine of delusion
Unconscious did I lie.
Who is it that came to-day to wake me up?

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After the songs a conversation commenced ;
Gurupriya Didi asked questions and Mataji replied.

Didi : Is it necessary to take on a Guru in
order to lead a religious life ?

Mataji : One has to accept guidance ; without
guidance one cannot proceed. For the simple
reason -- look, when we are reared from birth, all
this cannot be achieved without guidance. For
the same reason one has to secure assistance
also in the spiritual world from a definite source.
Who can be this guide ? God Himself ! It is He
who for the uplift of the individual, for his real
Good, in order to free him from his conditioning
(*samskara*), appears as his helper on the path in
the shape that is most beneficial for any particu-
lar person. Therefore we need a Guru. Without a
Guru, without guidance one cannot proceed.

Didi : Many say : "If the Guru himself does
not know, what can he teach me ?"

Mataji : Well, suppose a small child discovers
a seed -- it does not know anything, it just finds
it and keeps it. If you plant this seed in good
earth and tend it with care, a tree will definitely

grow out of it. Such a tree will yield flowers,
fruit and so forth. Then you will be able to
know what kind of a seed you have sown. That is
why it is said that if one sets to work with
whatever one may have obtained from no matter
whom, the fruit thereof will be reaped without a
doubt. There is only one God, none and nothing
else. Although we, as creatures of the world
do not know, do not understand anything, in rea-
lity it is certain that God alone exists and
nothing else. So, wherever, and in whatever
manner you may receive something, if you
make good use of it you will and must get a
result.

And you know very well : without a cause
there can be no effect. Whatever work you
undertake must definitely bear its fruit. Therefore
to assist you on this path you must take recourse
to some practice and to some helper. Do you
know what we have to determine ? First of all
we must resolve : "I want to realize God."
If once you are bent on this 'want' definitely,
then whatever is helpful will automatically
come your way. Just as for instance, as soon as
you decide to give your children proper education,
ways and means of doing so and how to get the
right company for them will automatically
suggest themselves to you. Similarly, if one wants
to proceed along the spiritual path, one must have
recourse to certain aids such as the company of
seekers after Truth, *japa*, discussion on spiritual
subjects, kirtan, and so on. This type of aids

will awaken the tendencies (*samskaras*) or currents that lie dormant within you.

When you let your children study a number of subjects, you will discover after some time that they excel in certain subjects; then if you let them continue their studies according to their inherent inclinations, they gradually become proficient in these subjects. So also, if we make up our minds to realize God, if the keen desire to follow the spiritual path awakens within us, then whatever is necessary along this road will automatically present itself. But one must progress according to one's natural inclinations. To proceed along a line not in keeping with one's innate predilections will not do.

Supposing we are not all eager to find God -- just as children have no desire to pursue their studies -- then in order to awaken such eagerness, we have to bind ourselves to a strict timetable. Children, even if they don't feel like studying, have to be compelled to sit down with their books at regular hours. So will you have to engage in spiritual exercises regularly for at least some fixed time, in order to rouse the keen desire to seek God. Do you know what you must resolve? "Whether I like it or not, whether I am able to concentrate or not -- out of the 24 hours I will definitely set apart so and so much time for Him."

Further, to bring about this keen sense of longing, you must put your whole heart and

soul into whatever spiritual practice you may undertake. To devote merely your mind to this task is not enough. Why? Because although Conscious Being (*chaitanya satta*) is all-pervading yet in order to worship a deity effectively, we, after creating an earthen image, have to ritually instill life into it (*prana pratistha*). Similarly you must put your whole being into the attempt to realize God. To call forth this whole-hearted effort you have to bind yourself down to a rigid routine. Just as children have to spend a definite period, say from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at school or college, so also if you want to lead a spiritual life, you must devote a definite amount of time daily to your *japa* or similar exercises. If, any day, for some special reason the fixed period kept apart for God cannot wholly be given, then the amount by which it has been reduced should be remembered and made up the next day. Furthermore efforts have to be made to increase this period of time gradually, as far as possible. The sole purpose of these attempts is to enhance your eagerness to find God. For until you become totally anxious you cannot attain to anything. Not until you are truly agitated can you become tranquil. To realize tranquillity you must first of all become frantic, frantic for Him.

Therefore you have to resort to expedients that will be helpful in this objective. Such a device may be *satsang*. This does not necessarily mean to cultivate thoughts and aspirations.

directed to God or Truth. If you sit in the presence of a sadhu while your mind is busy with family affairs or something similar, then there cannot be much improvement. Of course, some benefit will be derived from the proximity of sadhus; but real *satsang* means to be God-centred in thought, feeling and aspiration. Your whole being, mind, heart and even the body must become absorbed into such self-dedication to the Supreme. Unless this totally is attained there can be no achievement. That is why one must carefully choose the kind of work that is helpful in spiritual life. The I-ness and intelligence that we apply to all our worldly tasks, that very I-ness and intelligence must be used to select the type of work that will be an aid. Since we live in the midst of activity we must advance through action. Action that leads to purity of mind and heart, to concentration of thought, is the type of action helpful to spiritual life.

Do you know what is essential? God is one. So, in order to realize the One, we must become one-pointed. It is imperative to be singleminded in all objectives.

Gurupriya Didi: Do you maintain that everything is within the One?

Mataji: In the One there are many and in the many is the One. We are indeed of the One. There is evidence of this: as for example we eat mouthful by mouthful, we walk step by step. In the one, Infinity is contained. Suppose I were to ask you: "Tell me where your mind has been during the last five minutes!" You cannot even account

for the movements of the ordinary mind. You are unable to register your mind's wanderings within five minutes. In this respect there is infinity also in the mind.

Again look, supposing I catch hold of your hand or foot and ask: "Who is this?" You will reply: "It is I." The I-ness is not confined to the body. When saying "I" this refers actually to the Supreme I which is the real I. In order to know, to realize that Supreme I, you will have to start on the task with the self-consciousness and intelligence that you possess. For THAT which we call God or the ONE, is one eternally and in all respects. In order to become aware of this fact one must aspire to one single Goal. What will be the result of this single-mindedness? You will come to understand that you are of the ONE. The proof of this is that whatever you may undertake, you have to attend to your tasks one by one, you cannot do two things simultaneously. Our prime need is to take recourse to one remembrance, one aspiration -- whatever helps us to realize the One must be our constant companion.

Didi: You declare that we yearn for never ending happiness because we know this uninterrupted bliss in our innermost being?

Mataji: If the hidden knowledge of this unalloyed bliss were not within us, why should we seek it? The consciousness of it is there but it has not manifested. We desire what we have had a taste of. Because undisturbed bliss, undisturbed peace are concealed deep within us, it is the very

nature of a human being to yearn for it. Hence nothing finite can give lasting satisfaction. In this wide world, whatever people do at all times is ultimately for the sake of obtaining peace and happiness. In order to find this happiness we must take up the work dictated to us by our true nature. Work prompted by our true nature means action which will ultimately lead us to uninterrupted bliss and uninterrupted peace.

Already before Mataji stopped speaking, the time allotted for recording had been exhausted. Afterwards Dr. Pant asked Mataji a few questions in Hindi and She replied in Hindi.

Dr. Pant : Mataji, does the real welfare of the world lie in being well fed and clothed or in remaining hungry and practising devotion ?

Mataji : Look, is it not a fact that you are always hungry ? Do you ever feel satisfied ? If you did, why should you continue to go to all this trouble ? But by your endeavours to approach God you will get satisfaction. By stilling 'that' hunger everything will become all right.

Dr. Pant : Then it boils down to this that people should remain hungry but worship God ?

Mataji : Look, when you talk of being hungry, are you ever not hungry ? But when you start engaging in some practices for the sake of finding God, and in the process of it you procure some spiritual food to satisfy your inner hunger, your craving for material food will disappear of itself. There will no longer be any need for it. First of all you must realize that in order to

get proper nourishment and still your hunger you must take to the path of devotion. Try to reduce the need for material food and sleep. You are a doctor, aren't you ? So you know full well that to cure a disease, firstly medicine and secondly a diet are necessary ; then the malady will vanish of itself.

There is something else to be said : When falling ill we automatically develop an aversion to material food. Similarly, once we are longing for God, the taste for worldly goods will disappear of itself, and the type of hunger that is necessary will be aroused simultaneously. Nobody can remain hungry. In one way or another one's hunger has to be stilled. Hence remember : "God alone exists. I want peace, I want bliss, so I must do whatever is necessary in order to obtain these." Just as for curing a disease, medicine as well as right diet are required, so also to approach God you must engage in what is helpful for this purpose. If you take medicine but persist in eating the wrong type of food, will you obtain good results ? Once you start advancing along the path leading to God, all the rest will of itself be settled. First of all feel convinced and then resolve firmly : "I must walk in His direction !"

Dr. Pant : To realize supreme bliss, which is the best path to follow -- that of knowledge, or of action or devotion ?

Mataji : Whichever is most dear to anyone, whichever he likes best. Keep on walking and everything will fall into place. None of these

paths is independent of the others. From the outside it may appear that some are inclined towards devotion, others towards knowledge and yet others towards activity. But in actual fact the three exist side by side. For instance, suppose you decide to visit a temple. Why do you go there at all? To have *darsana* of the Deity. Thus, first of all you have knowledge that there is a temple with an image of a certain deity at such and such a place. Next you wish to behold the image because of your devotion for it. Finally, in order to have *darsana* you have to walk to the temple -- this is action. Hence knowledge, action, devotion exist side by side.

Again, look, those who take the path of knowledge inquire into what is Real, saying: "not this, not that!" But they also have to act and be devoted: just as some aspirants are devoted to their chosen Deity, so those who advance through enquiry have equal faith in knowledge. To discriminate between the Real and the false is their work. Thus there is knowledge, devotion and action all together.

Furthermore, consider: whatever work you accomplish will undoubtedly have a result. Nothing is wasted. To attain to peace and bliss you must resort to some action or other. Never keep your mouth empty nor take a breath uselessly. (Laughing.) Just as you chew betel while working in your office, so repeat God's name or mantra with each breath. Simultaneously with your worldly duties the Lord's work has to be done.

* * *

In the short interval between the Bengali and Hindi recording, I took the opportunity to say: "Ma, it was my desire to ask you about the real import of the Guru concept and about the potency of mantras."

Mataji: It is not possible to discuss profound subjects in such a short time. These matters cannot be explained within three minutes.

I: What is the difference between a Guru and a Sadguru?

Mataji: Guru means Sadguru.

I: But I believe the Sastras make a distinction between the two?

Mataji: Do you know what the difference is? Like someone starts teaching others only after having passed all his exams, while many who are still studying are teaching others at the same time.

* * *

When the Hindi recording was completed, we got up. All of us performed our devoted *pranamas* to Ma. None of us could have foreseen that Ma's songs and words would be so beautifully recorded. Full of happiness, Sachibabu fell at Ma's feet, saying: "Ma, just as you have responded to our request, from now on we shall obey all your promptings."

Sri Anandamayi Ashram,
Varanasi, July 28th 1949.

This morning, while discussing other topics, Professor Sudhir Gopal Mukherji asked: "Ma, I am eager to hear how exactly the first manifestation of Guru-power took place within you."

Mataji (laughing): 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 *sadhana* did take place for this body: for some time it assumed the role of a *sadhaka* and all the conditions and stages that are traversed by a *sadhaka* were fully manifested in this body.

Do I not repeatedly say: "I must now go and see how Nani* is? 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 *sadhana* took place in a somewhat similar fashion.

Sudhir Gopal: We are very keen to hear from you how your *sadhana* started and how your initiation took place in due course.

Mataji: This body's father was very fond of singing *kirtana* and religious songs. They included

*Nani was the wife of Sri Sudhir Chakravarti. She had come on a visit from Calcutta and fallen ill.

songs of various religious sects, such as *Saktas*, *Vaisnavas*, etc. He slept very little and usually spent his nights singing devotional songs. When this body was about four or five years old it asked him one day: "Baba, what is the purpose of singing the name of Hari?" He replied: "By calling out to Hari one comes to see Him." I again asked: "Is Hari very big to look at?" He replied: "Yes, very big." "Is He as big as this field here in front of us?" "Much, much bigger. Why don't you call Him, then you will be able to see for yourself how great He is."

This was how I began to sing His Name. But right in earnest the repetition of the Name commenced when Bholanath took me to Astagram after our marriage. In the house where we stayed there was another person who was Bholanath's friend. Although I was always heavily veiled, he used to address me as "Ma". He let us occupy the room in which his own mother had breathed her last.

In early childhood I had been taught by this body's mother to take great care of the tulasi plant. So on arrival in Astagram I prepared a *tulasi mancha** in the courtyard. Daily I used to place flowers and lights there in such a way that people would come and perform their *pranamas* reverently at the *mancha*. It was due to this *mancha* that preparations for holding a *kirtan*

*Tulasi Mancha A raised platform with a tulasi plant in the centre.

in front of it were made subsequently.

When the *kirtan* started I was engaged in nursing a patient. But on listening to this *kirtan* for some time, I fell down as if in a faint. In this condition there was no longer any question of modesty or purdah. Before this I used to veil myself heavily and conduct myself with the utmost propriety.

On seeing my condition everybody thought I had a fit. They raised me up and sprinkled water on my eyes and face. Just as perspiration trickles down a human body in an incessant stream, so blissful ecstasy (*ananda*) oozed out of every pore of this body. It appeared as if I had become one with the *kirtan*.

But if people become immersed in ecstatic emotion while singing *kirtan*, this is of a different nature because it is connected with *kriya* (action) and hence there is a touch of worldliness about it. But this body's condition was not due to any *kriya*. So worldliness was entirely excluded in this case. Furthermore the experience of *ananda* was somewhat different -- of its own right.

After my being in such a state of *bhava* * during the *kirtan*, the singing of the name of Hari was continued regularly, whereas previously this used to take place only occasionally, not according to a fixed routine.

* *Bhava* Spiritual ecstasy, generally emotional in nature. *Bhavas* usually occur on elevated stages of the path of *bhakti*.

At this point of the conversation, Sri Sri Ma was being called for Her meal. So we performed our *pranamas* and stood up to go. It was decided to continue this discussion in the evening.

At about 5 p.m. I went to the Ashram. Ma had not yet descended but a little later She came downstairs and sat down in the courtyard. Sudhir Gopal, raising the topic of the morning, said: "The reason for asking questions regarding Sri Sri Ma's *diksha* is that among us Hindus there is a tradition that without a Guru no religious practice can be started. But exceptions can be seen in the cases of Sri Aurobindo and yourself. Although Sri Aurobindo did in fact resort to a Guru to start with, he progressed far beyond the Guru to a much higher state of achievement. He himself said that he reached this state only by total surrender to God. He further declared that if someone is really deeply anxious to receive the grace of God, then it is not difficult to obtain it. Therefore, even if the Guru is not fully enlightened this need not prove an obstacle. On the other hand, even if the Guru is fully enlightened but the disciple has not the right foundation or is unable to surrender entirely to God, then the Guru cannot provide substantial assistance though his own knowledge be complete.

Mataji: Well, do you think that as soon as you depend entirely and with your whole being on God, His grace starts functioning in you, or do you say it is due to the Lord's grace that you are able to surrender to Him

completely? I pose the question: when the earth is struck with a crowbar and the crowbar penetrates into the earth, is it due to the force of the blow or because the earth yields a path to the penetration of the crowbar?

Sudhir Gopal: It is difficult to say which comes first and which afterwards. It seems that both occur simultaneously.

In any case, apart from Sri Aurobindo, in your case also there was no sign of any Guru. This is why I wished to ascertain whether your spiritual progress was due to taking on a Guru or did it come about without any Guru whatsoever?

Would you please continue from where you left off in the morning when you said that during *kirtan* your body would fall unconscious.

Mataji: Yes, after that incident this used to recur off and on.

Near where we lived there was a house belonging to a family of carpenters. They used to build boats. During the day they worked hard but after sunset they would sing *kirtan*. Although their house was invisible because of a bamboo-grove, yet the sound of their *kirtan* reached my ears. Whenever it was heard this body would react sharply. Later it came to pass that whenever I merely glanced in the direction of that house, everything there seemed to brim over with supreme bliss. And even though there was indeed a blissful relationship due to their *kirtans*.

There was a little boy in the carpenter's

house who used to come to me. Whenever I asked him to sing *kirtan* he would dance and sing simultaneously. This body had the *kheyala* to make him dance while he was singing. When doing so he used to go into a *bhava*. When his mother saw this *bhava* she got frightened and told me: "He is still a child, please do not make him dance when he sings Hari's name". Since his mother objected to it, the boy was no longer asked to dance. But whenever he met me he would shout loudly: "*Hari bol, Govinda bol!*"

Anyway, this body continued to become unconscious when hearing various *kirtans* at various places. At first efforts were made to keep this secret. But even these efforts were of short duration; because when the flood of *bhava* was really roused, then all efforts to suppress this were of no avail. The fact that I had these *bhavas* during *kirtan* was a source of amusement to some people. I would make light of their criticism by appearing to join into their amusement. For this reason nobody tried to prevent these *bhavas* during *kirtan*. In fact, with the exception of Bholanath, people were hardly aware of what was taking place. Moreover, I at that time had the *kheyala* that my *bhavas* should remain hidden as far as possible from the outside world.

Subsequently an accomplished singer named "Gagan Kirtania" came with his party to perform *kirtan*. It was arranged that after the *kirtan* they would have a meal before departing. Thus various

dishes had been prepared for them in advance. When the *kirtan* started I beheld two boys of tender age dancing in the midst of the *kirtan*. The funny thing was that this body also took on the role of a child and assumed the restless behaviour of a child. It repeatedly ran to the kitchen to see whether the food was all right, and again ran hurriedly to the place of the *kirtan*. In this manner this body was hastening hither and thither. Although the chief objective of all this moving to and fro was to make sure whether the food was all right, yet there was no real precaution taken to see that the food was indeed safe.

A wooden couch had been placed near the *kirtan* for us to sit upon. This body would sit on the couch and time and again hurry to the kitchen like a small child. In the course of all this nobody noticed when exactly this body came to lie motionless on the couch. When the *kirtan* ended and it was time for the singers to be fed, it was discovered that a dog had entered the kitchen and spoiled everything that had been cooked. On seeing this, Bholanath became furious and started looking for me. After much searching he found me lying unconscious on the couch. On calling out to me he realized that I was indeed senseless. On whom could he then vent his anger? In the meantime the people next door quickly cooked fresh *kitchuri* and other things and somehow fed the singers. But I remained unconscious during the whole night. When I did not come to

my senses even the next day, Bholanath called the singers together and resumed the *kirtan*. When the *kirtan* had been continued up to 3 p.m. my consciousness returned.

From that time onwards people would look upon this body's *bhavas* as a form of hysteria. Bholanath duly wrote to the parents of this body. They also became anxious on hearing the news. But this body's mother did not come to see me. She felt that if these *bhavas* were a help on the spiritual path, why should she take a wrong step in being an impediment to it? Thus pondering over the matter she did not visit me even after learning of my so-called illness.

Later on, when coming to Bajitpur after leaving Vidyakut, (of course quite a lot is being omitted that happened in between) then also this sort of *bhava* occurred again and again. Bholanath always used to take precautions to keep this secret from neighbours. When *kirtan* was sung I was not allowed to go outside. The doors of the small room in which I was staying were kept shut. I used to roll along the floor of that room. However, in spite of all precautions, a rumour spread that Ramani Babu's (Bholanath's) wife had been dancing during *kirtan* with a drum on her shoulder!

Just at about this time the Gurudeva of the local sub-registrar's mother arrived. He was a worshipper of *sakti* and used to wear bright red robes. On being told of my condition he expressed the wish to see me. So Bholanath took me

to his residence. There I was made to sit beside an image of Siva. Since arriving at Bajitpur this body used to regularly repeat the Name while sitting in a yogic posture. At such times various *bhavas* used to pass through this body. For instance, suppose I was seated repeating the Name, I would spontaneously start to spin round, still locked in a yogic *asana*. So when being made to sit near the Siva Linga, this body automatically assumed yogic postures and spun round once or twice. The Gurudeva observed this. Thereupon he kept on sending me messages through others to the effect that he was a *Siddha Purusa* (perfected soul) and, if I so desired, could be instrumental in communicating to me the direct vision of God. I merely listened to all these messages.

During his next visit to the house of his disciple, he told Bholanath that he wished to perform a *puja* in our house. When I heard of this, I pointed out to Bholanath that if the Guru was coming to perform a *puja*, he should also be offered a meal. Bholanath thought this very appropriate. So he invited the Guru to a meal and made all necessary arrangements. But owing to his work in the Court he could not remain at home during the visit. As Bholanath was leaving for the Court, I asked him: "I am remaining alone here, what should I do when the Guru comes?" Bholanath replied: "What can you do? Give him what he asks for and do as he tells you." Although this body was a very young housewife, yet Bholanath never felt any

qualms in leaving me alone. Even when going on tour to the district, he never arranged for anyone to stay with me. For this reason people used to speak ill of him, but Bholanath had seen enough of my bearing to realize that this body was fully capable of taking care of itself.

So in due course, after Bholanath's departure, the Gurudeva arrived. I had previously kept ready everything that was necessary for his *puja*. So he started on his worship, and I was busy cooking the food. At the conclusion of his *puja* he called me. I veiled myself and came and stood in front of him. He asked me to sit on the *asana* (carpet) of the *puja*. I complied as I had been told by Bholanath to do as the Guru requested. When I was seated on the *asana*, he asked me to perform the *achaman*.* As this body was not in the habit of doing *puja* or any other ritual, I asked him how exactly I was to perform *achaman*. He sat on his stool and showed me with his hands how to do it. Now it so happened that as soon as this body was seated on the seat for *puja*, its behaviour suddenly changed completely. The correct posture for *puja* was automatically assumed. There was then no question of shyness or modesty. My hands also started performing certain *kriyas*. On beholding all this the Gurudeva became frightened and at once asked me to get up from the *asana*. This is why

*Achaman Preliminary purification with water before performing any ritual.

it is said that if something is genuine, there is nothing to be feared. Even if you fling it into flames, it will not burn; even if you throw it to the tiger he will not be able to swallow it. However this may be, just then Bholanath returned and the Gurudeva, after having his meal, departed.

On his next visit to the town he again wanted to see me, so Bholanath brought him to me. He started talking of various subjects, including how he had attained to perfection by worshipping the Goddess Bagala* and another Deity as well. Now it can often be seen that when one lives in the shelter of Truth, the power of Truth automatically manifests. This is what happened on this occasion. As soon as he mentioned that he had achieved "*Bagala Siddhi*" this body retorted with extreme vehemence: "What? You have attained to *Bagala Siddhi*? This is a complete lie!" Thereafter the actual facts of how he had gone wrong in his efforts on each and every occasion were loudly divulged through this mouth. On hearing all this the Gurudev became bewildered. Bholanath kept on asking me to keep quiet. For fear that someone might hear what I was saying he shut the doors. But what was the use of crying: "Shut up! Shut

* *Bagala* One of the ten *Mahavidyas*, forms of Devi in which She manifested Herself to Siva. *Siddhi* means Realization, fulfilment. Also occult power gained by yogic practise.

up!" Whatever is meant to happen through this body is bound to come about. Bholanath had on previous occasions tried many times to stop me by force, but to no avail. So then the Gurudev was compelled to confess to this body that he had not got any *Bagala Siddhi* or any other *siddhi*, but he wanted to know from this body what he had to do in order to attain to it. The funniest part of the story is that, as soon as he asked this question, this body at once furnished him with the complete details of the mantras and methods of worship required by him.

Just now something else comes to my *kheyala*, so I shall tell you about it. Quite often nobody was allowed to touch this body. But the reason for this restriction was not understood by people. This was enforced because they did not possess the power to bear it. What happened once?

There was a young man in Bajitpur. He was married but had no children. This is why his father wanted him to marry again, but the boy had no wish to do so as he wanted to remain with his first wife. When his father continued to press him on the subject, he finally resolved that when I (Ma) would get up from my *asana* after *puja* he would touch my feet and mentally pray for a son. But at that time it was forbidden to touch my feet. Therefore after consulting Bholanath, he resolved to offer his mental prayers while touching my feet. So one day as soon as I got up from *puja* he came and

touched my feet. He at once fell down unconscious and therefore could not offer the prayers as decided. Hour after hour passed but he did not return to his senses. Bholanath became all right. The young man was a Government Treasury worker and Bholanath's friend. When after a long interval he regained consciousness, he said it was impossible to describe the blissful ecstasy he had been plunged in all that while. Even though he had been unable to pray for a son as planned, yet because it had been in his mind while touching me, he later did have children.

Previously I mentioned that ever since coming to Bajitpur I had the *kheyala* to perform *japa* regularly day by day. The room occupied by me was always kept spotlessly clean. Care was taken to see that there was no direct contact between the room and even a single blade of grass outside. In the evening burning incense used to be taken round the room from outside, since it was veritably a temple in which the Name was daily being recited. But so far no initiation had taken place. Even though every evening I sat down to do *japa* it was nothing else but just "*Hari bol*". Whatever state this body had already reached at that time had been brought about by virtue of the Name.

One day Bholanath said to me: "We are *saktas** why do you always repeat "*Hari bol, Hari bol*" ? This is not fitting." I replied: "Then what

*Sakta Worshipper of sakti.

should I chant ? "*Jai Siva Sankara, Vom Vom, Hara Hara*" ? This body did not know any mantras, so whatever came I voiced. Bholanath was satisfied and said: "Yes, just recite this!" So from then onwards "*Jai Siva Sankara*" was being recited. But already when repeating "*Hari bol*" this body had spontaneously assumed various yogic postures and this gradually was being intensified. With the repetition of "*Jai Siva Sankara*" it became even more intricate. So many different *asanas* came about of themselves, one after the other -- such as *siddhasana*, *padmasana*, *gomukhi asana*, etc. The strange thing was that while repeating the Name there was a sudden change in this body: yogic postures formed spontaneously and then, with an audible sound in the spinal column, this body would straighten out naturally into a completely upright pose. There was no force or compulsion, no uneasiness in this. In such a condition this body could not be moved or bent in any way. It seemed as if this body had been screwed down into this position. Thereafter the repetition of the Name would cease by itself and some kind of absorption (*tanmaya bhava*) ensued. After some time in this state, the Name would be resumed, the *asana* would slowly become relaxed and the body return again to its natural state. Some time passed in this manner. There are many details in this connection that cannot be revealed, and even those that can be, will not all be dealt with now.

So, omitting many things, I shall now speak about the *diksha*. This body's *diksha* took place in the night of *Jhulan Purnima**. In order to see the *Jhulan* festival, many people had dined early and then gone out. Bholanath had also had his evening meal. A hookah was got ready and given to him. He lay down smoking and watching what I was doing. The care with which I had wiped the floor of the room and then sat down in an *asana* seemed somewhat unusual to him. But after watching for a while he fell asleep. Here also, the curious thing is that the *yajna* and *puja* that have to be performed during initiation were spontaneously carried out by this body. The *yajna sthali* (vessel) was placed in front; all the various ingredients necessary for the *puja*, such as flowers, fruit, water, etc. were already there; although not everybody could see them, yet there was no doubt about their actual existence. The *diksha* mantra emanated from the navel and was pronounced by the tongue. Then the mantra was written by the hand on the *yajna* vessel and *puja* and fire sacrifice were duly performed over the mantra, that is to say all the ritual prescribed by the *Sastras* for *diksha* were duly gone through. Later when my fingers were moving to count the *japa*, Bholanath woke up and saw me performed *japa* counting with

*The fullmoon night on August 3rd, 1922.

the fingers neither had anyone taught me how to do it, yet the fingers of their own went through the movements of counting. Bholanath was exceedingly surprised to see all this. But the next day when I went to do *japa* of my own volition, I found everything turning topsyturvey. However, soon this body again entered into the previous state and the *japa* came about of itself. This is how this body became initiated.

Sudhir Gopal : The *diksha* mantra manifested indeed; but did the Guru's manifestation occur?

Mataji : Yes, that also happened.

Sudhir Gopal : Was the Guru in clear evidence (*pratyaksa*)?

Mataji : Yes, that was so.

Sudhir Gopal : Please describe the Guru a little!

Mataji (smiling) : I always say that during childhood this body's father and mother were the Guru. When marriage was performed my parents told me that the husband was now the Guru. So after marriage the husband became the Guru. Thereafter all who exist in the world are this body's Guru. From this point of view I can say that the *Atma* is in fact the Guru, in other words, this body is itself this body's Guru. Furthermore, about *puja* 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. In this way

I have just explained how at the time of *diksha*—flowers, fruit etc, whatever was needed for the *puja* and the *yajna*, everything came out of this body; so cannot the Guru have also issued out of this body? Now you have been told everything that was asked concerning this body's initiation. Do you now understand how the *diksha* took place?

Sudhir Gopal: Yes, I have understood.

Mataji: What have you understood?

Sudhir Gopal: I have understood nothing at all. (Everybody laughs loudly.) I shall ponder over what I have heard and then see. Later I shall question you again regarding this subject.

Nepal Dada (now Swami Narayananda Tirtha): When the mantra emanated from within you, did you know which deity's mantra it was?

Mataji: No; but immediately on receiving the mantra the question arose within me, "Whose mantra is it?" And then quite clearly the reply came from within that it was of such and such a Deity. This is why it is said that once a genuine question arises with urgency from within, it does not take long for it to find a response. But you are not truly receptive. If there is real enquiry there can be no delay in the answer.

Sudhir Gopal: Kusum Brahmachari says, your *sadhana* was no real *sadhana*, because all the obstacles and difficulties that arise from within us when we set out to practise *sadhana* were non-existent in your case.

Mataji: Why should this be so? When the

play of *sadhana* commenced within this body, did it not live with a good number of people? This body resided in the midst of Bholanath's large family. Every type of work was performed by this body. But when this body played the role of a *sadhaka*, it assumed every detail necessary for each particular *sadhana*. For instance, marks on the forehead like *tilak**, *svarupa*, *tripundra*§, all appeared one by one.

There was a man in Bajitpur who later became a judge. He also used to give *diksha*. On being told about my condition he suggested that I should wear a string of beads. In reply I sent a message to ask: "Should the necklace be worn outside or in the mind?" On hearing this he declared there was no need for me to adopt a string of beads.

About the *asanas* that formed spontaneously I have already told you previously. Some people spend a lifetime in acquiring the art to perform one such *asana* to perfection. But when this body became a *sadhaka*, it was seen that one *asana* after another was executed and each of them to perfection. All your questions have now been replied to.

While conversing thus, evening had descended on us. Mataji got up. I performed my *pranama* to Her and returned to my residence.

* *Tilak* Mark on the forehead.

§ *Tripundra* Three curved horizontal marks made on the forehead by the worshippers of Siva and Sakti.

Sri Sri Ma's Departure from Calcutta

Saturday, 22.10.1938

This morning Ma was taken to Belur. I heard Ma did not remain there for long and did not converse with anybody. Bhupati Babu and I waited for Her at Birla Mandir. Yesterday Ma had told us that today She would talk to us about the Dacca Ashram. Further I had learnt that last night Ma had left Her usual bedroom and spent the night where the kirtan had been performed. On beholding Ma lying down there, a large number of devotees had also spent the night in the same place. Although it was large enough, it was not at all suitable for use as a bedroom. As an apology a few thin carpets were spread over the bare floor. Even these were covered with dust from the feet of a thousand men and women. Around those carpets straw had been spread. On seeing the devotees lying on the carpets, Ma exclaimed: "Oho! They are used to sleeping in such comfort at home and here they are lying like this on the floor!" On Ma's instructions some curtains were removed from the stage and spread over the carpets for the devotees to lie on. Ma then warned them, saying: "Wherever this body resides, snakes are known to frequent the place. So you should be careful that while asleep your feet may not touch the straw." Thereafter Ma went all round the place of the kirtan and then lay down in Her place on the dais.

At 10 o'clock next morning Ma came to Birla Mandir. Immediately on Her arrival, Bhupati Babu, Sachi Babu and myself sat down near Her and the doors were closed. Bhupati Babu then spoke to Ma about Dacca Ashram. Ma listened in silence to all he had to say and gave us some advice. When we requested Ma to draw up some rules and regulations for the Ashram, Ma said in grave tones: "You must not expect any orders from me!" She said this in such a manner that none of us dared question Her any further. It appeared that She had spoken thus for our own good, because none of us had the capacity to obey Her instructions to the letter. Had we obtained any orders from Ma by insisting, and later found ourselves unable to carry them out, it would have been we who would have had to bear the consequences. That is why Ma was not willing to give any direct instructions to us.

After talking about Ashram affairs, the question of proceeding to Dacca arose. After some further conversation, Ma said, "All right, try to leave for Dacca to-night". Hearing this we stopped talking and came out of Her room. We went to Naresh Chandra Chakravarti's house and requested him to phone to Dacca the news of Ma starting for Dacca today. He at once passed on the message by phone to his brother Dr. Paresh Chandra.

In the afternoon the sky became overcast and by the evening it started raining heavily. Ma was in Birla Mandir until the evening. Today

was Diwali. I smelt danger in the face of this adversity caused by the weather. But once Ma had spoken the word She would not deviate. Her departure would not be put off merely by inclement weather. Luckily the skies cleared up by 8 p.m.

I was full of joy on beholding Ma as soon as I entered the platform. A large crowd of devotees had come to the station to see Ma off. Those who were accompanying Ma were happy but those who had to remain behind wore a dejected appearance. Our smiling Mother was looking at all this and laughing. There was no change in Her countenance which radiated joy.

As it was *amavasya* (new moon night) there were not too many passengers. We spent the night comfortably and reached Goalundoo early next morning. Sri Ma lay down on boarding the steamer. Later She got up and started talking to people. Those who wanted to seek Her advice in private went one by one into Her room and discussed their problems with Her. This continued until we reached Narayangunge.

Sri Sri Ma's Arrival in Dacca

A large number of people had come to Narayangunge from Dacca to greet Ma. Sor proposed to take Ma to Dacca by car. But finally it was decided to continue by train. From Dacca station I went home with my family.

After breakfast I proceeded to the Ashram. On arrival I found Khukuni Didi taking Ma from the kirtan room to the bathroom. As soon

as she saw me, Didi said: "Dr. Pant has been sent to your house. Bhupati Babu has accompanied him". On hearing this, I did not waste a single moment but returned home to make arrangements for Dr. Pant's bath and meals. In the evening we again went to the Ashram. Ma was in the kirtan room and the ladies were sitting all round Her, so there was no chance of any conversation. In order to allow sufficient time for rest Ma was soon taken to the Annapurna Mandir.

Sunday, 23.10.1938

Today is the festival of *Annakut*. Although arrangements had been made for Dr. Pant to stay in my house, Ma asked him to spend the night in the Ashram. So Dr. Pant expressed his desire to stay in the Ashram for three nights. This morning I heard from him that he would also have his meals in the Ashram. Since this was Ma's wish I had nothing further to say. After arranging for Dr. Pant's bath and while his breakfast was getting ready, news was received that Sri Ma had arrived at my house. I was exceedingly delighted and surprised. Running to the roadside, I beheld Ma sitting in the car. With Her were Didi, Prafulla Ghosh's wife, Naresh Chakravarti and Sisir Guha. When I did *Pranama* to Ma, She enquired about Dr. Pant. I said: "He is having his bath". Ma: "Ask him to hurry up and have his breakfast!" I: "If he learns you have arrived to fetch him, he may want to go with you without break-

fasting. So it seems better not to inform him of your arrival here". Ma agreed.

I left Ma in the car and went to look for Dr. Pant. He was still busy with his bath. I started to wonder what I could offer to Ma. On enquiry my wife informed me that there was not a single fruit in the house. I felt aggrieved not to be able to offer anything to Ma. About a year and a half ago Sri Ma had similarly appeared in my house without notice. That day I was not at home and on that occasion as well nothing could be offered to Her. Suddenly I remembered that I may have one or two myrobalan* fruits in the house. I resolved to place at least a *haritaki* fruit into Ma's hands. I called my second daughter, asked her to fetch a *haritaki* fruit and presented myself with it before Ma. She was then talking to Satya Babu's wife. When She had finished, I said: "Ma, you always seem to come to my house only to embarrass me. I have nothing to offer you except this *haritaki* fruit". Saying this, I placed the fruit at Her feet and did *pranama*. Ma (smiling): *Haritaki* is indeed beneficial. By eating it my digestive trouble will be cured. You have complained that I come to your house only to put you into difficulties, but is it a mere nothing that I come to you of my own accord when I find you cannot come to me?

*Myrobalan (*haritaki*) A stringent, plumlike fruit.

On listening to this smiling rejoinder of Sri Ma, my heart melted with joy and gratitude. There was no such goodness in me by which I could deserve this unexpected grace from Ma. I wondered how much unsolicited grace I had already received from her!

Ma was still waiting at my doorstep in order to take Dr. Pant to Siddheshwari Ashram, so instead of lingering near Ma, I hastened to get Dr. Pant ready for his departure. By this time his bath had been completed and, having received news of Ma's arrival, he was hurriedly gulping down his tea, when Brahmachari Jatubhai entered and told us that Ma had instructed Dr. Pant to eat his full before departure because the midday meal was sure to be delayed. Dr. Pant replied that he would eat sufficiently, but actually it was obvious that he was unable to partake of anything substantial, as in Ma's proximity somehow all pangs of hunger and thirst seem to recede far away.

At Siddheshwari Ashram

Ma now proceeded towards Siddheshwari with Dr. Pant. My relative Jatin Mazumdar and I followed in a horse-cab. On arriving at Siddheshwari Kali Mandir we learnt that Ma had gone to the house of the temple Mahanta.

Seven years ago I had also accompanied Ma to the Mahanta's house. Several years earlier, a Mahatma called Sumeru Ban had performed his ascetic practices here and attained to *siddhi*

(perfection). The present Mahanta also belonged to the Ban Sect. In his house there was a picture of Sumeru Ban Maharaj, which I had seen when I had been there along with Ma. In the courtyard there was a well and a creeper grew up a mango tree. A long standing belief prevailed that as long as the chain did not get immersed in the well water and as long as the creeper remained alive, Sumeru Maharaj would continue to abide unseen in Siddheshwari. I had heard this story on my previous visit.

The Sage of Siddheshwari - Sumeru Ban Maharaj

Now I presumed that Ma must have taken Dr. Pant there to hear and see all these things. We almost ran to the Mahanta's house. On arriving we found Ma standing in the courtyard and Khukuni explaining everything to Dr. Pant. To show him the creeper She took Dr. Pant inside. Ma moved up to the entrance, glanced within and came away again. I also followed Ma. She sat down in the outer courtyard. Some people came forward and offered *Pranama*. Conversation now commenced regarding Sumeru Maharaj. Ma said: "There is a prophecy prevalent here that so long as the creeper along the mango tree is alive and the iron chain is not completely covered by water, Babaji (Sumeru Maharaj) will remain here. Once upon a time all the surrounding places were areas for *sadhana*.

Naresh Babu: This must have been long ago.
Mataji: Yes, quite so. However, even

though all this belongs to the past, the atmosphere of it can still be felt. Grass grows even on top of burnt soil to the extent of hiding it, although the soil remains burnt below it; this is somewhat similar.

Myself: Is this atmosphere you talk of due to the transmission from a particular individual or to the ascetic practices carried out here?

Mataji: This also is due to some *samskara*. The fact that Babaji has stated he will remain here as long as the creeper is alive, shows that Babaji had a desire to be here. Otherwise he could have declared that he is everywhere. Since he has referred to this particular place, it must be understood that he has a predisposition in favour of this very spot.

Naresh Babu: How can this be? He went down into the well and never came up again. And now he says he is still here! How can he still be alive?

Mataji: The story goes that the Babaji travelled to Kashi through the well. When he says he is here, he means he is here in his subtle body. When one has gone beyond birth and death, one can still exist in this fashion.

Myself: Ma, having transcended birth and death, does one still exist in an ethereal body?

Mataji: The ethereal body also perishes. All the same supermen (*mahapurusha*) quite often assume special forms. This is due to their inherent disposition. Yet, some even after assuming a particular form can remain immersed

in Supreme Being. Again, the simultaneous existence in a formlessness is also possible.

At this juncture, Khukuni Didi, Dr. Pant and others arrived and all went to board the car. We learnt that Ma would go to Shahbagh from Siddheshwari. We returned to the Ashram to await Ma.

Annakut at Dakur

On returning from Shahbagh Ma sat in the kirtan room. By noon people started gathering for the Annakut ceremony. Many worshipped Ma's feet with flowers. At the same time there was continuous conversation with Ma. In due course Annakut at Dakur was discussed. Dakur is a place in Gujrat where there is a temple dedicated to Ranchorji. The image is that of Visnu. During Annakut, *bhoga* consisting of 125 maunds of cooked rice is offered in front of the deity. During the last Durga Puja, when Ma had travelled along the river Narmada, She had seen the Annakut celebration at Dakur.

Ma said: "This Annakut is a strange affair. 125 maunds of cooked rice are piled into a large hillock. Everybody stands in front with girded loins, ready for action. When it is time to partake of the *bhoga*, they all run up the hillock, fill their clothes with rice and descend, swinging from side to side with their loads". Ma actually demonstrated exactly how they walked down with their clothes full of rice. We all laughed hilariously.

Ma added: "In order to approach the image

of Ranchorji inside the temple, one has to traverse six courtyards. As soon as a particular courtyard is filled with people the doors are located and nobody is allowed to go outside until *arati*, etc is completed. When we approached the image, we of course did not know anything about this practice. But as soon as we arrived, I felt that the doors would be locked. I at once decided to go back. On seeing me turn round, everybody thought that the Puja ceremonies had not yet been completed, but on beholding the expression on my face, they somehow allowed us free exist.

Naresh Babu: On reaching Ranchorji's image, I noticed a change in Mataji's mood. She was, as it were, trembling from time to time. I then decided that this deity was no common one if it could change Ma's mood to that extent.

On hearing Naresh Babu's words, I looked questioningly at Ma who said with a laugh: "There was no change in my *bhava*; I returned in the same mood in which I had gone there".

It was now past midday and so Ma was taken to Her room for rest and we returned home. After a light meal I went back to the Ashram. The ladies were singing in the kirtan-room. During the time of offering *bhoga* Ma went inside the Annapurna temple and then sat with the kirtan party. After a while Ma started singing with her sweet, bewitching voice: "*Krishna Kan-hey, venu bajaiya, gaua chareya, Hare re, re re...*"

On listening to this song, the scenes of

Sri Krishna's childhood *lila* seemed to appear vividly before my mind's eye. There is a history to the song Ma was singing. Khukuni Didi told me that Ma once said to her in confidence: "One day I saw a large forest. A river was winding its way nearby and a number of people-- I cannot tell how many --but there were very many --kept on singing this song: *Krishna Kan-haya Venu bajaiya*" and following this body who was leading them and sometimes playing hide and seek with them behind the trees". After saying this Ma had sung the song to Didi in the very tune which those people had used. Having heard this story from Didi I had a keen desire to hear this song from Ma Herself. Today, after such a long time, my wish had suddenly been fulfilled. The tune of the song was as fascinating as the meaning of the words.

After singing for a while, Mataji went to lie down in Her room. Now groups of people sat down to partake of *prasada*. This continued nearly up to the evening, just before which Ma was taken to the temple veranda. Although a bamboo barricade had been set up in front of the veranda to keep crowds away from the vicinity of Ma, this was not considered sufficiently strong; so Ma was made to sit inside the temple, near the entrance, after closing the eastern window. Nobody was able to touch Ma but performed their *pranama* by touching the walls of the temple with their foreheads before taking their departure.

Photographing Sri Ma with my family

Tuesday, 25.10.38

This morning I was to take photos of Ma. On the day when Ma had been dressed up as Sri Krishna by Kumaris in Calcutta for being photographed, my second daughter Kanti had been absent due to illness and had cried desperately with disappointment. When Ma got to know this from my wife on the steamer from Goalundo, She had told her, "You can try to take a photo of myself in Dacca". There is always such a crowd surrounding Ma in the Ashram that it is no easy matter to take a photo of Her. I felt so helpless that I approached Didi for assistance. So according to Didi's instructions, after informing Coronation Studio, I had arrived there with my family this morning and was waiting for Ma. Didi had told me she would take Ma there at the first opportunity.

At about 10 a.m. Ma arrived at the studio with Babydidi and a number of others. We made Ma sit on a chair and sat down surrounding Her on three sides. When the photographer made preparations to take the picture, Ma smiled and said: "The *yogakriya* is being performed". I could not understand the meaning of Ma's words, but I had no courage to ask Her. When the picture had been taken, Ma said: "As Kanti had shed tears for this photo, you should take another one of me with her only."

I told the photographer but he had no

more plates ready and sent for more. In the meantime Ma started to speak on various topics.

Dacca, Tuesday, Oct. 25th, 1938.

While the photographer of Dacca was getting ready, Ma related the following :

Radharani's Marriage

Sri Ma remarked smilingly : "A girl has got married". I waited patiently, hoping to hear more, but Sri Ma did not speak. Khukuni Didi said : "Don't you understand ? This time at Mussoorie Sri Ma was married to a certain girl and Ma has named her 'Radharani'".

Mataji (langhing) : The girl has passed her examinations but looks so small and innocent that nobody would believe that she is earning her livelihood by teaching at school. It was the girl's wish to forsake everything and come away with me, but this was not to her father's liking. He does not earn anything and moreover is addicted to the bottle ! So how is his upkeep to be met if he relinquishes his daughter ? Since the father objected, the girl could not accompany me. But she told me, "Ma, perhaps there will be a day in future when I shall not be deterred by any obstacles".

Wednesday, Oct. 26th. 1938.

Today Sri Ma is leaving Dacca. I went to the Ashram very early and found that She had

gone with the girls to bathe in the pond. Dr. Pant had objected to this because of Ma's health but She had pleaded him into acquiescence. On Her return from the pond we did *pranama* to Ma and the girls were treated to *prasada* of various sweetmeats. We also obtained our share.

I was watching the crowd from the temple veranda, when Sisir came and said : "Dada, please go to the veranda of Annapurna Mandir, you will see something unheard of". On reaching there, I beheld Kalachand* going round and round the image of Annapurna inside the temple at a quick pace. No one was allowed to enter the temple except Brahmins. Kalachand was a Kayastha. I had no doubt that it was with Sri Ma's permission that he had entered the temple and was circumambulating the image. So I wished to ascertain why Ma had overstepped the general rule which had been observed for so long. However, I watched for a while and then came down from the veranda. A little later, Sri Ma came out of the temple accompanied by Gurupriya Didi and another lady. Referring to the incident of Kalachand entering the temple, I said : "Ma, what does all this mean ?"

Mataji : You all know that previously a lot was said concerning entry into the temple.

*Kalachand A very senior ashramite who passed away a few years ago at Kankhal after taking *sannyasa*

Many stipulated that since at various other places all caste were permitted to enter, why should not this temple follow suit as well. But here the prohibition for all and sundry to enter the temple is for your own good. There are tombs of several mahatmas below this temple. If you enter the mandir your feet will step on those *samadhis*. Why should you be subjected to the inauspicious consequences of this? For this reason the temple is thrown open to all without distinction only one day every year. All the same, if anybody observes strict brahmacharya he becomes qualified to enter the temple.

Kalachand has been a brahmachari for a very long time and has thereby earned the right (*adhikara*) to enter the temple. He is allowed to clean it but not to touch the images.

Sri Ma and Professor Upendra Gupta

Later Sri Ma came to sit in the kirtan hall and many did obeisance to Her. We sat down near Ma and were eagerly waiting for Her to speak some words of advice. Professor Upendra Gupta was among us. By way of introducing him to Ma, Abani Babu said: "Ma, he is a great philosopher".

Mataji (laughing): Baba, what is called philosophy?

Upendra: What do I know of it?

Mataji: O! You know so many things! You are teaching boys. (Looking at me, Does he not? Is he not a professor?

Myself: Yes, Ma, he used to teach; now he has retired.

Mataji (laughing): So you are an experienced teacher. Tell me, what does philosophy mean?

Upendra: I shall be able to speak only if you ask me to. Why don't you speak?

Mataji: Have I studied anything? You tell us!

Upendra: To speak of something of which one has no knowledge is called philosophy.

Mataji: Can one speak without knowing anything.

Upendra: Although one does not know, one pretends to know.

Mataji (laughing): Yes, this is knowing something without understanding it. But Baba, you have spoken very well indeed.

In order to know Him you must enter into your true nature. But you are dwelling in the realm of constant wanting. Whatever you do produces only more and more want. There can be no peace unless you change from the state of wanting (*abhava*) to your true nature (*svabhava*).

Upendra: So what then should we do?

Mataji: I repeat what I tell everybody: start with your studies! Whatever is due to happen will take place of itself. Look, when children begin to study they usually excel in a particular subject. Similarly when someone starts out on the quest of realizing God, whatever has to be done becomes revealed from within oneself. This is why God is said to be Self-effulgent.

He Himself shows the path that leads to His realization. What is necessary for you is merely to start on the job -- to commence your studies.

Very frequently you complain that your mind is roaming and that you cannot possibly make it steady. But then the mind is restless by its nature. This is why I look upon the mind as a child. Intelligence and Iness (*ahamkara*) are the parents of the mind-child. Just as father and mother coax their wayward children in various ways to persuade them to learn reading and writing, so should you by discriminating with your Iness and intelligence try to make your mind one-pointed. All work must be carried out with patience and single-minded zeal. Otherwise there will be no results. Just as when you want to extract water from the earth you have to dig patiently in a selected spot and not dig a little here and a little there; so also in order to realize God you have to exert yourself for a long time with single-minded devotion and the utmost steadfastness.

Often one can hear it said that however many sins the greatest sinner may have committed, they can all be washed clean by pronouncing Rama's name even once. This is very true indeed, because a single spark of fire can consume more goods than man can ever accumulate. Whether you recite His name or worship Him, whatever you may do to realize God, if you do it with unwavering patience and single-minded devotion, you will find the way to lasting peace.

By clearing the forest you get an open field -- you don't have to create a new field. You often repeat "I -- I" (*aham*) or "I am He" (*soham*), don't you? Do you know what this leads to? It is like the tree and its shadow; if you follow its shadow you get to the tree. Similarly by concentrating on "*aham*" you will come to "*soham*".

Dacca, Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1939.

In the evening I was sitting at home when Amiya Roy came to inform me that Sri Ma had arrived at Dacca. Immediately I started for the ashram with Bhupati Babu. It was raining and the wind was blowing hard. In the ashram I found Sri Ma sitting in the kirtan hall. *Arati* was being performed in the temple. We bowed to Ma in *pranama* and sat down near Her. Ma was looking somewhat emaciated but there was a wonderful radiance in Her eyes and face. While *arati* was going on there was no conversation.

As soon as it was over, Ma asked Bhupati: "Where did you hear of my arrival?"

Bhupati: I heard it from Amulya Babu on the road.

Mataji (to me): Where did you get the news?

Myself: Amiya informed me at my home.

Mataji: In Calcutta I was told that there were two parties at Dacca. If one party were informed, the other one might be dissatisfied. This is why I have come this time without letting anyone know. But God seems to have found a way of spreading the news.

And Ma started laughing.

Trying to ascertain how long Ma would remain in Dacca, Sri Ganesh Chandra Sen asked: "Ma, you are of course always present in Dacca, but for how many days will you be visible here this time?"

Ma (making a play upon words): What is *dhaka* (hidden) remains of course hidden and what is manifest is indeed visible.

Sriman Anath: For how many days shall we see you with these our insentient eyes?

Mataji (laughing): Does the insentient have eyes? Its eyes are of course also lifeless.

Anath: So, how long shall we see you with these eyes of ours?

Mataji: You see whatever your eyes are capable of perceiving. For this body nothing is predetermined. Whatever is to happen takes place. From Calcutta I went to Arjungunge where I had never been before. Where I would stay was not known. Someone mentioned a *dharmasala*, so we went there. On arriving I saw a large hall. People started coming in ones and twos from various places, some from Berhampore, others from Jamshedpur. Then kirtan was performed. It was to continue for six hours, but later it was decided that it should be kept up from sunrise to sunset. Then it was seen that the kirtan went on all day and all night and even beyond that. From Arjungunge we proceeded to Calcutta. Khukuni Didi was with me. I told the others to drop me at Bandel

and go on to Calcutta. This was what happened. The *kheyala* arose to go from Bandel to Naihati. Now I have come to Dacca. From the steamer I wired to Didi my intention to go to Dacca.

A devotee: Will they come to Dacca?

Mataji: Let us see what they do.

Sri Ma was accompanied by Abhaya, Sisir and Ruma Devi. At 8 p.m. Mataji proceeded to Siddheswari to spend the night there.

Ramna Ashram, 17th August 1939

The Necessity of a Sadguru in Spiritual Life

I raised the topic of Sobha Ma, saying: "Sobha Ma maintains that without taking initiation from a Sadguru one cannot get anywhere in religious life. But you don't say so.

Mataji: I too say this.

Myself: But not all the time.

Mataji: Whom do you call a Sadguru?

Myself: Him who has realized the Brahman.

Mataji: Yes, he has been established in the Brahman. Look, one finds a Sadguru after acquiring a great deal of merit. You know, I lay much stress on the repetition of the Lord's name and maintain that everything can be achieved by His name. You must thoroughly understand the spirit in which I assert this.

Look, you teach in a College, but not every body can do so. One can teach in a College only after having acquired the capacity and the necessary degree. But one cannot ignore

someone who teaches A,B,C in a primary school, for this is also not in vain. Because the knowledge of A,B,C is necessary also for B.A. & M.A.

Similarly there are different levels on the path of *sadhana* leading to the knowledge of Reality. A person can only speak from the level he has reached at that time. So on all these levels a Sadguru is relevant. You know this body's ways, don't you? It never discourages anyone. If somebody is told that he can never make any progress without a Sadguru, he may be so discouraged as to remain quite inactive. This is why I always advise constant adherence to the Name. By repeating the Name great yearning for Him will ensue and the keen desire for a Guru will awaken.

Perhaps even after having found a Guru one's longing may not be appeased. Then you may possibly notice that some aspirants move from the shelter of, one Guru to that of another. 'Step-by-step initiation' is also mentioned in the *Sastras*. This is something similar. Guru, mantra, *Ista* are all one. From the worldly point of view one may perceive several Gurus, but in Supreme Truth they are all one. Although there are thousands of waves in the ocean, they are all nothing but water. I behold everything as one; I cannot speak of anything in division.

The essential thing is a real thirst for the Divine to prepare the ground properly. The body is just the soil. If it has been prepared well, then as soon as the seed is sown the tree

will start growing. So as to increase the desire for Truth, to prepare the soil properly, I advise the repetition of a sacred Name.

(Pointing to Herself) For this body everything has happened of itself. Perhaps in one in a million or in a billion everything may take place spontaneously. So under these circumstances, how can I declare that nothing can be achieved without a Sadguru? However, it is preferable to avoid mentioning how it was with this body.

Again, viewing it from another angle of vision, suppose somebody does not have recourse to a human Guru and starts practising the Name or a religious rite. Although it may appear from the ordinary point of view that he has no Guru, I will say that what he does is certainly due to the Guru's prompting. When referring to a Guru we mean God Himself who is the root cause of all thought, feeling and action. In a case like the one just mentioned, I would say that it is the Guru residing in his heart who is inspiring him to engage in those practices. So in this sense you can say that nothing can be achieved without a Sadguru. But the real purport of what people say about the necessity of the Sadguru's shelter is that once you have been accepted by a Sadguru there is no more downfall. For he inculcates divine power into the mantra so that it is never destroyed.

Nevertheless you may find that many aspirants, even after having been initiated by a Sadguru, look for another Guru because their

eagerness to find God is so intense that they cannot place full reliance in their Sadguru. About this kind of thing, I will maintain that their keen anxiety, this having recourse to one Guru after another--even this is due to the will of the Sadguru. Eventually one reaches a stage when the Guru, His grace and all the rest disappears--all is merged in the One. Surely, there is also a state of existence without Guru, is there not?

Myself: How can I tell? I have not yet reached that state.

Mataji: But you have read the *Sastras*.

Myself: Yes, I have previously heard of such things from you.

Mataji: Yes, as soon as the sense of duality vanishes, then such a state supervenes. Who then is whose Guru? Who showers grace on whom?

Myself: Ma, you have previously said that it is only as a result of many meritorious deeds that one obtains a Sadguru. Why then can no special improvement be noticed in oneself even after having been blessed by a Sadguru?

Mataji: Not only as a result of one's good deeds does one secure a Sadguru. His mercy is also without cause or reason. This is why some obtain quick results after being blessed by a Sadguru, while others are faced with delay.

Myself: Is the delay due to the disciple's tendencies and inclinations brought over from previous births?

Mataji: The Guru's power can achieve

everything. He can burn to ashes everything in a moment; He may also cause delay.

Myself: Sobha Ma declares that having once been blessed by the grace of a Sadguru, one attains to liberation within three births. This may be applicable to persons with lesser qualifications. Is this correct?

Mataji: It does not occur to me to reply to this question just now.

The Attainment of the Brahman and Ultimate Fulfilment

Myself: Sobha Ma also says that not more than nine Sadgurus can live simultaneously in the world. It will not do to have one more or one less.

Mataji: Does Sobha Ma say so? But I cannot say anything of the sort. You must consider that there is an infinite variety of experiences in the spiritual world. Everything is possible. In this sense the simultaneous existence of nine Sadgurus is also correct.

Myself: After attaining to fulfilment does not the viewpoint of everyone become equally valid? So why do some speak in a clear and definite way while others hint vaguely at the Infinite?

Mataji: Look, fullness is made up of both the pieces and the whole. When you see some-thing in a piecemeal fashion, how can you have seen the whole? If you want to behold anything properly, you cannot confine it within any boundary.

Myself: Therefore should I understand that not all who have realized the Brahman are fully enlightened? For instance the various authors of our *Sastras* are said to have been knowers of the Brahman and the *Sastras* indicate definite paths to fulfilment--they are not vague.

Mataji (laughing): This can be replied to in two ways: On the one hand it may be said that they have described only their own experiences, so it must be a partial exposition of Truth. On the other hand it may be argued that they have written to educate the public. Thus the authors of the *Sastras* who are supposed to have been knowers of the Brahman may have been fully enlightened or not. Now you have understood, haven't you?

Myself: Yes, I have in a way, but not really.

Mataji (laughing): You are trying to find out who has reached what particular stage, but nothing of this kind of topic will be divulged by this body.

Sri Sri Ma's Words of Assurance.

Pramathanath: Ma, I want to ask you something: Besides our mother who gave us birth, we are told to have another Mother who understands our joys and sorrows, to whom we can submit our unreasonable grievances, who puts up with our egotism and helps us in times of danger and distress--does such a Mother really exist or not?

Mataji: She does.

Pramatha: Then why is this Mother so unattached and devoid of affection?

Mataji: In what way?

Pramatha: Just now you were comforting Rajkumari* with the remark that in family life one has to endure sorrow and bereavement. If someone lives among thorns he is bound to be scratched. What kind of a mother is she who cannot save us from the scratches?

Mataji: Don't you know? You are also the parents of children. You let your children play games because you know this is good for them. While playing they sometimes hurt themselves falling down, or get covered with mud and dirt. But when you scrub and clean them they start crying loudly. Similarly when in your family life you suffer pain and sorrow, remember this is nothing else but your Mother cleaning you of dirt.

Pramatha: But do we understand this? When the mother beats her children they know it is their mother who is beating them. This is why, even when they weep they are crying "Ma!"

Mataji: No, this is not correct. When children cry while being cleaned they resent the discomfort of it. Later they come to understand that their mother has given them trouble in

* Rajkumar Bhattacharjee the husband of Bholanath's niece who had recently lost his wife.

order to rid them of dirt.

Having started on the simile of "children's education, I can also point out that the Mother does not entrust all things to her children in spite of loving them. She carefully puts away articles that are of value, otherwise they might be spoiled by her children. When the time is ripe the mother entrusts those things to her sons and daughters. So there is no cause for despair. Continue to perform your work. If you do not see quick results, remember your labour is not wasted. The Mother is preserving everything and at the right moment will hand it over to you.

Pramatha: So we can rely on the Mother?

Mataji: I assure you can be entirely free from all anxiety. Just go on practising your japa or whatever other spiritual exercise you may have chosen.

Rajkumar: Why do you insist on *nama japa* or similar practices? Our worldly mother does not insist on anything for ensuring the well-being of her children.

Mataji: This Mother is somewhat different from your worldly mother. This Mother wants Her sons and daughters to develop all virtues. They should become endowed with Her qualities and become like Her. This is why She tells Her children to resort to the Name. Besides you can observe that the worldly mother also prevails on her children to take the trouble of studying well so that after education they may be able

to look after their parents' properly. But that Mother wants to mould Her children in her own image. She wishes to inculcate into Her children all Her virtues and qualities, so that these may be revealed to them by their own experience. For these reasons this Mother is somewhat different from the worldly mother.

At these words of confident assurance from Sri Sri Ma everyone present appeared to be relieved. There was a look of joy in their eyes and faces. But how long would this wonderful feeling last? We are not even aware of when the clouds of doubt and disbelief arise and darken our dimly lit horizon.

The Benefit of Sri Ma's Company

The time of our departure had come. Sri Ma said to Rajkumar: "Your way is now clear. With single-minded determination continue to tread this path".

Rajkumar: I wanted to take the spiritual path from the very beginning. It is you who induced me to get involved into family life with all its complications.

Mataji: Good--to get a taste of life in the world has cleared the atmosphere. This is the peculiarity of having approached this body. Had you gone elsewhere many things would have remained hidden within you; but having come to this body everything has become revealed. This is for your good. Is it safe to keep snakes in your caverns? Who knows when they may

raise their hoods? It is far better to extract these reptiles once for all and clear the road for further progress.

On listening to these words of Ma I recalled something that Gopinath Kaviraj had told me. One day he was explaining to me the difference between keeping company with someone beyond the range of the three *gunas* (*gunatita*) and a mahatma endowed with all the nobler qualities (*sattwa*). He pointed out that in associating with such mahatmas one could get considerable help in one's *sadhana*, because by their *sattvic* influence, one's evil tendencies are temporarily subdued, so much so that they don't seem to exist anymore. At that time it looks as if close proximity to these mahatmas has brought much success in one's *sadhana*. But these undesirable qualities have not been completely uprooted, though temporarily subdued, and in due course, given the opportunity, they will awaken once more. Whereas association with Sri Sri Ma, who is beyond the three *gunas* has not at all this effect. The company of such an exalted Being does not stimulate the nobler or baser tendencies at all, because such a Being is completely beyond the attributes (*gunas*) of matter and so does not influence anyone by the qualities of *sattwa* (luminosity, harmony) or *rajas* (ceaseless activity and movement). Quite often it even appears as if there were not only no progress but rather retrogression. This is due to the fact that association with a being beyond the qualities

or attributes (*gunas*) of matter brings to light and may even temporarily enhance suppressed tendencies and inclinations. They rise up with full force only to be destroyed for ever and by their annihilation noble qualities and inclinations are awakened and established for good. But at the early stage a dreadful experience has to be gone through by the *sadhaka*.

The above mentioned words of Sri Sri Ma seemed to vindicate the substantive truth of Sri Gopi Baba's philosophy.

Dacca, August 20th, 1939.

This morning Ma was sitting on the Veranda of the Smriti Mandir surrounded by devotees. Everyone was anxious to hear Ma talk but nobody had any questions ready. At last Pramatha Babu requested: "Ma, please say something!"

Ma: What shall I say?

Pramatha Babu: Whatever you have in mind.

Ma: That is the trouble, there is no mind here. (Turning to me) Baba, what should I say?

I: Whatever you feel inclined to.

Ma: Here, there is no inclination or disinclination.

I: Speak of something that will be of benefit to all of us. (Everybody laughs.)

Abhaya: At Azimgunge you spoke for three or four hours about *diksha*, *samadhi*, etc. Please repeat some of that!

Ma: The reason for so much conversation was that several people had asked various

questions about their personal *sadhana*. This was their own individual affairs. Hence it cannot be given as general advice.

I: Please, tell us something concerning *diksha* (initiation). What exactly is *diksha*?

Ma: Why do you study?

I: To acquire knowledge.

Ma: So I say that just as after completing your studies you do professional work and thus reap the benefits of pension, so also there is a kind of pension to be enjoyed on this path.

I: When Sri Ram Thakur's disciples complained to him in their disappointment: "Baba, we are unable to repeat the Name properly, so what is to be done?" Thakur would reply: "Can the Name be repeated deliberately? The Name comes about spontaneously. Even though you may not be doing anything, the Name is there automatically. If this were not so, what did I bestow on you?" What is the purport of these words of Ram Thakur? What precisely does the Guru give the *diksha*? Even though we have no experience of it, yet a certain action is taking place within us. How is this possible?

Ma: What do you understand by *diksha*?

I: I know nothing myself, I can only repeat what I have heard from revered Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj on this subject. He has said that *Sastras* connotes making a connection between the power of God and the individual power of the disciple. If the disciple can be linked to the current of the Lord's might, then the force of

this current will one day or another lead the disciple to the Supreme Goal. Even if the aspirant makes no effort, the force of the current will gradually draw him towards God--there is no doubt about this. And if he regularly engages in spiritual exercises or worship, he will be able to progress very much faster--it is just like swimming with the current.

Ma: All this is very true, completely true.

I: Very well. So there is no need for us to repeat God's name or do anything in this direction, for in any case we are bound to reach the Goal one day!

Ma: (laughing) But you want to get there quickly, you feel the urgency of it, don't you? So for this reason you will have to set to work.

Didi: While being carried along by the current, you may be held up by some obstacle and come to a standstill.

I: No, Didi, there is no fear of that. Ma has declared that once the mercy of a Sadguru has been won, there can be no more fall from Grace.

Ma: Yes, if a Sadguru has bestowed his Grace, how can there be danger of a fall? Some devotees are of the opinion, "since I have been blessed by the Grace of the Sadguru why should I take the trouble to practise *sadhana*? The Guru will accomplish everything. So I can continue to enjoy my life". Again, someone else feels the intense urge to make quick progress, so he performs *japa* and meditation. There are so many different types. It is of course a fact that

once the timber catches fire, it will in due course be reduced to ashes, *That seed* (of initiation) cannot be destroyed. When a seed is buried in the ground, in some cases the plant grows quickly and in other cases there may be delay. If the soil is well prepared beforehand the plant grows fast, but if not it may be a slow process.

A devotee : Could not some of the seeds rot in the ground ?

Ma : Yes, a few seeds may possibly become rotten in the ground. But even this does not render them useless. After rotting they remain in the soil as fertilizers. Nothing is wasted.

It may happen that some people receive the Sadguru's grace at an early age but for many years are not interested in the spiritual path. Eventually, in old age devotion for God awakens in them. For others nothing may be achieved during the present birth, but in a subsequent birth there may be fulfilment. Is it not said that after leaving the body one has to return and live in another body. This world is a continuous coming and going. Here there is only birth, death and rebirth. But it may also happen that after leaving the body one may never have to return again. For once the fire of the Knowledge of Reality is kindled it can reduce everything to ashes within a split second. Thereafter there is no more coming and going.

I : Ma, it is believed that in order to exhaust one's karma (results of former actions) one has

to take on a body. Can karma not be exhausted without assuming another body ?

Ma : Even when the physical body dies, there are other subtle bodies.

I : Then is it possible to work out one's karma in an etherial body ?

Ma : There are quite a lot of karmas for which a physical body is needed, so one has to be reborn in a new body. But there are other karmas that can be worked out in a subtle body. The ONE is constantly leading human beings towards Himself. Everyone will at sometime or other reach the Supreme Goal because this is man's destiny. To become established in his own true Being is man's inherent tendency (*samskara*).

I : Ma, by *samskara* we usually understand the results that will ensue due to one's previous actions. Has a human being the capacity to perform actions that will enable him to attain to the Supreme Brahman or the Supreme Goal.

Ma : This is why it is said that it is the Guru who out of His Grace leads to that Goal. It is impossible to achieve merely by performing action.

I : When you speak of becoming established in one's true Being, this seems to be the ultimate state reached by *sadhana*. But one also hears of states of existence such a *Sivaloka* or *Visnuloka*, etc., which the power instilled by the Guru into the disciple may subsequently enable him to attain, but beyond which the disciple cannot

proceed. So how can it be that everybody is able to reach the Supreme Goal, which is to be established in one's own Self?

Ma: What you say is also true. Frequently it is seen that human beings become arrested on particular levels. But if a person has the inborn tendency, he may after temporary confinement at one level, proceed higher up. Others may spend age after age in the same state. There are so many possibilities. Is there an end to this subject?

Pramatha: I don't understand all these bickerings over knowledge and worlds after death. I just want to make sure that since you are here as our Mother, do we have to acquire all this knowledge to know you?

Ma: You are a practising lawyer, do you do your work without having studied law?

Pramatha: By what kind of studies have you yourself acquired all this wisdom?

Ma: Leave aside the question of this body!

Abhaya: You are so great that one cannot compare anyone with you.

Ma: I do not ask you to leave aside the question of this body because it is so great. You can ask this body "to go to hell". (Everybody bursts into loud laughter). Do you not frequently call someone an "idiot"? You can ignore this body as an idiot. (Again loud laughter).

Pramatha: This is not what I mean. I must repeat that I want to realize Ma. Now, do I have to acquire all this knowledge in order

to realize Ma or will I automatically obtain all this knowledge by realizing who Ma is?

Ma: By realizing Ma you will have gained everything. Did I not say only the other day that the mother wishes to give everything to her children. It is the mother's sole desire that whatever she possesses should belong to her children.

Pramatha: Indeed, this is very heartening news. I understand this quite well. But Ma, do you know what happens to me when I listen to all these people discussing abstruse knowledge? I start suspecting my own feelings. I imagine these people have stolen away everything and I have been cheated. (Laughter)

Ma: (Laughing) Listen, even though the Goal is the same, the paths taken by different people are of great variety. Some choose the path of knowledge, discriminating: 'Not this, not this! (*neti, neti*); others tread the path of devotion and yet others of dedicated action. But the objective is the same.

Pramatha: I do not relish all these questions.

Ma: When one starts studying and gains a little knowledge, questions are bound to arise. Questions multiply in proportion to the increase of one's knowledge. On the other hand he who has never touched a book does not gain any knowledge nor do any questions occur to him. There is yet another category of individuals who have no problems and therefore no questions.

Pramatha: So it seems that I belong to

this category. (Everybody laughs)

Ma: (laughing) This is quite obvious. (Laughter again) But they do not harbour any suspicion that they have been cheated.

Pramatha: So, in order to realize Ma, we cannot evade all this knowledge?

Ma: See here, have I not pointed out a moment ago that it is the natural disposition of the human being to become aware of the treasure hidden within himself? The true nature of man is to move in this direction. In this natural process he cannot avoid anything. You may have observed the natural flow of water: If water is poured out it starts flowing. Should there be a hole on the way, so long as the hole is not filled entirely, the water cannot flow any further; but as soon as the hole is full, the water resumes its course. Similarly, the individual quite naturally moves towards peace and tranquillity. Along the way he cannot avoid anything that happens to be there, so nothing remains unknown to him. That is why I repeat: set to work. Effort is a necessity. Nevertheless attainment does not ensue due to one's own exertion. By His mercy alone everything becomes possible.

How to Get Rid of Doubt.

Pramatha: Tell me, Ma, how can I get rid of my doubt?

Ma: As soon as He is realized all doubts are resolved. Unless and until your spiritual

power (*chaitanya sakti*) or your Guru are revealed, doubts will not cease.

Pramatha: This is no reply to my question. I repeat, please tell us what we have to do to resolve our doubts.

Ma: Start by putting into practice what you have gained from your Guru. By continuing to do so, His mercy will resolve all your doubts.

Abhaya: This is not correct. Even though you say it, we cannot believe it.

Ma: I never ask anybody to listen to my advice or to accept it. This body merely voices what you evoke from it. However, some people do receive from these words what they are seeking. On the other hand some derive no benefit, since they don't require anything. This is somewhat like this: suppose you have dropped something on the way. Someone coming behind you may notice this but goes on, while someone else picks it up carefully and makes use of it. My words are like this.

How to Still the Mind.

Pramatha: Please tell us how to get rid of our doubts!

Ma: Have I not already told you to start your work with whatever your Guru has bestowed upon you. Quite often it is asked, how can the mind become still through *japa*? Everyone is anxious to have peace of mind, because without stilling the mind *ananda* is not possible. Here is one way to set the mind at rest.

I have already explained to you that Guru mantra and *Ista* are one. To contemplate the Guru or the *Ista* and to perform mantra japa amounts to the same because the Name and the Named are identical. So start by repeating the mantra received from your Guru. During this japa meditate on the image your Guru has indicated to you or on your Guru's photo. Where exactly should you concentrate during meditation? It is good to concentrate in the heart because this is the place where joy and sorrow arise. However, if your Guru has instructed you to concentrate on anyone of the six chakras, (along the meridian of the body as explained in the Yoga Sastras) it is a different matter. You will concentrate in whatever spot that the Guru has indicated. You may have read about the chakras that are situated in different locations of the body, and how each chakra has a different shape and a special presiding deity. This body has not studied anything, but it speaks on this subject because it has actually and quite clearly seen all this. By meditating on these different chakras, various states or spiritual experiences may be the result. But let us leave all this now.

You will start your meditation by imagining your Guru or *Ista* enthroned in your heart. There is yet another reason for concentrating in the heart. If you want to grow a tree out of a seed, you bury the seed under the earth and go on watering it. Due to your care and through the strength of the soil the tree grows

out of the seed. Why do I stress the strength of the soil? Because in order to produce a tree out of a seed, good earth is necessary. Even though the tree grows upwards, its roots remain underground, and it is the roots that constitute the life of the tree. Because it is seen that however many branches and twigs may be chopped off, the tree does not wither since its roots are intact. To enable the tree to grow you water it regularly. This water you pour at its bottom surface, not directly into the roots. The water reaches the roots and helps the tree to grow. Similarly, the roots of this body-tree of ours lie in the head while the branches are down below. The heart is the foundation of this tree and any nourishment given here will reach the roots. For this reason one should meditate in the heart.

A devotee: Where exactly is the heart?

Ma: The heart is everywhere in the hands, in the feet, in every part of the body. Yet, when we speak about the heart we normally understand this place (pointing to Her chest). This is where one should concentrate while meditating.

Now, what should you do when sitting down for meditation? Whether it is the Guru or the *Ista*, whom you have placed on the pedestal in your heart, contemplate His form. But during this meditation you find that your mind cannot remain steady. You cannot keep your mind fixed in one place even for a minute. This is why I advised that after placing your Guru on

His seat in your heart, watch your breath moving in and out. It is this breathing that enables us to remain alive. However different human beings, animals, birds, etc., may be in species and also each creature from the other, in this respect, as far as *prana* (life) is concerned, they are the same. Because they all remain alive by breathing. Hence, enthrone your Guru in your heart and contemplate Him as pervading the whole universe through *prana*, the breath of life. The Guru is all-pervasive. So one should perform japa of the mantra received from the Guru and simultaneously watch one's breathing.

Everybody can do this. But the practice of japa in rhythm with one's breathing should be done on the advice of the Guru. If it is done merely because one has read about it in a book, there is the possibility of the brain becoming over-exerted. All the same, in many cases it is seen that by this practice the japa fits in naturally with the rhythm of the breath. In such cases there is no danger.

For performing puja you have seen how people mould an earthen image and then instil life into it by some special rites. Consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) exists everywhere. It is equally present in every creature (*jiva*) as well as in earth. But because we do not realize that living consciousness is also present in clay, we mould an earthen image and then instill life into it through some special ceremonies. Similarly, enthroning your Guru in your heart, think of Him as pervading

everywhere as the life force (*prana*) and then engage in your japa while watching your breath moving in and out.

The benefit derived from watching the movement of one's breath while practising japa is that the mind becomes somewhat calm. Whether it is a picture or an image, the mind cannot concentrate on it for any length of time. But because breathing implies movement it is a little easier to tie the restless mind to it. In a similar fashion, to make a restless child remain quietly in a room, one has to provide the kid with a toy.

Now consider something else: the waves that arise in water are nothing but water. Yet, because of their movement they appear to be separate. The same substance is simultaneously quiet and in motion, broken into parts and unbroken. This constitutes the ceaseless *lila* of the universe. Beyond that there is a state where there are neither water nor waves. This is the unmanifest (*avyakta*).

If you concentrate on the waves for some time you will find that they are nothing but water. In the same way if you continue for some length of time to carry out your japa while concentrating your restive mind on your breathing or on your Guru in the guise of *prana*, you will find that your mind has become calm, and the consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) that is always present within you becomes revealed of itself. Once this revelation has taken place, there is an end

to doubts.

Another advantage of carrying out japa in rhythm with your breathing is that it can be performed everywhere, at all times. Inhaling and exhaling continues without a break; so all you have to do is to perform your japa in rhythm with your breathing. There is no need to keep a picture or photo in front of you. Besides, people proceeding by whatever path, whether that of devotion or dedicated action or knowledge, can carry this out. To imagine one's Guru to be the life force (*prana*) of all creatures is helpful on the path of knowledge. To enthrone his Guru or *Ista* in one's heart is helpful on the path of devotion; the performance of japa and the like is an aid on the path of dedicated action. So you see, this method of *sadhana* will suit aspirants regardless of the path they pursue.

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In the evening I returned to the Ashram and found Ma seated on a cot on the veranda of the Siva Temple. Speaking to an old man, She remarked: "Baba, do keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth."

The old man: Are my words so very harsh?

Ma: (smiling) Not that. When you keep a piece of sugar candy in your mouth it will melt slowly and keep your mouth sweet. That is to say, if you do not keep your tongue idle but engage it constantly in japa, you will get the taste of its

sweetness. Otherwise a "return ticket" has to be taken--one has to come back again and again.

Addressing another person, Ma said: "Here we are staying in a *dharmasala*, this is not our real hearth and home. If it were, could we be forced against our will to leave it? When the call comes we cannot delay even for an instant, neither do we get the opportunity to make preparations. As we are so we have to quit. This is why I request you to try and follow a path by which you can return to your real home and not have to wander from one *dharmasala* to another again and again.

Pointing towards an aged lady, Ma said: "Ma, with your Gopal remain inside your room and shut the doors. This is the way to peace. One by one you have lost all your teeth, now you are toothless (*bedanta*).^{*} If you cannot stick to your Gopal, you will have to return again and become toothless once more.

Another lady: Ma, I cannot bear the worries and troubles of my household any longer. There is constant unrest.

Ma: No, you are still liking it, otherwise how could you live in it? Once a house catches fire, can one remain in it? One has to run away with great speed. Since you are still living in it, it appears that although there is some trouble, yet you are still fond of your home."

* *Bedanta* -- toothless, & *Vedanta* Philosophy, a play upon words.

Dacca, August 20th, 1939.

Sadek Khan, the personal assistant of the Commissioner called on Ma along with two other Deputy Magistrates. Ma was told that when She had been to Coxbazar, Sadek had been the sub-divisional officer there. Ma told him:

"Baba, just as you receive a pension for working in your job, there is also a pension on this Path. In your present position, however much you may earn, you will never be able to satisfy all your wants. World means *duniya*, i.e. based on duality. Therefore there is happiness and sorrow, light and darkness, virtue and sin: The one is never without the other. Happiness is followed by sorrow and sorrow again by happiness. Therefore you must try to become established in your true Nature. When this is achieved you will find supreme peace."

Then the senior District Magistrate, Manindra Babu arrived. When he was introduced, it was mentioned that he was unmarried and was practising yoga. Ma asked him:

"Baba, so you have not tied a garland round your neck and are practising yoga? Hathayoga or Rajayoga or some other yoga?"

Manindra Babu: Not hathayoga; I practise rajayoga. Previously I could be at it for long hours and liked it a lot; but now, due to laziness, I cannot do very much.

Mataji: Laziness is certainly an obstacle, an enemy. Well, has this yoga that you practise become natural to you?

Manindra Babu: I do not understand it. Often it seems to have become natural to me, yet at other times I doubt whether this is so.

Mataji: Have you learnt this yoga from a Guru?

Manindra Babu: In the eyes of the world I have no Guru, but I know full well that I have a Guru.

Mataji (laughing loudly): Without asking questions, information cannot be elicited.

Wednesday, August 23rd, 1939.

At Dacca Station on the way to Kheora

I had heard that Sri Ma was arriving at Dacca by the Calcutta Mail and departing from the station in a car provided by Bhairav.

There was a large crowd at the station by the time Mataji arrived. She sat down smilingly under a flowering Gol Mohur tree at the end of a platform. Ma addressed the elders, saying:

"The road is long, time is short, keep walking without idleness. You are enjoying the pension earned by your worldly labours, now try to earn a pension also in the spiritual world. Otherwise you will have to return again and again. If you try hard, you can obtain a pension in this very life or at least reduce the chances of having to return many more times. But if you do not work you will be obliged to take another return ticket. Already you have taken so many return

tickets, oh so very many!

Manmohan Babu: We know how to earn a pension in our worldly life. Please tell us how to do so in our spiritual life.

Mataji: If you practise faithfully what you have learnt from your Guru, your pension will be provided.

An old man: I wanted to stay with you but you would not let me do so!

Mataji: Could you have stayed merely because I asked you? You would then have started worrying about your son, your daughter and the grandchildren (Everybody laughs). It is better for you to stay at home and do your work there. Suppose your children wanted to leave home and pursue a religious life, would you not have pointed out to them that if they practised their religion by forsaking you, they would not attain their spiritual goal. Similarly they can also retort that since you have brought them into the world, you should not forsake them now. (Everybody laughs).

The old man: So then tell me please what I should do now!

Mataji: Stay in your house within closed doors. This will be as good as not staying at home. But your children will be satisfied to see you on the premises.

The old man: Is it possible to live within closed doors in a household?

Mataji: Can you live in a dharmasala?

The old man: No, I can't.

Mataji: Can you not convert your house into a dharmasala? I strongly advise you to do so!

The old man: What is the use of promising something which I know I cannot achieve?

Mataji: You mean to say you cannot convert your house into a dharmasala? What else is it but a dharmasala? You presume that you own the house, that your son and daughter are yours -- but when you breathe your last, everything will have to be left behind. Then, where will your house be, where your son and daughter? This is why everybody should understand that he is living in a dharmasala. "Our real home is not here. My son and daughter don't belong to me, nor do I belong to them." How do you feel about thinking on these lines?

The old man: When thinking in this fashion one cannot live a family life.

Mataji: Why don't you relax your hold, stand apart as an onlooker and see whether your household still functions. He who really owns your house and family, He will arrange for everything. Once you can place your trust wholeheartedly in Him, He is sure to run your household very smoothly.

Furthermore, you have not been born with the sole object of living a family life. See what a state you have reached by doing so! Your black hair has turned white, your teeth have fallen out. How much longer will you continue to mistake your role in the comedy of life for the Real?

Listen, it is no good remaining in abject poverty all your life. As it is we live in constant want. No sooner do we satisfy one want, than a new one crops up. Having built one house you then hanker after another, or you wish to replace your old motor car by a new one. In this manner you spend one life after another in the attempt of fulfilling your earthly wants. It is good to call a halt to this incessant wanting. This is why I say, it is no good to remain permanently in poverty, in other words to let constant wanting be your second nature. It is much better to strive towards redeeming your life (*prana*).

The old man : By '*prana*' do you mean the act of inhaling and exhaling ?

Mataji : Yes, we talked about this subject only the other day. As the breath (*prana*) He resides within each creature. He is the Life of all lives (*praner prana*), the supreme Life (*mahaprana*). Ever remain in His presence. At all times repeat His name with every breath. You will realize everything in this way. Creation, preservation, destruction; the paths of spiritual enquiry, of action, of devotion are all contained in this process. The sense perceptions, such as sight, taste, smell, etc; the individual, the world, the gods, the One with attributes and devoid of attributes, are all embraced in this process.

The world is manifested as the *prana* (Life force) in waves. This is *Prakriti* (Nature). One must rise beyond this Nature. Just as still water can be reached by pursuing flowing waves, so Supreme

Life (*mahaprana*) can be realized by performing *sadhana* with every breath (*praner sadhana*). This kind of *sadhana* can be practised in all circumstances. God Himself is present as the breath of life. Nothing can be achieved without breath control. What I said about sitting in one's house with the doors shut means just this. To withdraw the senses from their objects of enjoyment means to close the doors. Otherwise, what would be the use of sitting in one's room within closed doors ? (Smiling) You should partake of several different preparations when taking your meal; then only can your intake be increased.

Pramatha Babu : Ma, please make sure that this is done by us !

Mataji : What does partaking of several different preparations mean ? *Japa*, meditation, reading Scriptures or religious books one after another, so that you can devote more and more time to this. Should you be unable to perform *japa* beyond a certain length of time, turn to reading spiritual books or listen to talks on spiritual subjects or to kirtan. This is what is meant by partaking of several food preparations.

The old man : This seems to be very difficult.

Mataji : Do you want to set to work or do you just want to eat and drink and sit idle ? Can you afford to behave in this manner ? How is it possible to earn your pension if you do not work at all ?

Pramatha Babu : Why does not the Mother prepare food and feed the children ?

Mataji: When will She do so? When they really pray to Her to prepare food for them. Rely on Her entirely like an infant and you will see that She will make all necessary arrangements.

When grown-up children request their mother: "Ma, please cook our meals and feed us!" The mother may then turn round and say: "Why should I? Can't you cook for yourself? Or else get married so that your wife may cook for you!" (Everybody laughs loudly).

As the time of departure of the train was nearing, Sri Ma stopped talking and Bhupati Mitra took the opportunity of asking Her some questions concerning the Dacca Ashram. I heard Ma reply:

"I have nothing to say on this subject. You should get together and decide whatever is best for you. If the Ashram belonged to me, perhaps I might lay down certain rules and regulations. But there is nothing that can be called my own. I did not even decide on the site where the Ashram should be built. It is true that I used to come to this place from time to time before the Ashram was built. Therefore Jyotish (Bhaiji) thought it was my wish to establish an Ashram here. Actually those that had in the past performed their spiritual practices in that place used to take me along there. This is why I say that I have nothing to elaborate on the subject of Ashrams. Carry out whatever you think best. Those who gave the inspiration for building the Ashram are looking after it, and

will continue to do so".

29th August, 1939.

Sri Sri Ma's Ashram at the village of Kheora was ceremonially inaugurated on Tuesday, August 29th, 1939. From there Sri Ma visited Sultanpur, Comilla, Chittagong, Vidyakut, etc. and eventually landed at Dacca for a day only, on Sept. 13th, 1939. On hearing this, I at once went to the Ashram. There, a brief conversation concerning Sobha Ma's meeting with Ma at Comilla ensued.

Tatwa Jnana (Knowledge of the Real)

I asked Ma, "To have a genuine desire and to stimulate a desire is surely not the same thing. I at first misunderstood what you were saying. I noticed another thing: whenever you asked Shobha Ma a question on any essential truth, she would reply without any hesitation so that one could not help being impressed or amazed.

Mataji: When a subject is discussed, it is better not to refer to any particular person and whatever I say now should also not be construed to refer to any particular person. You should specially keep this in mind!

You were talking about answers to questions on essential truths; do you know how this takes place? Even in the material world you may have noticed that when someone acquires special proficiency in any particular subject, he can talk at length on other similar subjects.

If he is thoroughly acquainted with a certain aspect of some branch of knowledge, he can talk on other branches in a balanced way. The same applies to the knowledge of essential truths.

Knowledge (*jnana*) may supervene in three different ways. One possibility is to acquire knowledge by the study of Scriptures. Another way is to have certain inner experiences during these studies. As one progresses and has more and more experiences, one's understanding of the Scriptures starts undergoing all kinds of changes. These changes can be of endless variety.

There is yet another kind of knowledge which is not based on the study of Scriptures and the like. This is Self-revealed. Just as the juice of ripe fruit flows of itself so this knowledge reveals itself. These three types of knowledge just mentioned cause different kinds of *bhava* (attitude of mind and heart) and different behaviour. By observing the attitude of mind and the conduct of persons who have acquired knowledge, it can be understood whether their knowledge is based on the Scriptures or on their own inner experience.

The same applies to *samadhi*. People frequently say, "so and so goes into *samadhi*". So I should like to ask what are the characteristics of *samadhi*? Only by watching the symptoms of the body one cannot decide on the type of *samadhi*. Someone may have closed his fists and it may be impossible to open them even by force. In another case perhaps one hand is

lying crosswise on the other. In a third case, may be, the feet are crossed, or else both hands and feet are static in a crossed position. But just by noticing all this one cannot know whether it is a *samadhi*.

I: Ma you made us understand at Navadvip that if someone by the force of some *bhava* closes his fists in the intensity of feeling and loses outer consciousness, then this is not a case of *samadhi*. If one tries to hold on to any one *bhava* by force this may happen. Here desire and passion are still present, so it cannot be termed as *samadhi*.

Mataji: Yes, but do not belittle such a state. It is no mean achievement to curb all worldly thought and concentrate only on a single type of *bhava*. By holding on with intensity to this *bhava* for some length of time, one can slowly proceed towards fulfilment. You must have observed food being cooked in steam. This process is somewhat similar. If one notices that while boiling something in steam, the steam is not being dispersed away, then one understands that the food will be boiled on its own, and the more it is boiled the more will its colour change. Likewise, if by forsaking all other thoughts, someone remains absorbed in one particular type of intense feeling (*bhava*) then he is gradually transformed both within and without. By remaining in such a state for some length of time, he will eventually attain perfection (*siddhi*).

I: Does one retain any knowledge of the

outer world when in a state of *samadhi*? Once, when explaining to us the state of *samadhi* you said that, supposing you were conversing normally and felt the urge to answer a call of nature; then suddenly a state of *samadhi* supervened and you lost consciousness of this. Three or four hours may have passed in such a state. Later, when you returned to your normal condition you again felt the call of nature with the same intensity as before the *samadhi*, not more, not less. But during those three or four hours that had elapsed in *samadhi*, did you retain any knowledge of the outer world?

Mataji: You have referred to the urge of nature calls. During *samadhi* bodily urges are in abeyance. Everything is thrown up and one merges into Oneness. Later after having gradually become completely still, the previous state may again be resumed. This may be repeated several times. You may perhaps have noticed that I went to the toilet. There the state of *bhava* supervened and all outer things were forgotten. Later, when the ecstasy became subdued, I may have relieved myself, but subsequently on a return to the *bhava*, outer things were stopped.

I: Ma, you have described what was happening inside your body. What I should like to know is this: Suppose you are lying in a state of *samadhi* and we start crying in fear because your *samadhi* does not seem to end. Would you in your state of *samadhi* be aware that we were weeping?

Mataji: In that state there is no question of duality. All is merged into ONE. Everything is

contained in the One -- the fragments and the whole exist simultaneously just like water and its waves.

I: Ma you said that knowledge can come about in three ways: through a study of scriptures, through a combination of study and inner experience, and through direct vision. Can somebody who has not attained to any of these types of knowledge, take part in discussions on the essence of things? Suppose he remembers his former birth, can he give instruction on spiritual truth?

Mataji: The remembrance of previous births can be of very many kinds. There is infinity in everything. Somebody may be able to tell about his father, mother, country, and so on of his previous birth. He may relate several incidents which can be proved to have actually happened. Others may have retained the knowledge acquired in a previous birth. Suppose someone has by spiritual practices attained to a certain realm (*loka*) and become closely connected with its Gods and Goddesses; he may then be reborn retaining the knowledge of all this, and be able to converse on vital matters of truth in accordance with it. How can one explain the different kinds of states that may be attained? Everything is of infinite variety.

At this stage there was an interruption to Mataji's talk as many ladies had come to perform their *pranamas*. The small room could not accommodate all the people, so Ma went to

the Kirtan Hall. There I asked :

"Ma, some people believe you to be totally perfect. Yet they cannot understand why you do not always answer their questions to their satisfaction. Why is this so ?

Mataji : (laughing) Look, you say, whosoever is completely perfect, why should he not be able to answer all questions at all times ? Actually if somebody is perfect in all respects, he is able to divulge all truths, whatever anyone may think. But it may also happen that he does not like to hurt the feelings of anyone present. Then again he may adapt what he says to the grasping capacity of the people present. There are various aspects to this problem. But for this body there is no confusion : whatever has to happen is happening. This body has no particular specified mood (*bhava*). At times certain truths may be voiced by this body, but it is not at all concerned whether it satisfies people or not. At other times this body does not like to speak in any way that would hurt someone's feelings. Whatever is meant to happen does happen through this body. Where is the confusion in this ?

I : Everything is confusing. (Everybody bursts into loud laughter).

Mataji : If someone believes that I at times do not reply because I am unable to do so, why should I mind it ? I have no objection to anything you may say about me.

I : Well, Ma, what is the harm in there being a bit of ignorance together with perfection?

Do not Knowledge and ignorance together make up wholeness ?

Mataji : Of course, there may also be a bit of ignorance within perfection, but do you know in what way ? This slight ignorance is completely under the control of the Perfect One, whereas the ordinary human being is subjected to ignorance. One who is perfect is not subservient to anybody or anything.

A number of similar subjects were then discussed. In the evening many visitors came to the Ashram. Manindra Babu, the Deputy Magistrate, asked some questions on the present state of the country. He said : "Ma, where will the oppression and injustice that can be observed in our country, end ? The nation seems to be heading towards destruction. What is the means to save it ? I do not want to say anything about myself, but what can be done to save the country or the nation ?"

Mataji : This is just the present way of this country. Such is the world -- *duniya*, based on duality. There is bound to exist side by side joy and sorrow, truth and falsehood, war, dissention. At times there is peace, then again upheaval : like the waves which continuously rise and fall.

You have said, you do not seek anything for yourself, but this is not quite correct. You have identified yourself with the country so that its travails have become your own. Thus whatever you say about the country is also what you say about yourself. If you can merge

yourself in something still bigger, such as the whole world, you will come to realize that these wars and dissensions are all part of the Almighty's *lila*. Sorrow and disaster come into being and are again driven away. It is He who is awakening in you the intense desire to change the state of affairs. Because He now wants things to change He has aroused these feelings in you and in many others. If you look upon everything in this detached manner nothing will upset you anymore.

Mataji continued to converse in this way until late at night.

The Benefit of Satsang

Towards the middle of December 1939, Sri Sri Ma arrived in Calcutta from Navadwip and eventually took up residence in the newly built house of Sri U.C. Banerjee in Southern Avenue. In spite of being very busy with my eldest daughter's wedding, I used to visit Ma daily.

Monday 17-12-39

In the afternoon I found Ma surrounded by a large crowd. She asked an old gentleman who was seated near Her to tell a story. Later I came to know that he was Sri Revati Mohan Sen a well-known kirtan singer and disciple of Srimat Vijai Krishna Goswami. He thus narrated the following story :

"Sant Kabirji often used to go out in disguise. One day he was dressed as a labourer when a

wealthy man asked him to carry a load for him. He inquired what payment he would take. Sant Kabir replied: "I have no demand, I accept what anyone likes to give". At this reply the gentleman became somewhat irritated and said: "Just come along with the load and I shall give you whatever I please". Sant Kabir complied without further argument.

While walking along, he said to the gentleman: "Even though I am a labourer, I can foretell how long people will live".

The gentleman replied with an unbelieving voice: "Well, then tell me how much longer I shall live!"

Sant Kabir replied: "Oh, only one *danda* (24 minutes)!"

The gentleman contemptuously rejoined: "All right, we shall see! I will keep you with me until the truth of your statement can be verified and if you have lied, I shall punish you accordingly!" Sant Kabir said: "So be it."

Although the gentleman was doubtful about the labourer's words, he became very perturbed. Whoever can be unshaken at the imminent prospect of his death? On reaching his home, he said: "Well, is it true that I have only 24 minutes to live?" Kabir replied: "My words never fail. You have only a few more minutes to live. However, I want to give you a piece of good advice: When after death you are taken to the abode of *Yama* (the Lord of Death), you will be asked whether you wish to enjoy the merit

earned by your good deeds before or after your punishment for your evil deeds; reply that you wish to enjoy first". Having said this, Sant Kabir took his leave.

When the 24 minutes had elapsed, the gentleman breathed his last. When he was taken to *Yamaraj's* abode, *Yamaraj* asked his minister Chitrugupta to see what the gentleman's good and evil deeds had been. Chitrugupta looked up the records and said: "His whole life has been full of evil deeds with the sole exception of having earned the merit of spending 24 minutes in the company of a Saint." *Yamaraj* informed the gentleman of this and added: "As a result of your numerous evil deeds you are doomed to be relegated to hell for ages; but for having had satsang with a saint for 24 minutes you are entitled to a brief stay in heaven. Do you want to enjoy the benefit of your good deed first or do you want to suffer first for your misdeeds?"

In accordance with Kabir's instructions, the evil-doer replied: "First I wish to enjoy the fruit of my good deed!" So the gentleman proceeded to heaven. On arriving there, he beheld the labourer he had met before dying. Kabirji said to him: "Come, let me initiate you at once, then you will not have to go to hell at all!" The initiation took place and the messenger of *Yama* no longer had the power to escort the sinner to hell. So, as a result of 24 minutes of *sadhusanga* the gentleman

became entitled to remain in heaven for ever.

After finishing his tale, Revati Babu kept silent for a while and later continued thus: "We come here only for satsang. What is the use of merely listening to good advice? Have we got the capacity to put the advice in practice? If we can carry out correctly even a single teaching we receive here, our whole lives will be glorified. In order to imbibe this teaching, words are not necessary. When coming here, if we merely study Ma's wonderful patience and try to emulate even a particle of it, our life will be sanctified. But which one of us is able to achieve this much? So I repeat, when we have no capacity to absorb this teaching, what will be the use of merely talking?"

There is No Other Way but This

20th December 1939.

On visiting Ma early in the morning, I found that Sri Navataru Haldar had arrived with a doctor friend to see Ma. He pointed to his friend, saying: "A few days ago a son of this friend of mine was burnt to death".

Ma: Everything happens according to one's destiny. Such accidents must be regarded as unavoidable. Each according to his fate. Some die burning the body, others die burning within the mind.

Doctor: There is a limit to endurance. One must have the strength to bear suffering.

Mataji: HE indeed gives this strength. Whatever anyone is fated to suffer, that much he has to endure. Whether you call this the fault of the Almighty or His greatness, what is due to anyone has to be gone through.

Doctor: If one has to suffer willy-nilly and if, what has to happen does take place, then is it the aim of man's life not to do anything and just sit still?

Mataji: But how is it possible to avoid action? It is He who pulls you into the maelstrom of work. People go on working and working until they get so tired that they relinquish all action. But this cannot be done until the proper moment arrives. So long as karma has not been exhausted one will have to work and bear the consequences. This is His *lila*.

Doctor: This means beating a person after binding him. This is a fine state of affairs! I am bound to perform the work and thereafter have to bear the consequences. This may be God's *lila* but he plays at our cost!

Mataji (smiling): Who is it that enjoys and who that suffers? Who bears the blows? It is He who hits out and it is He who absorbs the blows and suffers. Nobody exists except the One.

Doctor: If you look at things in this light, then nothing matters. HE produces the abscess and then, becoming the doctor.....

Mataji (interrupting): He does not produce the abscess, He becomes Himself the abscess.

(Everybody laughs). Look, if you live in the world, pain and suffering are unavoidable. At first you were one, then you became two, and then many. For this you have to suffer. But you can do one thing: Take medicine. Consult a good doctor and his prescription. Thereby your disease will be cured. There is no other way to peace.

Doctor: But where can I find a good doctor? This precisely is the reason why I have come to you.

Mataji: Yes, to find a good doctor is most difficult. All the same, procure medicine from whomsoever you consider competent. To get oneself admitted to a hospital is best of all. There one has to take treatment and medicine at proper time. Then there is the added benefit of the atmosphere of the place. But if it is not possible to enter a hospital, then take the medicine regularly at home. But there you may not always take the proper dose at the right time and off and on wrong diet will interfere with the action of the medicine. Don't people say that even though they take the Lord's name regularly they derive no benefit? How can good results be obtained when side by side with the medicine they continue with harmful diet? And this is bound to happen in your own homes. Nevertheless, always try to swallow the medicine at regular times and whenever possible take recourse to wholesome diet, i.e. association with sadhus.

The Mark of the Devil

Saturday, 23-12-39

On arriving near Sri Sri Ma I found Pashupati Babu, Naresh Chakravarti and others there. Pashupati at one time used to narrate amusing anecdotes before Ma and make everyone laugh. Ma said to him: "Baba, we have not heard any stories from you for a long time, do tell us something".

Pashupati: I have nothing to say now. The time for making speeches is over.

Mataji: What? Have you given up talking altogether? (Everybody laughs).

Pashupati: People generally tell pleasing things. I have nothing of the kind to say. Daily I come to sit at your feet and then depart after doing *pranama*.

After keeping silent for a while, he said to Ma: "Well, I should like to ask you something. Whose karma am I reaping? There was a time when I did not exist. Thereafter God created me and this is how all this misery started. In every walk of life we see blind and distressed people. How much misery they are subjected to! Observing this, one reflects thus: God is merciful, He cannot be responsible for all this suffering. So all this affliction must be the result of their own previous misdeeds. In this way one tries to gloss over the situation. It is God who has created me, yet it is I who have to undergo all the suffering.

Mataji: Look, all happiness, sorrow, sickness, bereavement, blindness, distress and so on that you see is nothing but God's own manifestation in infinite forms and ways. He has not created anything, it is He Himself who assumes all these forms. However, if you want to call it creation, it is He Himself who creates Himself in innumerable shapes and guises.

You spoke about action, didn't you? As action also He alone is revealed. Disease is one of His manifestations. Sorrow and bereavement He Himself suffers, and when it becomes very severe, it is He who cries out: "O, I cannot bear it, it is too much for me!" So long as we are in the realm of Creation, we shall have to express it in this manner. When reaching beyond, there is no more speaking or talk. When knowing and not knowing have become one and the same, then it can neither be said that something exists nor that it does not exist. So then, when it cannot be said that it exists nor that it does not exist, the question of existence or non-existence does not arise at all.

Do you not sometimes say "this is unreal?" The saying is also unreal. For everything is real and also unreal, true and also false. So long as we are confined within our worldly intelligence, there are the opposites of true and false, real and unreal. When one progresses beyond this, there is no more distinction between truth and falsehood.

Pashupati: All this is immaterial. It is I

who am suffering, yet you maintain, it is not I who is undergoing the suffering, God is suffering.

Someone else: I can just about understand when you state that there is neither existence nor non-existence. But when shall we be able to realize that something is untrue.

Mataji: So you have understood all this? (Everybody laughs). When you will have attained to the status of a Guru, then you will have full comprehension. At present there is the duality of Guru and disciple, so you are unable to grasp all this. When the disciple will merge with the Guru, when there will be only one, not two separately, then only will full comprehension dawn. Of course in that state there will be understanding as well as non-understanding. Otherwise why should all this have been discussed? You have not yet passed the Matric and you wish to grasp what is on the level of an M.A. Even if that kind of knowledge were vouchsafed to you, you would not have the capacity to absorb it.

Naresh C.: This is the age of progress, so there is no consideration of whether anyone is entitled to anything or not. People behave exactly as they please. While in ancient times if anybody without having the proper right dared to question about the Brahman, the Rishis would tell him point blank that he simply had no right to ask such questions. Because without having mastered the first steps in yoga such as yama, niyama, asana, etc., one is not ready

to ask questions concerning the Brahman. But nowadays all and sundry have questions regarding the Brahman.

Mataji: Are the questions really related to the ultimate Reality? And do you get correct replies? If the questions are real questions the answers will be accordingly. Nowadays the questions are superficial and so are the answers. Nevertheless it must be admitted that asking questions of this kind is beneficial. And the steps in yoga you mentioned, these cannot be accomplished by effort, they come about spontaneously. Just as flowers and fruits grow naturally on trees, but cannot be fabricated, so it is similar with yogic *kriyas*.

Naresh C.: All the same, effort is indispensable. In order to get fruit from trees, the seed must be sown, the plant has to be watered and looked after; only then will the tree grow and bear fruit. Exactly in what way flowers and fruit are obtained from the tree can be explained by scientists.

Mataji: How much can they explain? Can they explain by what Power fruit and flowers grow on trees? It is only when the One shows you the way that you will be enabled to understand all this. It is by the movement of His own Nature that all these things come into being. Even the effort or care you mentioned, these also, must be looked upon as His endeavour. When you arrive at a certain state of achievement you can comprehend all this. Again, what you say about your own endeavours is correct from your present angle of vision. Whatever

you say about your own endeavours is correct from your present angle of vision. Whatever you say is all true on your level.

Pashupati : Yes, yes, nobody is to be blamed -- It is just like the mark of satan !

One day the devil told a number of people : "I shall do nothing except paint a mark on your foreheads". When they agreed, he made them lie down on the roadside next to a grocer's shop and put a spot of *gur* (molasses) on their foreheads. After a while, attracted by the sweet smell, ants came and started eating the *gur*. On seeing the ants a lizard arrived. A man, carrying his pet parrot passed by. The bird flew unto the foreheads of the people to catch the lizard. Next a cat belonging to the grocer ran outside to catch the bird. The owner of the parrot hit out smartly with his stick to drive the cat away. And then started a real quarrel between that man and the grocer. From words to blows and thence to bloodshed ! God's Creation is just like this ! (Everybody laughs).

Ma started laughing loudly and asked Pashupati to relate another story. But there was no further time. Khukuni Didi came to take Ma away for Her meal.

Hidden tendencies come to light in Ma's proximity

23.12.1939

This evening after kirtan, a young man recited from his own poems in Ma's presence

and later performed a number of caricatures. On hearing them Ma laughed and remarked : "This place must be like a zoo, all this was missing previously, but now it has come up".

I : This is due to the special atmosphere of this place.

Ma : What you say about the local atmosphere is also true. God is everywhere, so one can perceive different kinds of manifestations in different places. (Addressing Ganga Charan Babu) : Where Mahatmas live a special influence can be felt. But in such places this kind of thing (namely frivolity or light entertainment) does not occur.

I : When people are in your proximity all their hidden tendencies are brought out.

Ma (smiling) : Yes, when they come here, whatever is concealed within them emerges. This manifestation is all to the good. But keep in mind : If you can bear it, it will gradually subside.

Sunday, 24th Dec. 1939

When I arrived early in the morning near Ma, only a few people were present. Ma looked towards an old gentleman, saying : "You are a Professor of Chemistry, aren't you ? Tell me what it is all about".

The gentleman : Have I the capacity to explain this ?

Ma : Explain as much as you can !

The gentleman : Western scientists have come to the conclusion that whatever matter we

perceive is composed of a conglomeration of very small particles. Of course, their tiny particles are not the same as what we understand. They are not ready to admit the existence of any matter that cannot be seen with the eyes at least with the help of their scientific instruments. Scientists have analysed and divided matter into such minute particles that they cannot be split any further. Then again they have divided matter into various other constituents, and have tried to reconstruct the matter by assembling them together once more. If they are successful in getting back the original under different conditions and in different locations, they come to the conclusion that the tiny elements are part and parcel of the material. In this way they are trying to divide matter into its composing elements and then again assemble them to come back to the original. In order to do this they have discovered and keep on inventing many marvellous instruments and machines.

Ma (smiling) : Well, all this analysis they are carrying out seems to indicate that they are working under certain limitations. For instance they can assert how long it will take for this piece of wood to be converted into dust. But do they realize that every single object is changing every moment ?

The old gentleman kept silent. Nitish Guha exclaimed: "No Ma, they cannot realize this." Ma said nothing more.

Fate and Mercy

Sri Durgamohan Choudhury asked Ma: "Is it possible for man to change by his own action what is looked upon as Fate ?

Ma: Everything is possible by God's grace. If He showers His mercy, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished in a moment.

The old gentleman: Is that bit of grace not part of Fate ?

Ma: If you believe this and go beyond Fate, then there is nothing left. So long as one talks of God's existence, one's own existence and the existence of karma, there is also the question of Grace and karma. But when this dual viewpoint disappears, then there is neither Fate nor Grace. Then it can be said that whatever takes place happens just by its own nature.

Durgamohan: Talk of Grace implies partiality for God.

Ma: From the point of view from which you are speaking, in that state, all this is certainly true. But when you come to see that God is not apart from the world, when you come to know that whatever happens in the world is an expression of God's movement, then there will be neither grace nor karma. Nor will there be discrimination between truth and falsehood.

Enjoyment, Relinquishment, Taking on a Guru

Thereafter other topics came up for discussion.

Durgamohan said to Ma: We do not really love Ma. We are not for enjoyment and we

come to Ma to enjoy ourselves.

Ma: You don't desire real enjoyment. What you seek is that which has to be renounced.

Durgamohan: I do not understand what you mean.

Ma: What you keep on wanting, are all things to be renounced. In due course they will in any case forsake you. Do you ever seek genuine enjoyment? If you gain that which is real enjoyment, can there be an end to it? This is why I maintain that you only desire what has to be given up and not what is truly enjoyable.

Durgamohan: If you look upon it in this light, then of course this is true. (Everybody laughs). But while we are busy enjoying ourselves, how is it possible to turn from this to the path of renunciation? We are considering our family and our worldly life our own and are afraid to renounce them. Under these circumstances, what is the means of salvation?

Ma: The means is simply to obtain the Guru's grace. If you perform your duties to your family entirely in a spirit of service, this never leads to bondage. Family life need not necessarily be a tie. It is by living for the enjoyment of it that you have created this fetter for yourself.

Durgamohan: I do not have the courage to take on a Guru, because I feel that my Guru must be such that I can obey his instructions without hesitation. If I fail to do so I shall be guilty of a serious offence. Consequently, as long as I do not enter into the correct state of mind, I

cannot pluck up sufficient courage to take on a Guru.

Ma: This attitude of mind is also justified. You feel that you are not yet ready to be a disciple. If you continuously entertain such a notion, in time the desire to make yourself ready will awaken in you and prayers for it will also arise from within your heart. In this way you will make some progress. But it is not good to believe that you will never take on a Guru, just because you consider yourself unworthy. Do you know what this is like? If you look upon a stone as a mere stone, it remains a stone. But if you look upon it as Siva, it becomes Siva. Your Scriptures also declare that one must become Godlike in order to worship a Deity. Whatever anyone constantly thinks about that he becomes. Therefore never abide in weakness. Always be sure, "I am bound to receive Grace", and act in this belief. Have you not heard that offences can be committed even when the Lord's name is being taken? Under certain circumstances it could be a serious transgression to pronounce His name. But should one then stop repeating God's name for fear of this? Much better to be aware of the circumstances under which such an offence might occur, so that people could take the Lord's name with due precaution.

Similarly it would not be right never to take on a Guru just because you may not consider yourself fit to do so. Much better to take refuge in a Guru and try your best to become a worthy

disciple, in which case the Guru will himself graciously come forward to make you a true disciple.

The Art of developing the right Inclinations through Practice

Durgamohan : There are many occasions when we actually do not wish to do certain things, yet somehow, against our will, we commit those deeds as if paralyzed. How can we prevent this ?

Ma : Paralysis in fact lies in the nature of the individual (*jiva*). Whatever people do they act as if under compulsion. Look, if a particle of dust gets into the eye, one is unable to see. Even after getting rid of it, the eyes are full of water. Similarly, the slightest pursuit of worldly affairs renders the mind restless. The impressions of any number of past births have laid their stamp on our minds. Can these be effaced so easily ? It is because of tendencies developed in the past that we are forced to perform actions as if powerless. This is why sustained effort is necessary. Such constant practice could even lead to another kind of paralysis ! Just as we carry out worldly jobs against our will as if paralyzed due to tendencies and inclinations developed in the past, so also why should it not be possible to perform spiritual work spontaneously as a result of sustained practice ?

There is no necessity to rush hither and thither to participate in Satsang

Durgamohan : Swami Vivekananda has said :

Suppose there is a powerful light, then those who come within the orbit of this light will themselves be enlightened to some degree. Hence it is beneficial to seek the presence of a Mahatma or of someone in whom God is specially manifested. This is why we come to you.

Ma smiling : Well -- all right ! All the same you have merely come to your own Self. Nothing exist in the world but your own Self. The reason why someone loves another is also this. Though it may appear that the one is fond of the other, in actual fact he just is fond of himself. But it is truly beneficial to seek satsang. However there is no need to rush about from place to place to do so. It is possible to have satsang while sitting in one's own house.

Suppose you have gone to a sadhu, but keep on thinking of your household affairs, then you have not truly participated in satsang. While, being bound down by your household duties, you remain at home, yet are truly sorry that you are being deprived of satsang, then your gain can be said to be much greater than by actually meeting the mahatma. It is the state of mind which is of paramount importance.

Worldly Knowledge and the Knowledge of Reality (Brahmavidya)

Calcutta, 27.12.1939

On arriving at Sri Ma's early in the morning, I found Durgamohan and others present.

Durgamohan asked: Ma, do you ever go to sleep?

Ma (laughing): Look at this beautiful mosquito net and at this thick blanket from Gangotri, do you not consider these sufficient to induce sleep?

Durgamohan: I have heard that the Brahmachari Mahasaya of Barodi, Lokenath Baba, never slept. He used to say that sleep would lead to his giving up the body.

Ma: Death can be of various types: One is the death of the ego, another the death of the body. Further, the stoppage of ascension to the upper heights and therefore to return to the world of coming and going is also equivalent to death. To which of these meanings did the Babaji refer? What have you understood from his words?

Durgamohan: He did not use the word "death". He spoke of "*Pindapata*" (consummation of funeral rites).

Ma: This means that until the funeral rites were concluded death was within his control. To live or to die--all these are subject to a yogic's own free will.

Durgamohan: Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and the Brahmachari of Barodi never learnt to read and write. Sri Ramakrishna said that learning produced pride in one's knowledge; that is why he kept aloof from studies.

Ma: Did the Babaji actually say this?

Durgamohan: I have read it in the book written by Swami Sharadananda, called "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lila Prasanga."

Ma: I have not learnt anything, this is why I am asking. However, the Sastras are actually deep within every individual. By study this fact merely becomes revealed. There is a book of knowledge within each human being. When this has been read nothing more remains to be learnt.

Durgamohan: The Guru of Lokenath Brahmachari also did not allow his disciples to go in for learning. He is said to have told the Brahmachari that whatever knowledge he required had already been imparted to him by his Guru. There was nothing left for the Brahmachari to do.

Ma: Yes, knowledge is hidden within every human being, it is only a question of making it unfold and of drawing it out to the surface. THAT which, when known, nothing else remains to be learnt, THAT indeed has to be known. Through this one Knowledge all the different branches of worldly knowledge are gained. Just as there are different methods to acquire different branches of worldly knowledge, as for instance law or medicine and so on, so are there also different ways to attain to *Brahmavidya*. For the sake of instructing people there is division into various religions and sects. However, there is a basic difference between worldly knowledge and Knowledge of Reality. By pursuing one particular branch of worldly knowledge, mastery over that subject is certainly acquired, but one does not gain any insight into other subjects. Whereas in the case of *Brahmavidya*, once the goal is reached, even though having pursued

the path of a particular religion or sect, complete knowledge of everything is acquired. Then nothing at all remains to be learnt.

28.12.1939

On arriving in the morning, I found Ma conversing with a number of devotees. She had been previously speaking with a certain gentleman, so addressing him again, She said: "A short while ago I was talking about Creation. I then omitted to mention one point; one cannot deal with all aspects at the same time. What is meant by 'Creation'? When the ONE manifests as the many, this is called 'Creation'. Just as you were at first single, then became two by marriage and thereafter procreated several children and became many. Similarly, God the ONE and only became the infinite many. Whatever you see around you in the world, whatsoever is but His own progeny, His very own family. This applies to God and is equally so for human beings. That is why you have become entangled in the web of illusory earthly affection, by developing many out of the single one. If you can reverse this movement and proceed in the opposite direction, this is the path to liberation (*mukti*). Whenever you refer to "my son, my daughter, my wealth, my property" it shows that you have become the many out of the One. Returning to the ONE from the many amounts to liberation (*mukti*). The attitude of heart and mind that leads downward to bondage must be stopped and reversed into an upward direction. What is termed 'passion'

an upward direction. What is termed 'passion' on the downward trend, can be transformed into pure love on the upward path. That is why the injunction is to remain upward turned. The very things that tie you to the world can be reversed and lead you back to what you were originally. It is this different way of life, this upward tendency, which the Guru bestows on His disciple. The current that leads you to your own true Nature is initiated by the Guru. This is why the relationship between Guru and disciple has to be thoroughly established.

Of course, all the worldly ties of affection that we look upon as our bondage are also His lower manifestations. There is happiness in this too. If it were not so, the world with its family life could not continue. But without realizing Him, Supreme Bliss cannot be attained. The world is of course His manifestation, His shadow. But in order to taste complete and everlasting bliss, one must forsake the shadow and grasp the substance.

(Addressing Durgamohan): Did you not mention yesterday that Ramakrishnadeva and the Brahmachari of Barodi had not learnt to read and write? They were born with the full storehouse of learning within themselves. They were indeed manifestations of *Brahmavidya*. What could they possibly learn?

The Story of Tying the Cat.

When Durgamohan got up to leave after

performing his *pranama*, Ma remarked laughingly : "Today you were the first to come and you are the last to depart."

Durgamohan : I hear that from to-day all your rules and regulations will be dispensed with.

Ma (laughingly) : You sometimes discard something valuable while throwing away rubbish. Do you know the story of tying the cat ?

There was a cat in someone's house. It invariably gave a lot of trouble during Durga Puja. To avoid this, the people would tie up the cat for the three days of the function. Of course it was not made to fast for those three days; it was fed at regular times, but the string remained tied to its neck. This rule was adhered to for several years. After some time the cat left the house. That year there was no trouble during Durga Puja, but the inmates of the house thought it was one of the regulations pertaining to Durga Puja to tie up a cat for three days. So they went in search of a cat and tied it up. (Everyone bursts into loud laughter).

We also quite often behave in a similar manner. We make certain rules and regulations when the occasion demands, but even when there is no more necessity, we stick to these obsolete customs.

Truth becomes revealed when the seeds of samskaras are destroyed

At 10 o'clock Ma's room was again crowded. Ma was conversing with the devotees. Someone

obviously had asked whether or not God **could** be actually beheld. I heard Ma reply:

"When that vision opens up in you, then you can see Him exactly as you see me. You can even have a talk with Him."

Question : Can this remain so permanently ?

Ma : It may, but it can also change.

Question : Why should it change ?

Ma : He is of infinite forms. So in diverse ways He manifests some of them at different times.

Ramtaran : But these forms are all due to *maya* ?

Ma : They are certainly due to *maya* so long as one perceives *maya* (illusion). But when *maya* is cast aside then all forms become His own form. Then still water and flowing waves are both true.

Devotee : Well, Ma, you declared that God Himself comes and makes everything clear. When will I understand that He has come and made everything clear ?

Pasupati : Never ! (Everybody laughs).

Ma : Where the seeds (of *samskaras*) are destroyed.

Abhaya : So seeds also have an end ?

Ma : They may end, but they may also survive.

Abhaya : So seeds are not wholly destroyed ?

Ma : I have just said that seeds remain, yet also do not remain. This relates to a special condition. *Samskaras* (inborn tendencies) may be called seeds. When there is awareness of one's

samskaras or of their presence or absence then there is a possibility of the destruction of the seeds. Otherwise everything is a form of seed. Destruction of seeds means freedom from *samskaras*.

Tears and Tears of Love

A young man : Ma, suppose I do not perform *japa* while sitting down, yet practise it while walking on the road, can I eventually reach a state where God may be realized ?

Ma : It is worth while to make an effort. If you try again and again, you may perhaps conceive a desire to perform *japa* sitting down. When cycling along the road and watching the fun all around you while doing *japa*, can this be called *japa* ? Nevertheless, it is better to do something than nothing at all. One has to concentrate while doing *japa*. Real *japa* may not take place even when sitting on an *asana*. *Japa* must be done with heart and soul. When does true *japa* come about ? Certain portents indicate that real *japa* has been performed. What are these portents ? When the eyes are diseased, tears flow automatically.

A lady : I have seen tears flow from your eyes.

Ma : Have you actually seen this ?

The lady : Yes, my knees got wet by your tears.

Ma : Whether your knees got wet, I do not know. But there was a time when water did flow from this body's eyes as if from a syringe.*

*This phenomenon reminds of the description in Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's life, when tears

(Addressing Ramtaran) : You must have been witness to this ! (Pointing to the lady) Ma said : She was referring to what happened at Bajitpur.

Agarpara, Giribala Ashram
31.12.1939

The Power of Speech

Sri Ma was seated on an *asana*. Abhaya asked Her a question which I could not catch, but I heard Ma's reply.

Ma : This is what is called the power of speech. *Sabda Brahman* is the word that expresses Supreme Reality. Look, complete strangers can become one's friends by talking to them. On the other hand, the impact of mere words can cause bloodshed even among one's kith and kin.

Brahmachari Atul of Sadhan Samar Ashram : By talking to them one's own kin's folk can be brought still nearer.

Ma : Yes, one cannot enumerate the effects without number which the power of speech may produce. (Turning to me) A battle can be fought in many ways, for instance by words. Does one not compare the sharpness of words with that of an arrow ? This kind of arrow can be used as a weapon just like proper bows and arrows. So one can attempt to attain to the One by being His enemy just as one can worship Him, love Him

were streaming out in great profusion from his eyes during kirtan.

and be at peace with Him. He is both the epitome of war and peace. Peace and conflict -- everything is He alone. Whatever you may perceive in whatever condition, everything is His manifestation.

Taking shelter in a Sadguru destroys samskaras

Atul Brahmachari: What about action and its fruit?

Ma: Both action and its fruit are facts. So long as the sense of ego remains, one feels "this is my work", etc. but when the idea of the separate "I" is gone, then there is neither action nor its results. Then it becomes clear that one is merely His tool. It is then the true relationship between the Supreme Architect and His tool blossoms forth. But so long as the sense of "I" remains -- "I am doing something, I have the capacity to accomplish things" -- when this is felt, one should remain engaged in His work.

Atul Br: Can one make any progress by working with this attitude of mind?

Ma: Certainly, you will progress exactly in accordance with your attitude towards your work. If you act with a pure intention, this will have its results. On the other hand, if you do things for your personal enjoyment, this also will bear fruit. You can progress in whichever direction you try. The fruits of your actions are bound to be reaped. (Turning to me) However, all this is different for him who has taken refuge in a Sadguru. Once somebody has won the grace of a Sadguru, then in whatever manner

he may act, he continuously moves forward towards his supreme Objective. Even if he is enjoying the fulfilment of his desires, he remains on the Path. The reason for this is that once the spark has been ignited, it will of its own accord burn away all the *samskaras* of the disciple.

(Turning 'towards' Atul Br.) So long as one has to reap the fruit of one's actions, it is commendable to undertake all work in a spirit of purity. Because the effects of pure intention are found to be felt in due course. This is but natural. Just as you benefit by the cool breeze of the Ganga if you sit on its shores. Similarly, in whatever spirit you proceed, it will leave its impression on your mind and heart in the midst of the dirt of worldly life.

Atul Br. : Ma, you stated one day that by offering repeatedly oblations into a sacrificial fire, offering becomes spontaneous. How can offering occur by itself?

Ma: Well, why only an offering? The same holds good for everything. For instance: God's name can be repeated by making an effort or it can come about of itself. People start performing worship day after day according to the prescribed rules and regulations. By continuing in this manner for some time, real worship comes about and there is no more need for ritual worship. Just as when one has eaten one's full, nothing more can be partaken of. Tell me, why do you offer oblations into a sacrificial fire?

Atul Br.: To stop mind and heart from turning outward.

Ma: So you acknowledge that offering oblations has an effect. It is for the sake of the result that men perform work.

Atul Br.: Hearing you talk I thought that having offered oblation after oblation one has at the end to offer oneself in the fire and be burnt to ashes.

Ma (laughing): What is the meaning of offering yourself in oblation? It only means offering one's sense of I-ness to be destroyed. When identification with one's ego is offered as oblation, then true oblation takes place. Do not partake of *triphala** water!

Atul Br.: What is *triphala* water?

Ma (laughing): A certain Guru instructed his disciple to drink *triphala* water (obtained by soaking the three medicinal fruits in it). The Guru meant that the disciple should study the effects caused by the three *gunas*, *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas* (luminosity, restless activity, darkness) or the worship of the Trinity: Brahma, Visnu, Siva. But the disciple, unable to understand this, went straight to the market and bought *triphala*, soaked it in water and drank of it several times a day. As a result he developed cold and cough and other ailments. (Everyone laughs heartily)

Once I told an old man to keep *misri* (sugar candy) in his mouth, meaning that he should

* *Triphala* Three medicinal fruits.

repeat God's name constantly. When keeping sugar candy in one's mouth it goes on melting slowly and so there is always a sweet taste in one's mouth; likewise by the constant remembrance of the Lord's name, everything becomes sweet. But the old man could not grasp the meaning of my words and so the next day he came with a packet of sugar candy and sucked it bit by bit. (Laughter).

Triguna Banerji: This reminds me of the story of "The same to you."

Several people present became curious to hear that story.

Ma (laughing): Shall I tell you the story of "The same to you?" All right, listen! A Brahman sat down on the bank of a river to perform his evening prayers. It was after sundown and only very few people were about. Just then a woman arrived to fetch water from the river. The Brahman was meditating with his eyes shut when he heard the woman sneeze. He had been taught, whenever he heard someone sneeze to bless the person by saying "May you live long", and he was also accustomed to hear the reply "The same to you!"

So when the Brahman heard the sound of sneezing he interrupted his meditation for a moment and, uttering the words, "may you live long", remained with his ears open to hear the usual reply. But the woman was quite ignorant of such a custom. She remained absorbed in filling her vessel and then started on her return

journey homewards.

When the Brahman saw her depart, he shouted loudly: "My daughter, you have not replied: "The same to you!" When the woman heard these words, she was totally puzzled and thought: "What is he saying? There is nobody else here. I hope he is not mad!" So she hurried away all the more. The Brahman now left his seat and ran after her, saying: You must repeat: "The same to you!"

The woman was by now convinced that he was a lunatic, so she ran home and shut her main door. But the Brahman was equally adamant. He kept standing outside, shouting: "O daughter, please say the words "The same to you", so that I can go away and finish my prayers!"

At all this shouting and commotion, neighbours soon arrived from all around and then the whole matter was clarified. (Everybody laughs loudly)

This is an example of how things are with us. We forget the real objective and waste our time and energy on insignificant matters. I have the other day already related to you the story of tying up the cat.

An Introduction Into Wholeness

Kishenpur, Dehradun,
May 15th, 1941

Leaving Varanasi by train, we arrived with Ma at Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun on

May 15th, 1941. After 5 p.m. Ma came downstairs and sat in the hall. One by one Manmatha Babu, Hariram Joshi and others took their departure. Swami Akhandananda exclaimed: "They are all gone!" On hearing this, Ma laughingly remarked:

Ma: When saying: "Everyone has gone away", it must be understood that in one sense nobody has gone because actually there is no coming and no going. Everything and everybody is present everywhere at all times. In the realm of wholeness to say that something exists or does not exist is not true, yet again everything is true. From the viewpoint of Wholeness one cannot declare that some things are present and others absent. Because what exists, at the same time does not exist, and yet again what does not exist, exists. That which is complete is complete in every respect. A portion of the Whole is as complete as the Whole in its entirety.

Suppose you ignite a small candle from a large light. The light of the candle is thus but a portion of the big light. However, by lighting the candle the big light has not been reduced even by an iota, yet the whole power of the large light and its qualities are present potentially in the candle light.

Now consider something else: Although you are single by yourself, you are also many from another point of view. The same person can be father, husband, son, uncle, cousin, nephew, etc. etc; but by these different relationships his being a single entity has not been

impaired in the very least. Again, so far as these different aspects are concerned, each is complete in itself. Do you not maintain that in a single grain of sand the entire Universe is contained? If each atom or sub-atom contains the whole world, one cannot say "this is not" or "that is not". This is why I say that viewed with the vision of entirety, one cannot say: "Everybody has gone". Considering the completeness of everything there is no such thing as creation or annihilation; at the same time creation, sustenance and destruction exist side by side.

Prajanananda Br.: What then is the measure of truth?

Ma (smiling): The measure of truth is truth. All that exists is true.

Brahmachari: Not everything can be true like for instance "a horse's egg" or "a rabbit's horn"* These surely are not true!

Ma: Even these are true in a way. Because there are quite a few who are not only capable of referring to a horse's egg but also of producing one. Supermen (*Mahapurusas*) can produce anything by their will-power. But from your level you may also say that a horse's egg or a rabbit's horn can only be false. That is to say, when people living at a certain level assert that a horse's egg is false, it is really so from their standpoint.

* "A horse's egg" & "a rabbit's horn" are often quoted as illustrations in Vedanta.

I: I have heard it said that what does not exist at all cannot be thought of even in our imagination.

Ma: Yes.

I: Then how is it possible to speak of a horse's egg or "a rabbit's horn"?

Ma: Even though a horse's egg does not exist physically, yet it can exist in one's imagination. In other words, although, physically it is untrue, it may still be true in one's imagination. Only because a horse's egg can exist in one's imagination it is possible to speak about it.

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Has one to suffer for misdeeds committed in ignorance?

During a later discussion I related the following story from the *Srimad Bhagavata*:

A Rishi was in deep meditation. The officials of a local King mistook him for a thief and together with some thieves he was crucified. When his meditation was thus rudely interrupted and he saw himself crucified, he asked *Yama Raja* (the Lord of Death) for the reason for this terrible fate. *Yama Raja* told him that as a youngster he had inflicted a lot of pain on an insect and for this he was now being punished.

On hearing this, the Rishi decreed that any sin committed by a child in complete ignorance should not meet with any punishment in future. If the utterance of a Rishi cannot be set aside,

why then should we have to suffer the consequences of actions done in ignorance ?

Ma : This is also true.

It was very late at night, and further discussion was postponed.

May 16th, 1941.

Resuming yesterday's discussion, I asked

Ma : "I was unable to understand what you said yesterday about suffering the fruits of misdeeds committed through ignorance. Admittedly one's character can be reformed by suffering as a result of misdeeds knowingly committed, but there seems to be no sense in undergoing punishment for sins committed in ignorance.

Further, it is known that certain birds and other ignorant beings can be taught to repeat God's names, such as Radha, Krishna, etc. and they continue to recite these names without understanding their significance. But seemingly they reap no benefit from their unconscious recitations, because the Sastras declare that without birth as a human being there is no such thing as reaping the consequences of previous actions, neither is it possible to attain to Self-realization. Therefore the constant repetition of God's name by a bird does not produce the same results as a human being's recitation. Hence, according to the Sastras as well as from the viewpoint of ordinary common sense, it does not appear that suffering the consequences of misdeeds committed in sheer ignorance can be justified.

Ma : Look, that actions committed in ignorance have a result is both true and untrue. If you give a little thought to the subject, you will understand. You stated yesterday that if the consequences of actions committed previously in ignorance are suffered, then the sayings of even Rishis become false. This is quite true. In fact, the words emanating from the mouths of Rishis cannot be false. That is why we do not consider that the faults committed by a mere child can be subject to legal judgement. Do we ever hang a child if through sheer ignorance he happens to kill someone ? Or do we even consign him to jail ? This natural tendency of forgiveness in the case of children is due to the dictates of the Rishis ; because in each one of us is contained the germ of Rishihood. Everything is all pervading. So due to our Rishihood we declare that there can be no consequences to actions committed in ignorance and we also act accordingly.

But then consider, if the ignorant child touches fire, will his fingers not be burnt ? So one cannot state that one never suffers from the consequences of actions performed in total ignorance. Therefore it is said that all things are possible at all times.

Further, what you said about birds reciting God's name and that birds do not suffer from the results of their actions is in general true. But certain birds were human beings born as birds due to a curse and they may retain consciousness

of this fact even as birds. In such cases it cannot be said that the recitation of God's name goes in vain.

Then also, look, not all parrots are able to pronounce the name of Krishna. If a bird has learnt to recite the name of Krishna, it should be understood that its previous action was such that instead of the normal cry of a parrot, it has now learnt to pronounce the Lord's name. So here also you see the results of former deeds. Moreover one cannot maintain that the recitation of the Lord's name, even as a bird, is useless. Do you not yourselves believe that even if the Lord's name is pronounced carelessly or in disrespect, it never goes in vain?

And again, even if it is true that there is no liberation for being born as a bird or animal, it is also true that under certain circumstances liberation is possible for a soul in the body of an animal. If you can consider things from the standpoint of totality, you will realize that everything is possible at all times. But generally we are not used to consider things in their wholeness and without fully acquiring the inner qualification to do so, it is not correct to try and embrace all these unknown angles, because this may lead to worse confusion.

That is why people are taught to work. By God's grace anybody can at any time attain liberation. If bliss and peace are the objectives of human beings then it is good to work at attaining them. Because at least some results will be obtained as a consequence of such action. However, without God's grace perfection cannot

will be obtained as a consequence of such action. However, without God's grace perfection cannot be achieved. Through action and endeavour Realization cannot be attained. Were it so, then God would be limited without the confines of action.

Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun
16th May, 1941

The change in Bhaiji's life

After a while Sri Ma continued to speak :
"The level that can be reached through regular worship and adoration can also often be attained through the compassionate glance or touch of a great Being (*Mahapurush*). In such cases no outward act of worship or the like is needed. But this does not mean that those who possess the inherent tendency to perform puja, will be asked to remain idle. For them it is better to progress through worship and adoration. God's grace does not wait for anything. This is why it is said that all things are possible at all times. Through this body too God's grace has often been manifested. But such manifestations have occurred in a perfectly natural way, not in response to anyone's request or entreaty.

That serious trouble started in Jyotish's family life was also due to an event of this kind. The day I gave Jyotish my golden necklace to be used as a sacred thread, from this very day his life started changing radically. As soon as he received the necklace, all the outward

signs of a true Brahmin, such as eating only food cooked by himself, etc. began to manifest. Noticing all this, his wife could no longer tolerate it. An intense feeling of opposition was aroused in her. This is what usually does take place. When husband and wife do not think and feel on the same lines there is bound to be this kind of trouble. If one can't be in tune with the other's feeling and ways, then severe opposition is the result and at every step one tends to put obstacles into the other's path. This feeling of defiance gradually becomes more and more virulent. This kind of things also happened in the case of Jyotish.

On learning from Jyotish of his wife's behaviour, I often used to exhort him to try and explain everything to her. But although he tried his best to follow my advice, this had the reverse effect. Jyotish would tell me: "Ma, what is the use of trying to explain to her? In response to every such attempt she only assumes an even more violent attitude."

Soon after obtaining my necklace, Jyotish's desire to receive the sacred thread became more pronounced. He duly donned the sacred thread and with great zeal and enthusiasm started performing his daily practices with the help of a Brahmin pandit. In this way the bonds of his life as a householder gradually loosened. He did of course continue with his official duties and thereby maintained his family, but all this was done in a spirit of aloofness. His attitude of mind and

heart was quite divorced from his outer life. During this period he used to walk with me in the mornings in the fields of Ramna and talk about his inner life in great detail.

Now see the fun of it all! Although his spiritual progress gave rise to a wild rage and resentment in his wife, which alienated her from her husband, yet how can the influence of satsang go waste? Due to her association with Jyotish, nobler qualities such as faith and trust in God were kindled in her. Consequently she took on as her Guru a certain Bhagavan Brahmachari and began to carry out all his instructions with the utmost faith. Some of you must have observed how Jyotish's wife reposed implicit faith and confidence in her Guru.

I: Ma, I have heard that Jyotish relinquished on the shores of lake Manas sarovar the necklace he had received from you.

Mataji: Yes, I shall tell you what happened. On the way to Kailash, when we were nearing the lake, Jyotish, Bholanath and others reached two hours earlier than Swami Akhandananda and myself. Immediately on arriving there, Jyotish was gripped by an irresistible urge for total renunciation. Without telling anyone he went all by himself, bathed in the lake and after offering oblations of water to the gods, he gave himself *vidvat samnyasa*. * The thought that

* There are two kinds of *sannyasa*: *vividisa sannyasa* which is preceded by a sense of detach-

before anyone arrived to prevent him, he would disappear and hide himself in a cave in the hills round the lake and spend the rest of his life there.

But before he could carry out his intention, Bholanath arrived and found him completely naked on the shores of Manas sarovar. Jyotish did *pranama* to Bholanath and disclosed his heart's desire to him. But Bholanath would not let him go anywhere, made him put on clothes and brought him to me. I returned with Jyotish to the lake, where he made me sip nine mouthfuls of water. This seems to have been a part of the rituals for taking *samnyasa*. Thereafter he laid the golden necklace and his sacred thread at my feet and said: "Ma, please give me permission to depart to the distant hills so that I can live all by myself in one of the solitary caves." He seemed to feel no hesitation or sorrow about leaving me. At that time his deep inner conviction was: 'Ma is not confined within any particular body, but is omnipresent everywhere in the whole universe. So it is impossible to forsake Ma under any circumstances.' I picked up the gold necklace and the sacred thread and, putting them into Jyotish's hands, I said: 'For the time being let them remain with you.'

Then I began strolling with him on the

ment from the world, and *vidvat samnyasa* which is *samnyasa* par excellence, preceded by Realization of THAT.

shores of the lake. All of a sudden some mantras poured from my mouth. On hearing them, Jyotish at once assimilated them and started repeating them in *japa*. Jyotish's condition then was such that he felt not the slightest attraction for anything at all. In that condition the body does not remain because there is nothing anymore that has to be done. Subsequent to this, Jyotish's last illness was a mere pretext.

Jyotish had developed certain powers already before he took *samnyasa*. He used to declare sometimes that he could depart from his body at will. But such a death would have been self-willed, whereas his leaving the body as it actually took place was quite natural. Already much earlier he had a desire to leave his body. In fact when he was critically ill at Tarapith this was due to some such resolution on his part.

Ma was at this juncture taken away for Her meal and we came downstairs as well.

Bhaiji's Final Beatitude

In the afternoon when we again assembled near Ma, She resumed the topic of Jyotish of Her own accord.

Ma: I had already explained previously that Jyotish's condition was such that it was no longer possible for him to retain his body. On the way back from Kailash, he soon fell ill. He was treated by a good doctor, but this did not lead to any improvement of his health. He gradually became very weak. In due course, he had no longer the strength to get up from bed and his

speech became indistinct. But just before his death this feebleness disappeared and he uttered quite clearly several words in quick succession. On noticing this some people thought that his condition had changed for the better and that his life could be saved. But others were of the opinion that this change was nothing but the dying embers of a fire bursting into flame before being extinguished for ever. The doctor, noticing the deterioration of the patient's pulse, went to the adjoining room and started crying.

The doctor was a Mohammedan, but the way he ministered to Jyotish both medically and as a nurse was something very rarely to be met with. He used to come along frequently to examine Jyotish's condition, and often helped him to pass urine and stool. He never took a pice for his labour. One day, everybody present approached him and compelled him to accept payment, because genuine expenditure for medical attention was widely believed to often lead to success. The money was given to him through Jyotish's hands. He did accept the money but before leaving, he quietly put it under Jyotish's pillow.

Meanwhile Hariram Joshi and others present, realizing that Jyotish's end was imminent, said to him, "Bhaiji, please give us some advice!" Jyotish then spoke quite distinctly: "*Ma and I are one, we are all one.*" Then he repeated his *samnyasa* mantra, and uttering the name "*Ma*", he gave up his body. Although a number of people

were present, nobody except Khukuni (Gurupriya Didi) could hear the *samnyasa* mantra.

A little before his demise I asked Jyotish to take off the gold necklace and his sacred thread. But they were under his vest and it was not possible to remove the vest. So it was cut open with a pair of scissors and they were taken from him.

I: Why did you ask him to remove the necklace and the sacred thread?

Ma (smiling): There was no particular reason for this. Jyotish had already previously relinquished them, and it was only due to my request that he had agreed to keep them. So before his passing away I took these things back in order to relieve him from all responsibility for their care. Of course, many people naturally surmised that it had not taken them away, they might have been the cause of Jyotish's further bondage. But in reality this was not so, because Jyotish's condition was such that none of those things could have created any bondage for him.

I: When Jyotish said just before leaving: "*Ma and I are one, we are all one,*" what exactly did he mean by this?

Ma: He had then realized the oneness of all and everything.

I: Does this mean Self-realization?

Ma: This sort of question has already been raised. After his death, a lot of people have asked me whether or not Jyotish had attained Self-realization. At that time I did not give a

clear reply, but from what I said they gathered that Jyotish had indeed attained Nirvana. I first spoke to Gopinath Kaviraj about Jyotish's ultimate state. Later I spoke to one or two others, now I am telling you: I have seen Jyotish three times after he left his body. On those three occasions I beheld him in three entirely different forms.

The first time his appearance was just like what I had noticed on the shores of Manas sarovar -- he was in a state of total renunciation (*vairagya*), the place was just like that, with an expanse of a plateau and distant hills in the background. Jyotish was running quite naked towards the hills. This body was standing there, and though Jyotish passed quite close by, he paid not the slightest attention to it. Even when he turned his head slightly and looked in the direction of this body, his gaze was not focussed on anything. He was entirely possessed of the idea to find sanctuary in a cave of the distant hills.

When I was travelling in Narmada Valley, I beheld Jyotish for the second time. On that occasion I saw him in a body of light. At that time the wife of Gangacharan Babu* was with me. She could not see Jyotish, yet she told me: "Ma, I feel that Jyotish is here. He used to love me very much, perhaps this is why I am sensing his presence." I of course did not reply to her words, but on looking round I saw Jyotish standing

nearby, his weight on one leg, with the other leg bent behind.

The third time I saw Jyotish, his appearance was quite different. It was neither like the first time when he seemed like in a human body of flesh and blood, nor a luminous body like on the second occasion, but it appeared somewhat like a cloud of smoke. If you had seen it, you would not have been able to know what you saw, but I realized Jyotish had arrived in this particular guise. He was proceeding slowly, slowly to merge with this body, but I forbade him, saying: "There is a *kheyala* that so long as this body exists, one has to communicate with it in separation." He nodded in acquiescence. Later he very gradually mingled with the atoms and sub-atoms of this body. Thus Jyotish's deep aspiration was fulfilled.

When he saw me for the first time, I used to be heavily veiled and speak only very rarely after drawing a circle around myself. On the first occasion when he met me, he beheld me seated in *siddhasana*, fully veiled. He could not see my face, only small portions of my hands and feet. Even so, he resolved: "I shall end up under these very lotus feet." And this actually came to pass.

*Gangacharan Dasgupta was a relation of Bhajji.

Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun

16th May, 1941

Dadamashai's Death & Ultimate Liberation

(As Jyotishdada (Bhaiji) and Dadamashai (Mataji's father) both passed away in 1937, the former in mid-August and the latter in mid-December, Mataji continued to talk this in the same strain after having recounted Bhaiji's end).

Ma: A similar series of events occurred after the death of the father of this body. Jyotish died in August of that year, and merged with this body on the 12th Agrahayan (approximately 27th November) of the same year. And your Dadamashai merged with this body on the 5th Magh (approximately 20th January 1938).

You will remember that your Dadamashai accompanied us to the Narmada valley and returned to Calcutta from there. At that time this body had no intention to visit Bengal. But see how events actually came to pass! Due to Bhola-nath's urging, I had to go to Tarapith. In the meantime your Dadamashai fell seriously ill. On seeing his condition, Jyotish (Guha) and others came to Tarapith to take me back with them to Calcutta. I told them that I would go to Calcutta on a certain day, but they held that according to the ayurvedic doctor's opinion, Dadamashai would not last till then. So they insisted on my going to Calcutta with them. I had already told them that I would not enter the house and that I would come away after seeing your Dadamashai

from outside. This is what actually took place. After seeing your Dadamashai from the courtyard on arriving at Calcutta, I immediately went to the Birla Mandir (in Ballygunge).

The following day we were to return to Tarapith. Before our departure, the next morning, I again went to visit your Dadamashai. A number of house-holders were also staying in the same house. In the morning they had all lit their kitchen fires, and when I arrived, the yard was full of smoke. You know very well that up to then your Dadamashai had looked upon this body as just his daughter and nothing more. But that day I noticed a change in his attitude. Lying in bed he was trying to catch sight of this body. In the gloom he could not perceive anything, yet kept on crying, "Ma, Ma", while straining to catch a glimpse of me. It was the moment of our farewell. All were trying to make me eat something, so nobody noticed the changed attitude of your Dadamashai.

After this we returned to Tarapith. When we were in Burdwan, waiting for a train connexion to Kashi, I asked Swami Akhandananda to go with certain instructions and see your Dadamashai. Had he started in time, he would have been able to see your Dadamashai before he passed away. Of course, he had been given an indication that there was a possibility that they might never meet. For some reason or other, Akhandananda could not reach Calcutta in time. On arrival at Kashi, we heard the news that

your Dadamashai had expired. It was then realized that the day I had previously fixed for visiting him in Calcutta from Tarapith was the day of his death.

After that, I caught a glimpse of your Dadamashai on the 5th of Magh (approximately Jan. 20th, 1938). I saw him in an extra-ordinary disguise. His appearance was that of a naked fakir with a turban tied round his head. See, how significant it all is! When alive Dadamashai often used to threaten us when in a temper, "What do I care? I will put on a turban and go off in some direction or other." From time to time he had had a desire to become a fakir, hence his appearance beheld by me was that of a fakir. But the nearer he came to me, the more did he resemble a smoky cloud. Later he slowly and gradually merged with this body.

Don't think that only those known to you have merged with this body--others unknown to you have also done so.

May 17th, 1941

In the morning I went and sat down near Ma and resumed the discussion which had taken place the day before yesterday. I asked: "Ma, you mentioned that Jyotishdada and Dadamashai merged with your body. What exactly does "merging" mean? Did they entirely lose their own identity (*satta*)?"

Ma: What do you mean by their own identity?

I: Was there a complete disappearance

of the individual identity that was Jyotish?

Ma: Had there been any finite being left, how could he be considered to have merged completely?

I: Why? To merge and yet remain separate, can this not happen simultaneously? Cannot a being remain finite and be infinite at the same time?

Ma: To be both finite and infinite simultaneously, this is called merging. This in fact is realization of the Self. In that condition one cannot define what remains and what does not remain. In such a state everything exists and yet nothing exists.

I: Does this realization of the Self supervene after one realizes Divinity? (*Iswaratva*)?

Ma: Certainly. After becoming established in Divinity, (*Iswaratva*) that is to say, realizing the significance of creation and destruction, of the power of divine compassion and suffering, the attainment of the Supreme Self ensues. But how long this divine state lasts depends upon the rate of the upward progress of the *sadhaka*.

I: You had mentioned yesterday that not only those known to us had merged with your body but that others, unknown to us, had also done so.

Ma: Quite right.

I: Well, if they were unknown to us, were they known to you in their physical bodies?

Ma: They were not.

I: Then why did they merge with you instead of with their own *Ista Deva*?

Ma : To merge with one's *Ista Deva* is all that matters. Did they not merge with their *Ista Deva*? In Him also I exist, just as their *Ista Deva* exists in me. I already explained to you that at all times everything exists everywhere.

The conversation now changed to another topic.

Mantra Chaitanya and Diksha

I : Ma, what is meant by *Mantra Chaitanya*?

Ma : You want to know what *Mantra Chaitanya* signifies? Well, suppose I call you, saying "Baba", you immediately respond; because the name and he whose name it is are not separate. Thus, if one calls someone by his name, the bearer of the name will reply. So also, if by pronouncing the mantra the Deity of the mantra or one's *Ista Deva* is clearly perceived, then the mantra is said to be alive (*chetan*). This is what is called *mantra chaitanya*.

I : What is this clear perception of the Deity of the mantra or *Ista Deva* like? Does the *sadhaka* look upon his *Ista* as distinct from himself or does he see himself within his *Ista*?

Ma : Although to start with the *sadhaka* sees himself as separate from his *Ista Deva*, yet when the essential being (*tatwa*) of this Deity of the mantra or of the *Ista Deva* becomes revealed to him, then the *sadhaka* realizes himself to be within this *tatwa*. This is why it is said, is it not, that one has to become one with the Deity one is worshipping. By worshipping his *Ista*, the *sadhaka* thus worships himself, in other words, the *Ista* and

the *sadhaka* become one.

I : I have heard it said that when a *Sadguru* gives initiation, he renders the mantra alive (*chetana*). You have just described a *chetana* mantra by whose recitation the *Ista Deva* becomes revealed. But our experience is, although we recite the mantra in *japa*, no revelation of the *Ista Deva* takes place. Are we then to understand that our mantra has not been rendered potent to arouse our consciousness.

Ma : No, why should this be so? There are various kinds of *diksha*. There is a kind of initiation by which the disciple is radically transformed instantly. As soon as this kind of *diksha* is received, the physical body of the disciple merges completely in the five elements and he attains full Self-realization. This is called Supreme *Diksha*.

Initiation by a *Mahapurusha* or *Sadguru* may be called a medium type of *diksha*. Here the Guru bestows the mantra on the disciple after infusing his own power into it. As a result of such an initiation the disciple gradually gets free from his *samskaras* (tendencies and impressions, i.e. conditioning) and realizes his True Self in due course. To become thus liberated from one's accumulated tendencies and impressions takes time. Some people are of the opinion that the disciple will obtain liberation within at the most three births. Even if the disciple is not conscious of the power of the mantra, yet it does its work within him. That is why it is said that when a *sadhaka* has taken refuge in a *Sadguru*, whether he exerts

himself or not, his progress cannot be prevented. All the same, if after receiving the mantra he faithfully performs his spiritual exercises, he will be able to advance at great speed.

There is yet another kind of *diksha*, which is a sort of general initiation, such as *diksha* from the family guru. Now the family guru may not possess the inner capacity with which to bestow the mantra, nevertheless every mantra has its inherent power. Because every mantra is in itself fruitful. At some time or other, someone may become perfected by the constant repetition of the mantra. Because the power inherent in the mantra can drive him onwards. But this process is very slow indeed.

Apart from all this, there is also scope for repeated initiations, one after another. For instance, a Guru may bestow a mantra on his disciple by the recitation of which progress up to a certain stage has been made; then, to induce further advancement, the Guru may give him another mantra. In this way, before being ready for the ultimate final *diksha*, several preliminary initiations may be given. Such initiation by successive stages may also spontaneously arise within the disciple in course of time, that is to say, the very first *diksha* bestowed by the Guru can by itself provide all that is necessary to take the disciple onwards from one stage to another.

Alternately, the Guru can himself appear and by initiating the disciple again and again, take him along the path of progress by stages.

The fact that the Guru may no longer be in the body cannot be an obstacle to successive initiations step by step, because the Guru can never die. At the appropriate time and as necessity arises, he can always manifest himself to the disciple.

Sunday, 18th May '41

Initiation by mantra versus initiation without mantra

In the afternoon, sitting near Ma, I again raised the topic of *diksha* which had been discussed yesterday. I said: "Ma, yesterday you divided initiation into three categories, namely Supreme or Ultimate Initiation, medium initiation and general initiation.

Ma: Yes, this division was more or less according to the final results obtained by initiation. However, *diksha* may of course be of many different kinds.

I: What is meant by *diksha* with mantra (*sabija diksha*) and *diksha* without mantra (*nirbija*)?

Ma: This may also be called initiation without form (*nirakara diksha*) and initiation with form (*sakara*). Or one may also look upon the former as initiation without a mantra by which the disciple gets rid of his conditioning and is established in the Supreme State. Here all the inherent tendencies and inclinations of the disciple are washed away and obliterated and he is established in his true Self.

The ultimate aim of initiation by mantra is

also the same; but here the disciple is guided through stages of worshipping a form or Deity to the completely unconditioned state.

I: If all *samskaras* are extinguished entirely through initiation without mantra, how then can the relationship of generations of Gurus and disciples have been established?

Ma: In what is called the Supreme State or Self-realization, nothing at all is destroyed. I have already explained to you that in this exalted state it cannot be said what remains and what does not remain.

I: Ma, now you have touched upon a very controversial subject. So far as this state of realization of the Infinite is concerned, we cannot form any clear idea of anything in particular. So it is better to deal with one aspect at a time. I understand that everything is possible in the state of Self-realization. But leaving this aside, please do tell us something about how successive generations of Gurus are established. Is there no *samskara* or desire at the root of this creation of a traditional order?

Ma: You may remember that during yesterday's discussion I said that in some people a lingering desire for acquiring reputation or praise remains dormant and later this trend manifests in various ways. It may also happen that whatever is caused by *samadhi* is present in a person, yet none of it is exhibited outwardly. All the inward action of *samadhi* is quietly taking place, yet it cannot be perceived outside; that is to say,

the body is not in any way incapacitated and lying motionless due to *samadhi* as is ordinarily the case.

Elsewhere, on the other hand, such bodily signs are indeed exhibited. The reason for this is that the desire for acquiring status and praise, which is present in a subtle way in some of us, results in the outward manifestation of *sa-madhi* or exhibition of supernormal powers (*vibhuti*). Although we may not be in the least aware of such feelings within ourselves, yet they do exist and are manifested in such a way so that people may pay us homage and respect. But if someone has not the least ambition of this kind, then although he may acquire any number of supernormal powers, yet there will be no outward sign of it at all.

Similarly, from a desire for fame and applause, an Acharya or a particular sect of Acharyas may arise. Alternately someone may be an Acharya or Guru spontaneously by his inner qualification.

I: It appears that if someone becomes an Acharya by his inner qualification, probably no separate sect or community is thereby created?

Ma: No, why not? By this kind of Acharya also a sect may be created. Look, if everything could be achieved by one mantra and by one particular *bhava*, why should there be so many different mantras? The reason is that at different times, due to the individual needs of different persons, Acharyas have come into being to elucidate different paths that lead to liberation. This is why there are so many sects and religious communities.

I: Does the status of an Acharya correspond to a particular level of existence?

Ma: Yes, some may attain to a certain status and become qualified to act as Acharyas. But this does not mean that they remain Acharyas for all times. They may progress from this level to a still higher one. Then someone else may become qualified to take their place.

I: Can it not therefore be construed that *diksha* without seed-mantra means an initiation as a result of which the initiated does not take on any other disciples, in other words, the seed of such a *diksha* is not passed on through a succession of disciple? And a *sabija* (with seed) *diksha* (by mantra) is an initiation the seeds of which are passed on through a succession of disciples?

Ma: Yes, this also may be possible.

Kishenpur, Dehradun
Sunday, 18.5.1941

I am appointing you alone as my physician

During our conversation a few ladies and gentlemen arrived. So our talks came to a halt. It looked as if one of the new arrivals was very unhealthy. His relatives as well as he himself started talking to Ma about his illness. He was afflicted with a pain in his chest, which troubled him a lot. He had consulted any number of doctors and swallowed diverse medicines but there was no improvement. After recounting all this to Ma, he ended by saying: "Ma, now I am

appointing you alone as my physician."

Smiling, Ma gently repeated the words: "I am appointing you alone as my physician." Then after remaining silent for a while, She said: "Look Baba, this body cannot prescribe any other medicine save one: **The panacea for all ailments is the name of God.** You must repeat His name, take refuge in Him alone, and all your diseases will be cured. The illnesses and afflictions that people suffer are the result of their own previous actions. Your past actions were such that due to them your illness cannot be cured and you do not derive any benefit from medicines. Often it can be observed that some people continue to commit evil deeds, yet do not suffer any setback as regards their wealth. Even if one does not immediately undergo any suffering as a result of such misdeeds, yet the consequences remain suspended. The balance sheet of our evil deeds is stored away in minute detail and the results have to be experienced in due course.

All this suffering from disease or grief you must look upon as God's grace. He has created us and sent us to live in the world; and having arrived here we have completely forgotten Him. So, from time to time he inflicts pain on us to draw us back to him. In His presence there is supreme peace and supreme joy. He is constantly attracting people towards Him, so as to bestow on them this peace and joy. Those who are guilty of evil deeds He attracts towards Himself by striking them down again and again. And those

Brahmachariji: Yes, there is a definite ruling that before being initiated into *samnyasa* a propitious time has to be ascertained. But this is for *vividisa samnyasa* which is a sort of preparatory *samnyasa* to make one self ready for real, genuine *samnyasa*. In short, so long as one is governed by the *gunas* (attributes of nature), one will have to consult the almanac to ascertain a propitious time.

Sri Sri Ma supported this argument of the Brahmachari and said: To investigate the auspiciousness of a particular time or moment arises in a man's mind so long as he is bound by *samskaras* and *gunas*. When he becomes free from these such consultations are unnecessary.

Seed mantra and God's name.

In the evening the sky was overcast and it seemed as if the Mussoorie hills were covered by a dusty cloth. Lightning flashed from time to time but it had not yet started to rain. As there would be no outings in the evening and we would thus be able to spend the whole time in Ma's presence, I went upstairs and sat down before Her.

After keeping silent for a while, I asked: "Ma, would you care to discuss the question of *diksha* (initiation) also today?"

Ma: If anything emanates from within, I will.

I: At the time of initiation we find that the Guru bestows a seed mantra on some and only God's name on others. What is the reason for this differentiation? Is there any difference

between the potency of the *bija* mantra and that of the name?

Ma: From one point of view I would say that there is no difference between the potency of a seed mantra and that of a Name. A *bija* mantra charged with power as well as a Name charged with power will be instrumental in leading the disciple to the supreme state. Just as a seed contains a tree, so does a tree contain the seed. He who has received a Name will in due course also receive a *bija* mantra. But the Guru differentiates between bestowing a *bija* or a Name according to the inner qualification of the disciple and according to his tendencies and inclinations (*samskaras*) brought over from former births. However, many believe that a seed mantra is more potent than a Name. The Name is suitable for all and everyone, whereas the seed mantra is to be used when a certain stage has already been reached. The Name is often a well-known one whereas the seed mantra is kept concealed. This is why some people who have previously received a Name and later been initiated by a *bija* mantra, consider this a special favour and feel satisfied. But looked upon from the standpoint of the ultimate result, it must be said that the Name and the seed mantra are one.

I: What actually are the various mantras?

Ma: Well, well! Do you not yourselves declare that what delivers (*tran kara*) a person from his mind (*mana*) is called a mantra (*man-tran*)?

whose previous actions were just, He attracts towards Himself with love and compassion without causing them any hurt. Thus all the sorrow and suffering you behold in the world are an expression of his Divine Mercy, because it causes people to develop aversion to worldly enjoyment and to turn their minds towards God.

Again consider, you are now worried about your bodily ailments and are most eager to discover ways and means to cure them. But supposing this particular illness is cured--what then? If one ailment disappears, some other disease might attack you after some time or perhaps some other sorrow might be inflicted on you. Such is the very nature of the world. This is why I constantly insist that you should continuously call out to God and endeavour to realise Him. Once you have found Him, no sorrow or suffering can possibly approach you. You will then abide in permanent peace and joy.

Ma now asked: Have you taken *diksha* (initiation)?

Gentleman: No.

Ma: Have you ever recited God's name, have you ever read religious books, such as the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata*?

Gentleman: No, I have heard of them, but not read them.

Ma: Well, what sort of work appeals to you?

Gentleman: I like most of all to look after my worldly possessions, but often even this does not seem attractive to me. Due to my illness

I cannot do justice even to this work.

Ma: Baba, I am going to give you a few directions and asking you to endeavour to follow them. I am not asking you to follow these instructions in order to raise any false hopes. You should try to follow them only because it is a whim of this daughter of yours. Twice daily, before meals you must repeat the Lord's name. Not for very long, just one hour or half an hour a day will suffice. You may take whichever of God's names you like best, but it must be the same name each day before meals. At other times you may choose any other of God's names. And every single day you must read some portion of a sacred book, whether it be the *Ramayana*, *Bhagavata* or *Mahabharata*. If any day you find that you cannot spare the time due to pressure of work, then just to observe the rule, you may read at least one line or even a few words. Do not allow the rule to be broken! If due to illness you feel quite unable to read, then (glancing at his wife) you, Ma, must read aloud and let your husband listen. Do not stop reading even if he falls asleep. You should read for as long as it is the usual rule. You are his wife, his companion, joined to him before the Lord (*dharma patni*), so you must help him to fulfil his religious duties. If you do not help him in this, what is the use of being his lawfully wedded wife?

You must keep your mind on God. How can this be done? You must hang pictures of God in various forms on the walls of the room in

which you stay, and glancing at them from time to time, you should ponder: "These are all the likenesses of God." Further, keep photos of great beings in your room and when you gaze at them and read the life stories of these great men you may feel: "Oh, how many hardships have these mahatmas not undergone in order to realise God!" Then the desire will awaken in you to do likewise. Besides, it is also a good idea to keep pictures of saints and sages in your house because this will exercise its influence on you. Considerable inspiration can be derived from their sight and touch.

Furthermore, when you go out, whatever you behold, you should regard as an image of God. Suppose you see a beautiful flower, try to imagine: "Oh, here is my Lord, blossoming forth in the guise of this lovely flower. "If you do not perceive all this with such eyes, but look at it with greed or desire, there is danger because your mind will be soiled and hence a process of cleansing and purification will be necessary.

At first all this repetition of the Lord's name and reading of spiritual books may not be to your liking, but in spite of this you must try to attend to it with great regularity.

Ma said all this in such a sweet compassionate manner that all present were simply charmed listening to Her. The gentleman who had come to get some medicine for his various ailments, appeared to be highly satisfied when he took his departure.

Looking for an auspicious hour before starting on a journey.

Kishenpur Ashram
19.5.41

When I came to Ma this morning, I found Sri Prajnanananda Brahmachari and a few others with Her. The question of looking up an auspicious moment for a journey arose.

Ma asked the Brahmachari: Baba when starting on a journey, when and under what circumstances should one choose an auspicious moment?

Brahmachariji: When a journey is undertaken for a particular objective, such as for the realization of something keenly desired, then one should choose proper time. But when a journey is undertaken without any desired objective, then this is unnecessary.

Ma: Suppose someone wants to realize God and leaves for a remote place to practise sadhana, should he make sure that the time of his departure is auspicious?

Brahmachariji: For a journey undertaken for the realization of Supreme Truth, there is no particular moment set apart as being auspicious. For such an objective all times are propitious.

Ma: When someone wishes to become a *samnyasi*, he carefully looks for a proper time and distinguishes between auspicious and inauspicious dates and hours. Yet the only reason for embracing *samnyasa* is the realization of God.

Brahmachariji: Yes, there is a definite ruling that before being initiated into *samnyasa* a propitious time has to be ascertained. But this is for *vividisa samnyasa* which is a sort of preparatory *samnyasa* to make one self ready for real, genuine *samnyasa*. In short, so long as one is governed by the *gunas* (attributes of nature), one will have to consult the almanac to ascertain a propitious time.

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I: What actually are the various mantras?

Ma: Well, well! Do you not yourselves declare that what delivers (*tran kara*) a person from his mind (*mana*) is called a mantra (*man-tran*)?

I: How were all the mantras created?

Ma: All this is written down in your religious text books.

After saying this much Ma spoke a little more and then fell silent. Thereafter other topics came up for discussion. As Prajnanananda Brahma chari was present, Ma asked him to elucidate the subject of creation of mantras. He did speak on this issue but nobody was satisfied with what he said.

As the weather became bad, many of those who had come from the city started leaving, others went downstairs. Ma then reverted to the question raised by me and said:

"Look, words do not always emanate from my mouth. Be it due to the presence of certain people or to the atmosphere, words sometimes dry up. But do not imagine that I do this purposely. All this happens spontaneously.

"As to the question of the creation of mantras you have raised, from a certain point of view there is no such things as creation. Everything is already present, so why talk about creation? Yet, from another viewpoint you may say, creation does take place, both, ancient creation and new creation has taken place and does take place now. This means looking at the same issue from various angles--just as the sea is full of waves as well as quite motionless. The same thing may be simultaneously steady and yet restless. Creation is also like that.

A mantra consists of sounds. The *nada* or

Omkara (pranava) is the root of creation. You call it the *Sabda Brahman* (sound of Brahman), don't you? The waves and the sound that arise from the vibrations or tremors of the Supreme Being (*Parama Satta*) are the beginning of Creation. The mantra and its presiding deity are also created out of the *nada*. Within your own Self are contained all mantras and Deities and everything else. What you hear about different abodes, different words and different levels is all contained within this body. It is said, is it not? "What is not contained in the microcosm is not present in the macrocosm." Viewed from this angle, all mantras are eternal. On the other hand, by different juxtapositions of various letters, new mantras can be created."

In this manner Ma started to enlarge on many subtle issues, most of which were beyond my comprehension and I realized that I had broached a subject without being sufficiently entitled to do so.

Dehradun,

Tuesday, 20.5.1941

Motoring across the hills with Ma in the afternoon, Ma pointed to the scenery around us and said:

"Behold how beautiful all this appears! Everything is present, yet is also absent. You are sitting in front of me, I can turn my face towards you, yet not see you at all. It is the idea which creates. (Turning towards me) You raised the

subject of creation of mantras the other day, didn't you? Together with the creation of the human mind, there has been the creation of ways and means to be delivered from the mind (*mantra*). How wonderful is God's dispensation! Furthermore there are different strata of creation. At a certain layer there is no creation, at another it certainly exists. There is yet another level where creation exists and is also non-existent, both simultaneously. All these are different experiences on different levels of *sadhana*.

You maintain, don't you, that one cannot escape from the effects of *prarabdha* karma (karma that is bound to fructify in the present birth). Yet there is a certain state in which even *prarabdha* is destroyed. Once the flame of Knowledge has been lit, how can the effects of karma remain undestroyed? But this state is most difficult to obtain."

At the conclusion of this topic we returned to the Ashram. Ma sat down on the front veranda and we went off to perform our evening prayers.

Mataji was sitting on the eastern veranda of the Ashram. We also were squatting there. Prof. Shyama Charan Babu of Agra College was amongst us. He asked Mataji why She had been laughing so excessively the day before.

Mataji: Smiles and tears are indeed such with this body. You saw me laughing only at the time of reading. In the evening also I laughed heartily on hearing the sounds coming out of the water-tap in the Ashram yard. You must have

noticed that when a water-tap is turned, air often comes out of it with a hissing sound. Yesterday evening the tap of the Ashram yard was emitting a similar sound. When I heard it I was convulsed with laughter. This is because there are some screws loose somewhere in this head. Again, when Swamiji was reading at night, a slight touch of his hand turned the book-stand upside down. This gave me more convulsions of laughter. But the incident itself was nothing to laugh about. That shows that laughter comes to this body without any apparent reason. Anything may give occasion to a fit of laughter. Any attempt to check it at the time has the effect of only pouring oil on fire.

Once at the Dacca Ashram there was a *Kirtan* party. The *Kirtaniya* was singing in an inspired mood. His face was suffused with tears. The listeners were visibly moved. Though the singer had plenty of emotion, his literary attainments were no better than those of this body. While thus singing he mispronounced a word. Though the slip was slight and did not affect the emotional flow either of the singer or of the listeners, it made me laugh. Khukuni tried hard to compose me. She whispered to me that it would hurt the feelings of others. But it was all in vain. They then felt compelled to remove me to some other place. Even there I was rolling with laughter. This may give you some idea as to the character of my laughter.

It is not that this body laughs only when there is something comical. It is shaken with

laughter even when there is little or no occasion for it. At the sight of people's grief this body has often burst into laughter. Those who are unacquainted with the vagaries of this body may very well be offended. They may think that I simply laugh at them which would be far from the truth.

Sometimes it so happens that the incident which seems to move this body to laughter is not the real cause at all. Some incidents of the past or future swim into my ken and give occasion to the laughter.

Various States of Ma during Her Lila of Sadhana

There was a Gujarati lady amongst us named Miss Mani Ben. She asked: "Mataji, you have just referred to your visions of the past and future. How do you have them? Do you see them with your two physical eyes or (pointing at the space between the two eye-brows) do you see them with the third eye that is here?"

Mataji: How do I see them? Why, the eyes are all over the body. Don't you know that everything has in it (the essence of) all other things? Hands, legs, hair, in fact every part of the body can be made the instrument of sight. Of course, it is quite possible to see through the two eyes which all possess; and the existence of a third eye of which you speak is also true. People do possess such eyes. This may sound strange to you, but nonetheless it is true.

Once this body lived on three grains of rice

daily for four or five months. Nobody can live for so long on such a meagre diet. It looks like a miracle. But it has been so with this body. It has been so, because it can be so. The reason for this is that what we eat is not all necessary for us. The body takes in only the quintessence of the food, the rest is thrown out. As a result of *sadhana* the body becomes so constituted that though no food is taken physically, it can imbibe from the surroundings whatever is necessary for its maintenance. In three ways the body can be maintained without food: One way has just been referred to viz. the body can take from the environment the nourishment necessary for its maintenance. Secondly, one can live on air alone. For I have just said that in everything there are all other things; so that the properties of other things are in the air in some measure. Therefore by taking in air alone we get the essence of other things. Again, it may so happen that the body is not taking anything at all, yet it is being maintained unimpaired as in a state of *Samadhi*. Thus you find that as a consequence of *sadhana* it is quite possible to live without what we call food. In a similar way *sadhana* can effect such transformation of the body that by virtue of it any part of it can discharge the function of the eye.

Shyama Charan Babu: We hear that sages can take over the sufferings of other people.

Mataji: This is true. Sages can mitigate the sufferings of other people in three ways: they can

take the suffering upon themselves and thus relieve the sufferer; or without taking those sufferings upon themselves, they may distribute and apportion them amongst some other persons. This lightens to some extent the intensity and acuteness of the suffering. Also, it may so happen that sages out of supreme Grace can relieve an individual from all the consequences of his actions and restore him to Life Divine, which is his true Self. But such incidents are rare. Hence it is said that purification comes through suffering.

Myself: Mataji, how is it possible to distribute sufferings amongst others? This looks like sheer injustice.

Mataji: No, there is nothing wrong in it. Sages would divide the sufferings only amongst those who are only too willing and anxious to share them.

Shyama Charan Babu: Why should I allow a sage to bear my cross?

Mataji: That is well said. A *bhakta* would speak in this way. A devotee would not have the object of his devotion share his sufferings. He would rather bear his own cross. But sometimes such sufferings are too much for him, and his only concern then becomes how to get rid of them. In such cases only the question of mitigation or extenuation arises. With me, however, everything has happened spontaneously. I have seen that this body has taken upon itself the sufferings of others, not purposely, but without an effort of the will. Once I went to see a patient who was

attacked by a severe type of dysentery. On my return I found myself attacked by that very disease. I had frequent motions and passed blood and mucus. This went on for twelve hours. Then I was all right again. For some time something like a blizzard passed over this body, then everything was quiet. The man who had the original attack came round as soon as this body had the disease.

At another time this body took upon itself the fever from which another person had been suffering. Every third or fourth day I used to have a violent paroxysm of fever which lasted for three hours. The temperature shot up to 103° or 104°. We were then at Cox's Bazar. The nature of the fever convinced Dina Bandhu Babu that it was nothing but malaria. Bholanath was of the same opinion, and was anxious to administer quinine. But I flatly refused to take the drug. Dina Bandhu Babu had an almost paternal affection for this body, which used to address him as father. He often would humour me by complying with my requests. Though a Brahmin himself, he had given up the Brahminical practice of uttering *Gayatri Mantra*. But I induced him to resume it.

However, when he found me suffering from repeated paroxysms of fever he lost all patience and wrathfully declared: "These devotees have conspired to kill my daughter. I won't listen to anybody. I intend to administer by force, if necessary, quinine this very night." I heard all this, but said nothing. In the afternoon this

body fell into a trance-like condition. True to his words Dina Bandhu Babu came with quinine at night. Seeing me in a state of unconsciousness he shook me hard. Though his shaking and hustling made me open my eyes, they remained unmoved in a fixed stare. This pricked his curiosity. He examined me by focussing the light of an electric torch on my eyes and even thrusting his finger into them to see whether they would wink. When all his endeavours failed to restore me to a state of consciousness, he gave up the attempt to administer quinine that night. But he could not abandon the idea of trying the drug on me. Of course I knew how long the fever was to last. So I told him that if the fever persisted beyond a certain period I would take the medicine. But I did not take it, because within the specified period I was all right.

I have just now referred to the incident of my living on three grains of rice per day for four or five months. That is an illustration of how creature comforts can be overcome by renunciation. 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 realize 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, viz. to serve all as God, to do everything for the sake of God.

At that time I lived as one who had taken a vow of silence. I found enough time at my disposal even after the completion of all my household work. Usha lived near our house. She used to read out the Mahabharata at noon. One day I went to hear it. She handed over the book to me for reading. I took it in my hand but could not read; because at that time God's Name always bubbled out of me as from a spring. Somehow it got itself tacked to my natural respiration. Hence I found that any attempt to read the book only resulted in my suffocation. Moreover, you have some idea as to the range of my literary attainments. In order to read I had to spell through every word. When I attempted to read I found that I could not take in two syllables at a time. Suppose I was to pronounce 'ami'. I could pronounce 'a' all right, but when it was time to pronounce "mi" I found that I had cleanly forgotten the 'a' and the effacement was so complete that I could not trace its existence in me. In this condition no intelligent reading was possible. But

when I sat down to spin, I found that it was no hindrance to repeating God's Name. Both could go on simultaneously. I have spun a good deal of yarn. When I was at Bajitpur I myself prepared a towel and, with the help of a weaver, a pair of *dhotis* with my hand-spun yarn.

At this stage a lady remarked: "Ma, once I have seen you singing and weeping."

Mataji: There is nothing uniform with this body. *Svabhava* (Nature) takes Her unhampered course. The singing and weeping you mention are possible at a certain stage of *sadhana*. Suppose I sat down to sing. At that time my idea was that it was through God's Grace I was uttering His Name. As I went on repeating the Name, another idea took possession of me, and I thought: "Alas! I am praying so fervently and for such a long time, yet God is not revealing Himself to me!" This sense of frustration created a pang in my heart, and at once tears would trickle down my cheeks. These are, of course, stages of ignorance, for with the dawn of Knowledge prayers and *sadhana* cease.

When the different stages of *sadhana* were being manifested through this body, what a variety of experiences I then had! Sometimes I used to hear distinctly: "Repeat this mantra". When I got the mantra a query rose in me: "Whose mantra is this?" At once the reply came: "It is the mantra of Ganesh or Vishnu" or something like that. Again the query came from myself: "How does he look?" A form was revealed in no time.

Every question was met by a prompt reply and there was immediate dissolution of all doubts and misgivings.

One day I distinctly got the command: "From to day you are not to bow down to anybody." I asked my invisible monitor: "Who are you?" The reply came: "Your *Sakti*" (Power). I thought that there was a distinct *Sakti* residing in me and guiding me by issuing commands from time to time. Since all this happened at the stage of *sadhana*, *Jnana* (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 super-imposition of ignorance. At that time I was *mouni* (observing silence). This was also due to particular commands. The father of this body came to see me at that time. I could not make obeisance to him. Not that I refrained from doing it intentionally, but this body refused to do anything contrary to the commands it received from time to time. When the father of this body saw that I was not doing my duty by him, he took it to heart. But as I was *mouni* at that time I could not explain the situation to him. He came to regard me with suspicion. He argued that if my various moods and experiences had a spiritual origin, there was no reason why I should be disrespectful to those to whom respect was due. This led him to consult different persons regarding my condition.

In the meantime *Siva Ratri* (auspicious night

for the worship of God Siva) came. On such occasions it was customary with the father of this body to sit up the whole night and worship the God Siva. Corresponding to the four quarters of the night he used to perform *puja* four times. Each *puja* was meant for the well-being of a particular individual. This time also he proceeded as usual with the *puja*, and I sat up with him to make arrangements for it. When after finishing *puja* three times during the first three quarters of the night, he proceeded to perform the *puja* for the fourth quarter for the benefit of this body, a curious thing happened. He found that as he was proceeding with the worship, this body was uttering aloud all the relevant mantras and prayers quite automatically. This surprised him very much. Though he said nothing, he could not help looking at me from time to time.

However, to proceed with the account of my *sadhana*. 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.

Myself: How long was the period intervening between these two stages?

Mataji: Quite long. But in the meantime various *vibhuti*s were being manifested through

this body. These manifestations have again occurred in various ways: Sometimes they have been manifested in ignorance, e.g., I found that as soon as I had touched a particular patient he recovered in no time, but I did not know beforehand that he would be cured in that way. Sometimes the manifestation occurred with knowledge mixed up with ignorance, e.g., on seeing a patient I used to argue in this way: "I know from my past experience that my touch has a healing effect. If I touch this patient he may also get well." To verify this I touched him and found that he was cured immediately. Then again manifestations of *vibhuti* have taken place with full knowledge and consciousness on my part. Thus I knew for certain that I could cure a disease by a mere touch, and I touched in full confidence of success.

Jiten Babu: In what other ways have your *vibhuti*s been manifested? And how do they manifest themselves now?

Mataji: *Vibhuti*s have now become a part and parcel of *Svabhava*.

Jiten Babu: I do not quite follow you.

Mataji: *Vibhuti* becoming a part of *Svabhava* means that everything is now regulated by *Svabhava* or the Supreme Self. Here there is no scope for the play of a limited self. This was so with this body from its very infancy. Such disclosures are not always made by this body. Since they are coming spontaneously now, I give them out. Let me tell you that what I am, I have been from my infancy. But when the different stages of *sadhana*

were being manifested through this body there was something like a superimposition of *ajnana* (ignorance). But what sort of *ajnana* was that? It was really *Jnana* masquerading as *ajnana*. Let me tell you a story relating to my childhood. In childhood when this body was at Vidyakut, a woman became pregnant, and her child was born when I was still there. I knew from the beginning that the child was not to live long. He came only to complete his cycle of births and deaths. However, the child became one year old. He was not very nice to look at. His complexion was jet black, but his body was very soft. That is why he was always seen in the arms of others, who all wanted to have the luxury of the touch. And the child was all smiles. When he was over a year and a few months old, his span of life came to an end; and he became seriously ill. I went to see him on the day he was to die. On my way I took with me a hibiscus flower, but rubbed it so that the people might not know what I had in my hand. I left the flower under the child's pillow. Those who were present there thought that I had left some '*nirmalya*', seeing that the child was near his end. I did all this under the urge of *Svabhava*.

At the stage of *sadhana*, *vibhuti* first manifests itself as joy which comes from the recitation of God's Name. When people experience this, they think that they have got everything that *sadhana* can yield; and their upward progress is thereby arrested. But he who keeps himself always on the move without being overwhelmed

by such manifestations of joy, finds himself in possession of various miraculous powers. But those powers are not meant for display. They should be carefully kept under control. He alone can know his true Self, who keeps alive within him an insatiable thirst for the Divine without being contented with the possession of supernormal powers -- powers which enable him to cure any disease by a mere touch of the hand or which lead to the instantaneous fulfilment of all his desires.

Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun
Friday, 23rd May, 1941.

The Way to Peace

In the afternoon, some ladies of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's family arrived to meet Ma. They raised the subject of general unrest in the world.

Ma said: "There is bound to be unrest as long as duality reigns. It lies in the nature of worldly things to produce unrest. Hence it is essential to be ever engaged in activities prompted by one's true nature, that is to say, to do God's work. To perform service to mankind is also very good. By such work the mind is purified. But to do service by fits and starts will not lead to peace. Where two are, strife and unrest are unavoidable. If you engage yourself in ceaseless, uninterrupted service directed to Him, then only by His mercy the waters of the Ganga of Knowledge will wash away all your desires and doubts, and only then will you be at peace."

One of the ladies asked Ma for a cure for insanity.

Ma replied: "I have only one kind of medicine with me. I have just spoken to you about it. This body does not prescribe any specific remedy for anybody. There is general suffering in the world due to previous misdeeds. But this suffering is for the ultimate good. Just as the mother punishes an unruly child to teach him, so this worldly suffering produces a similar effect. That is why I always stress that constant remembrance or contemplation of God is the only way to supreme peace for mankind."

Truth and Untruth

Late that same evening Nepalada (the late Narayan Swami of our Ashram) was reading from the Mahabharata, and translating it immediately into Hindi. This continued upto 10 p.m., and thereafter various topics came up for discussion.

Ma said: "I arrived at the station and saw Bhupati Babu boarding the train. I went for a drive to the station."

Myself: I had already presumed this.

Ma: How did you do so?

Myself: You came down to enquire whether Bhupati Babu had left for the station or not, and later I learnt that you had proceeded to Dehradun by car, so I surmised that you had a *kheyala* concerning Bhupati Babu, and that you had gone to the station to meet him.

Ma: When I came down from upstairs, I had

the *kheyala* that as Lakshmi Tankha usually comes to see me at about this time, so if she happened to bring her car, it would be possible for me to go to the station. In actual fact, there and then I had already seen Bhupati.

Myself: Then why did you enquire if his tonga had left the Ashram when you came down?

Ma: What else could I say? I have to say something. I knew full well that Bhupati had said good-bye to me and that I had come downstairs much later, so Bhupati could not be here anymore. Nevertheless I asked the question. Do you know what this means? A semblance of ignorance in the presence of knowledge. Did I not tell you the other day that I am now exactly as I was in my childhood? Yet when all the various *lilas* of *sadhana* were being enacted by this body, there was this outward semblance of ignorance. This now is something similar.

After remaining silent for some time, Ma continued: What you call telling a lie, is not what I am talking about now. If you know something and you falsify it deliberately, then this is called telling a lie. But if, in different states of being you speak of the same thing quite differently, then this is not telling an untruth. Because if you talk according to the state you are in, it is true at that stage.

Is it necessary to practise Samyam in solitude?

Saturday, 24th May, 1941

In the morning Nepaldada was reading from the Mahabharata as usual in the front veranda of the Ashram. Sri Sri Ma was seated on an *asana* near the staircase. At this juncture a few local ladies arrived with a basket of fruit to see Ma. They performed their *pranama* to Ma and placed the basket before Her. Ma smiled gently, and pointing to Nepaldada, She said: "Place the basket near the reader. Let us see which way his mind veers!"

Hearing Ma's words all started laughing. Nepaldada smiled and asked Ma, "Does the mother test her son making him aware of his greediness? Suppose he fails to control his craving in the presence of the coveted articles?"

Ma: "It has been done because it is certain that he will remain indifferent."

Nepaldada: Is it not wise to keep away from temptation?

Ma: During the first stages of *samyam*, it is wise to keep away from temptation, because otherwise paralysis may set in, that is to say, one may be unable to control the senses. Later, when one has become somewhat firm, it is better to try and practise self-control by having desirable objects near at hand. Why should the need ever arise to run away at the sight of desirable objects? And even when fleeing to the jungle, is there any deliverance? There also longed for objects may make their appearance. So it is necessary to

remain concentrated on one's Goal under all circumstances. It is He who appears before us in all forms; if one cultivates this attitude and arrives at this actual knowledge, then only can one be at complete rest and ease.

Nepaldada: How will I realise that I have become sufficiently strong?

Ma: When the fruit ripens, this need not be announced. Its colour and smell proclaim its condition.

The reading from the text was taken up again. After a while Ma indicated that the fruits should be cut into pieces, saying, "The child is hungry, and cannot wait any longer". She distributed the work between two or three persons. When all the fruit was cut up, Ma ate only a tiny bit Herself, and asked that the *prasada* should be distributed among all present. This task fell to the lot of Sadhan Brahmachari. He was not very keen on this type of work, but because it was Sri Ma's request, he was compelled to do it. Ma laughed and said, "I often give tasks to people which they do not relish."

Sevaji's state

In the afternoon Sevaji and some other ladies came to meet Ma. They all went upstairs to Ma's room, while we sat downstairs in the hall, conversing. A little later Nepaldada came and told us, "Come into Ma's room, and watch the fun."

So we went along to Ma's room, where we found Her sitting on Her bed and laughing. Sevaji

and the other ladies were seated in front of Ma. On seeing me, Ma said, "I have created this situation in order to have some fun with Seva. I said to her, 'today we are going to Meerut, so check my pulse to see if I am fit to travel such a distance by bus'. As soon as she touched me, this has become her condition. The hand with which she touched me had remained so long suspended in midair, only now it has dropped down, but she cannot open her eyes nor move her body."

I then perceived that Sevaji was sitting like a piece of stone. There was no movement in her body. Her eyes were closed as if in meditation. On noticing her condition I asked Ma, "Is she now unconscious?"

Ma: No, she is quite conscious. She can hear what I say, but cannot open her eyes.

Saying this Ma smilingly asked Sevaji: "Are you now going to sit like this indefinitely?" Sevaji smiled gently but could not open her eyes.

Ma told me, "So you see, she can hear my words, but cannot reply or open her eyes. There is not the slightest artificiality in her condition. Had she not heard my words, her facial expression would not have changed at all. If she were able to speak, she would have replied on hearing my question. She will not do anything deceitfully."

A gentleman: Is this a kind of inert *Samadhi*? (*jada samadhi*).

Ma: Not quite, but something in this line.

Nepaldada: Why does this happen?

Ma: She has something in her which induces such a condition. But Seva herself is not aware of this trait of hers. She is as simple as a child. It is not at all difficult to make her laugh or cry.

They are two sisters. They used to cook their own food and perform their own household chores. But from her early years Seva had a strong inclination to study, so her father educated her and her younger sister also. Having earned a little, Seva bought a piece of land and built a house on it. Ultimately she got her younger sister married, and the house she built at a cost of some Rs. 16,000/- or Rs. 17,000/- she donated to her sister. Seva says, "What will I do with a house or property? If the necessity arises I can always beg for my food." Her brother-in-law's people wanted her also to donate the piece of land she possessed at the time of the wedding, and it was not as if Seva was unwilling. But her other relatives dissuaded her from doing so. You should know that God looks after the welfare of those who are indifferent to possessions."

Seva's trust is so childlike that she invariably believes without doubting anything that people tell her. Seva became very friendly with a woman who used to associate frequently with her. On observing this I warned Seva that she should not associate so closely with householders. On hearing this she exclaimed, "Ma, what is this you are saying? This woman calls me 'sister' and loves me so dearly. Furthermore she is so deeply religious. She is always talking about God and

often becomes absorbed in meditation. What harm is there in my going to her house?"

"On hearing these words, I did not say anything more to her. Had I then forbidden her to associate with the woman, Seva would have in her simplicity informed her friend that I had instructed Seva not to visit her. This would not have been beneficial, as the woman might have felt hurt. Seva used to stay in this woman's house whenever she visited Hardwar. I could see that the woman's character was not what Seva imagined and so I persuaded Seva to stay in Baghat House instead, and she finally obeyed.

Seva has passed her Doctor's degree, so one cannot say she is devoid of knowledge. But she has not much worldly shrewdness.

"After listening to all this, Gopi Baba (Mahamahopadhaya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj) once asked me whether or not this worldly cleverness could be acquired at a later date. I replied, "Yes, this could be so, but if, in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, true knowledge is once attained, then there is no danger of deception anymore. That is why so much emphasis is laid on regular spiritual practice.

"It is not as if Seva was very religious minded as a child. She then never pondered on whether God existed or not, or whether one should try to realise Him or not. But she had a strong urge to be truthful and she led a flawless life. For all these reasons her character was very pure. That is why certain things have such

an effect on her bodily functions. Not only by touching me does she attain such a state, she even does so sometimes as soon as she enters my room. At times she would tell me that as soon as she enters my room, she feels a sort of electric current passing through her, and therefore her body becomes dizzy. This is why she would sit down motionless and mum. She does not behave like this at all times, but fairly often this sort of thing is happening. On the other hand I have noticed that when she has helped me to bath or dry my body, there has been no change perceptible in her. So when I chided her by saying that these sudden changes in her bodily condition were nothing but some type of hysteria, because she has at those times touched me so frequently without such consequences, she would laugh and say: "No, no, all this is not hysteria at all."

"When engaged in meditating also, at times Seva was unable to move. One day an Inspector was expected to arrive to inspect their work. She had dressed specially for the occasion, and was sitting waiting for him, but as the Inspector seemed to be delayed, Seva thought she would spend the time profitably in meditation. As soon as she sat down, she entered that state of absorption! So who was there to receive the car or approach the Inspector? This happening however had no disagreeable consequences.

"Even now Seva sometimes enters those states. On occasions she has been ready to visit me when such a condition supervened! If then

she has the power of speech, she declares, "If you all will take hold of me, and put me in a car, I shall be alright", because she knows she will be normal within a short time. At other times, she cannot even speak. I have often told her to resign from her job, but she declares that she wants to continue her work.

In the beginning she could not exactly understand what this condition of hers was. Later, when she became aware that she reached such a state when sitting down to meditate, she imagined that such a state was a part of the process of meditation! Now of course she understands that she reaches such a condition because deep meditation comes about. In this way inner knowledge is revealed in bits and pieces. Even without somebody else's explanation, this kind of knowledge goes on revealing itself, and it is not too difficult to understand the true state of one's condition. While very often the revelation of such knowledge awaits the guidance of the Guru. When the Guru arrives himself, and explains to the disciple exactly his condition, it is only then that he attains unquestionable knowledge of his own Reality. That is why our scriptures maintain that without receiving Divine wisdom from the Guru, true knowledge of the Divine Being cannot be attained.

The real reason why Seva reached such a condition whenever she touched me was due to the fact that the sight and touch of this body immediately directed her outward sensory percep-

tion inwards towards the Self. The momentary paralysis of her limbs, her inability to open her eyes, all this is the result of intense meditation (*dhyana*). It is not that others do not reach identical states, but because their doors are shut, outward manifestation of it does not take place. Seva's being is so pure and unspoilt, that this attainment of outward manifestation is easy and happens naturally."