



SMARANIKA

Dedicated

to

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee

on

The Inauguration of the Temple
Ananda Jyoti Peetham

and

Celebration of

HER

Ninety First Birth Anniversary



SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE ASHRAM

Kankhal, Uttar Pradesh

Akshaya Tritiya

17th Baisakh, 1395 Beng. Era.

(1st May, 1987)

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श्री श्री जगद्गुरु शङ्कराचार्य महामंस्थानम् शारदापीठम्, शृङ्गेरी

मां आनन्दमयीति नाम्ना सुप्रथिता काचिदासीत् योगिनी । तस्याश्च
चरितं अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमतां ' इति भगवद्गीतावचनं
चरितार्थं अतनोत् । बहुभ्यो वत्सरेभ्यः प्राक् तस्या योगिन्याः
पश्चिमोस्माकं सम्पन्नः । स सुतरां श्रद्धादृष्टगौरवोपेत आसीत् ।
काल्यत एव जितेन्द्रियविषयगणा भगवतो ध्यानमेव ध्येयमाकलयन् ।
मन्त्र रहस्यानि अवैत् । लोककारुण्यप्रेरितान्तरङ्गा बहूनां दुःखं
अपानयत् । नैकान् नास्तिकानपि भगवति बद्धादरात् अतानीत् ।
महवः नैकविधदोषदूषितान्तःकरणा अपि तस्याः करुणातिशयेन
निर्मलमानसा अभूवन् । शीलधर्मयोरभिवृद्धये नैकेषु क्षेत्रेषु
भागवत भवनानि व्यधत् । लोकह्येमाय परमेश्वरकृपां आकाङ्क्ष्य
कोहन् अतिरुद्रयागादि धर्मान् अन्वतिष्ठत् ।

तादृश्याः महायोगिन्याः तिरोधानं भक्तजनानां महती क्षतिः ।

अधुना तदुद्देशान् प्रसारयितुं कनखलक्षेत्रे अमृत्यतृतोद्यायं
आनन्दज्योतिर्पीठमिति स्थापनं प्रवर्तयिष्यन्ति भक्ता इति विदित्वा
मोदमनुभवामः । उद्यमोयं साफल्यनोत्प्रेत्याशास्महे ।

शृङ्गेरिः

अष्टम्या काल्पुण सुदि अष्टमी

भानुवासरः ८.३.१९६७.

इति नारायणस्मरणम्

विद्यातीर्थः

2

अनन्त श्री समलङ्कृत ज्योतिष्पीठाधीश्वर जगद्गुरु 'शङ्कराचार्य'

श्री स्वामी विष्णुदेवानन्द सरस्वतीजी महाराज
ज्योतिर्मठ—बदरिकाश्रम (हिमालय)

सर्व शक्तिमान् सर्वाधिष्ठान् जगन्नियन्ता परम प्रभु नारायण से ले कर वर्तमान् कालिक सन्त परम्परा ने ही हमारे देश के जन मानस में आध्यात्मिकता का सन्देश, उपदेश एवं तत्त्वज्ञान का अनुभव कराता हुआ, स्वतः पद्म पत्रवत् संसार में रहता रहा है। उन्हीं प्राचीन सन्त परम्परा का साक्षात् स्वरूप माता श्री आनन्दमयी के रूप में धरा धाम पर अवतीर्ण हुआ था। माताजी से कई बार सम्पर्क में आने का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ। यथा—वाराणसी, आगरपाड़ा कलकत्तामें, तथा अन्त में सन १९८१-८२ ई० के प्रयाग में अर्द्धकुम्भ पर मिलने का अवसर मिला था। माताजी सभी सन्तों को, चाहे वह अधिक वय का हो, चाहे सम वयस्क हो अथवा अल्प वय ही क्यों न हो, सभी को पिताजी ही कह, सम्बोधित करती थी। माताजी सरलता एवं सौजन्यता की साक्षात् विग्रह थीं। माताजी का किसी से विरोध नहीं था। सभी सम्प्रदाय के सन्तों में उनका सम्मान था और वह भी सभी सम्प्रदाय के सन्तों का सम्मान करती थीं। जिस प्रकार भगवन्नाम की महत्ता सभी सम्प्रदाय एक स्वर से स्वीकार करते हैं, किसी का भी वैमत्य नहीं होता, वैसे ही माता श्री आनन्दमयी जी से किसी का वैमत्य नहीं था।

माता श्री आनन्दमयी के सम्बन्ध में तथा उनके सदगुणों के सम्बन्ध में जितना ही कहा जाय वह अत्यल्प ही होगा। माताजी के आनन्द ज्योति पीठ (महा समाधि) के उद्घाटन समारोह के समय पर प्रकाशित होने वाली स्मारिका समय पर प्रकाशित हो कर, जनमानस में सदगुणों का संचार कर, भक्ति पथ पर अग्रसरित करे, ऐसी हमारी मंगल कामना एवं शुभाशीर्वाद है।

शुभेच्छु
विष्णुदेवानन्द सरस्वती



सत्यमेव जयते

PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE

Indian thought and philosophy have been vastly influenced by great spiritual leaders through the centuries. They have implanted in our heritage the values of tolerance and love. It is these values that have held our diverse society together.

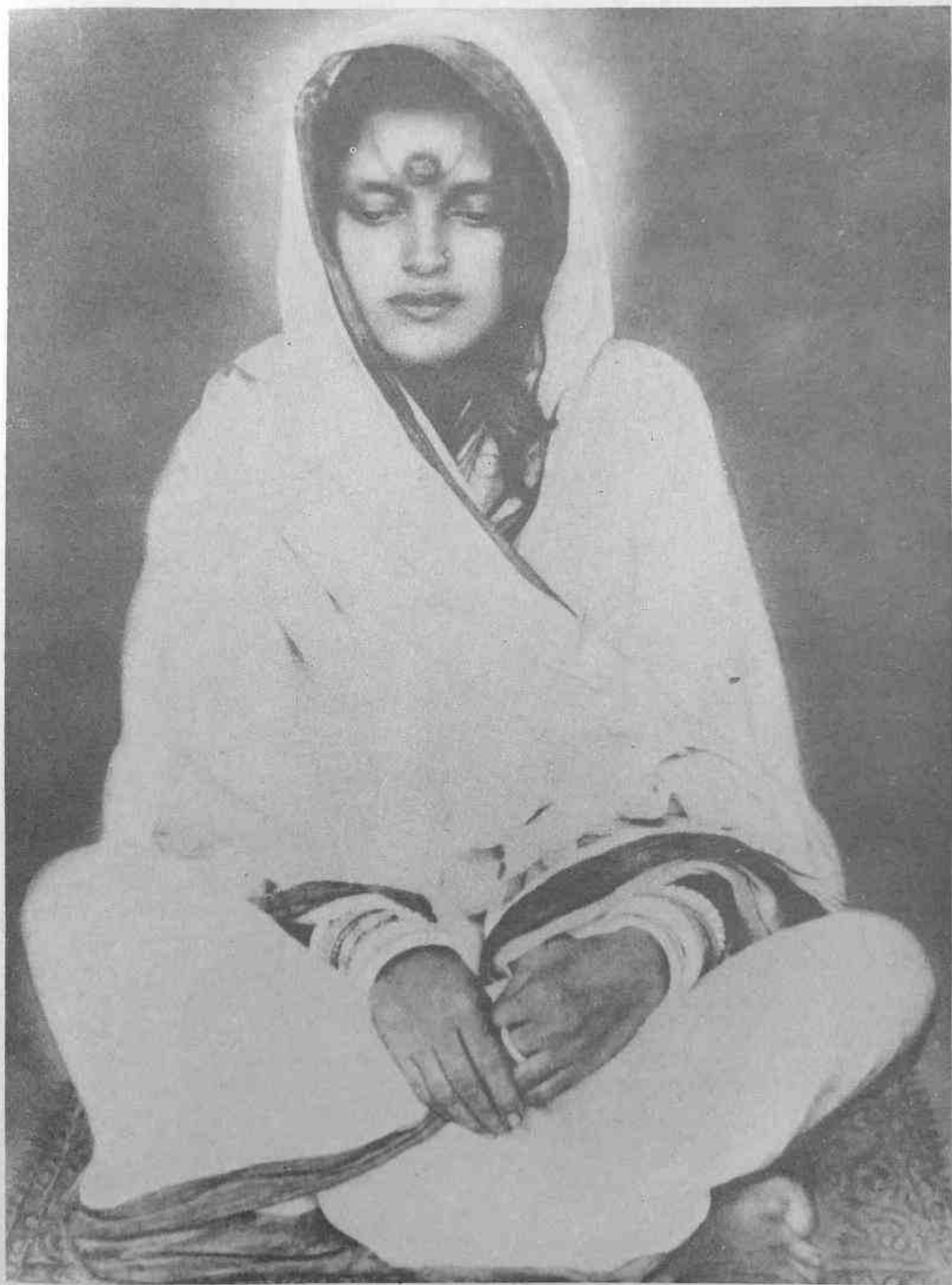
Ma Anandamayee was a person who shed calm and steady spiritual light. Her teachings transcended the narrow ritualistic barriers of religion. For a long time to come they will continue to be of relevance to each of us in the appreciation of Truth.

I am glad that the inauguration of Maha Samadhi Mandir of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee is to be done at Kankhal. My good wishes for the success of the dedication ceremony.

New Delhi
April 8, 1987

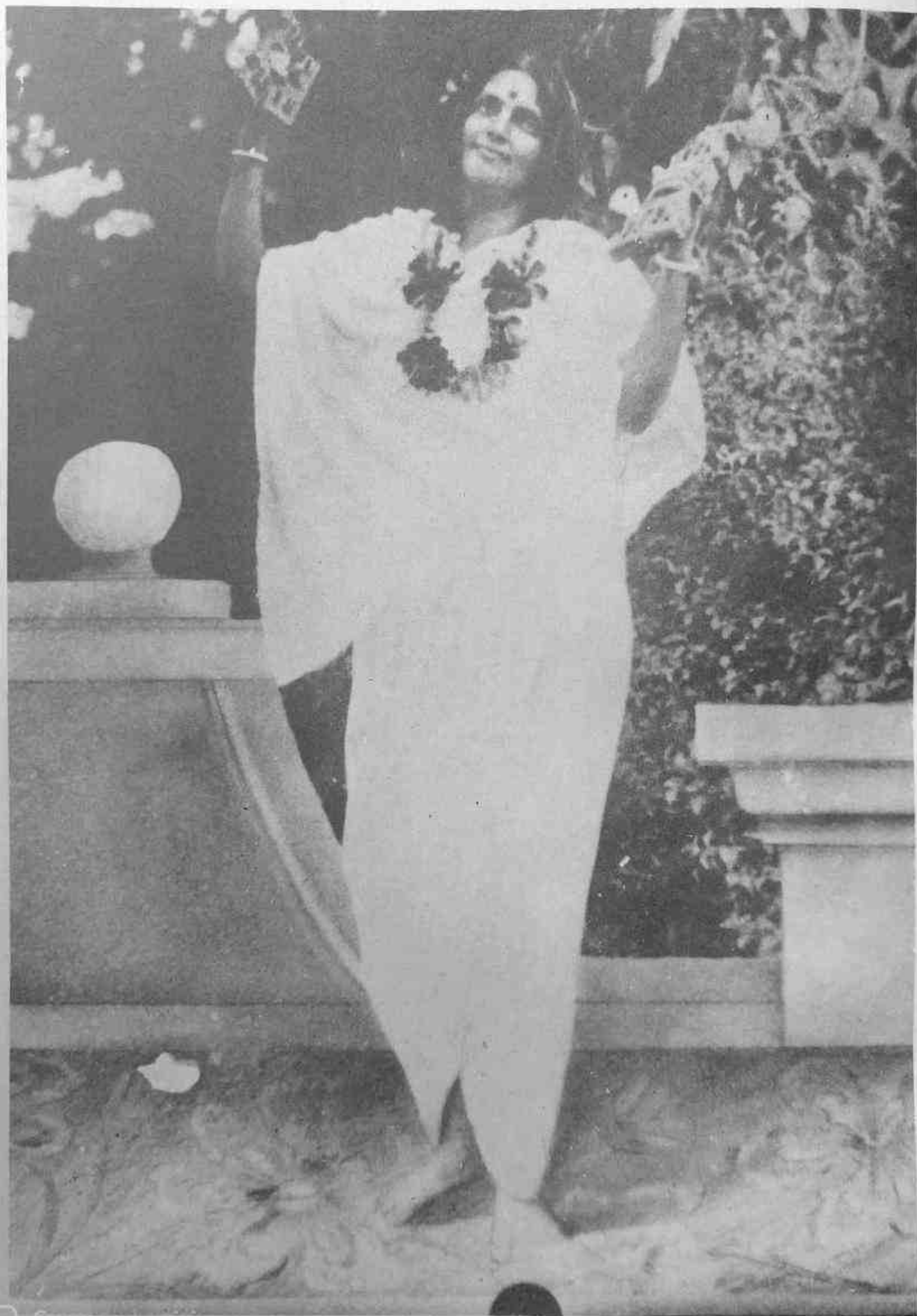
















Mother Anandamayee

**Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj, M.A., D.Litt.
Late Principal, Government Sanskrit College, Banaras.**

It was on a fine autumn morning in 1928 that I first came to know the name of Mother Anandamayee. I was getting ready to go to college,--I had not then retired,--when the late Mahamahopadhyaya Pt. Padmanath Vidyavinoda, M.A. came and met me in my house and informed me that Mother Anandamayee of Dacca had come to Banaras. He presented me with a pamphlet written by the late Mr. Kunja Mohan Mukherji alias Swami Turiyananda on Mother and on the miraculous deliverance of his son from an impending snake-bite through Her grace. He said to me that the sight of Mother absorbed in Samadhi was really an ennobling one and he asked me to go and see Her, if possible. This commendation from the lips of a person who was known to be a fastidious critic of men and things and who spared none from his attacks, seemed to me to carry special weight.

Mother was staying then in the house of Kunja Babu at Ramapura. I made up my mind to see Her there. Accordingly I went to Kunja Babu's place in the evening, where both Kunja Babu and his elder brother Sasanka Babu (the late Swami Akhandananda) very kindly undertook to help me in having Mother's 'darsana'. They introduced me to Bholanathji immediately and the latter took me to a small room on the ground floor where I found Mother absorbed in Samadhi surrounded by a number of bhaktas. Bholanathji was anxious to see Her come back to Her senses soon and made various unsuccessful attempts to that end. Knowing that a trance must be allowed to run its full natural course and that every artificial method of breaking it up was fraught with grave risks, I asked him to desist from doing anything calculated to interrupt it. I was waiting for Her return to normal consciousness, but noting that even in two or three hours Her condition did not come down to normal and apprehending that it might take an indefinitely long time, I returned home with the intention of coming and seeing Her next day.

It was on the 6th September that I paid my first visit to Mother. I came to learn that She had come a day or two earlier and also that this was the second time She had come to Banaras. Her first visit having been in 1927 on Her way to Hardwar on the occasion of the Great Kumbha Fair.

I came back to Mother's place on the 7th as already arranged. In fact I came twice every day during Her short stay at Banaras till the 12th September. I remember I did not miss a single day on this occasion. It is difficult to analyse after a lapse of over 17 years my first impressions of Mother and to explain in words what exactly I then felt. I can only say that what I actually saw with my own eyes far exceeded anything of a like nature I had ever seen before;--it was a dream, as it were, realised in life. During the few days Mother was at Banaras, Kunja Babu's house presented a spectacle of festive jubilation

'mantras' of an extraordinary kind used to gush out of Her lips with a rapidity which made it practically impossible for any one to record them. The language of these utterances was unique; it was not, strictly speaking, Sanskrit nor even any of its derivative vernaculars, though there were a few Sanskrit words here and there. Several words were unfamiliar and even the so-called Sanskrit words did not perhaps convey their usual sense. Besides, very often monosyllabic 'Bijas', known or unknown, were interspersed. The pronunciation was so perfect that even a conjunct sound, made up of several consonants without any intervocalic linking, was distinctly audible. Sometimes on these occasions Mother melted into tears or ejaculations, or even would become rigid and pass into a trance-like condition.

The trance-like state was also induced in those days when 'bhaktas' offered flowers at Her feet or in other ways tried to propitiate Her. The response was immediate.

There was a difference of opinion at that time concerning the precise status of Mother. Some held that She was a Goddess in human form--Kali according to some, Durga according to others, Sarasvati or Radha according to others still. Some thought that She was a human aspirant, who had attained perfection in this life after a series of births during which Her spiritual progress had been continued. Others again entertained the view that she was a *Brahma-vadini* as of yore or perhaps an Incarnation of the Divine come down to earth to relieve its sufferings. She was identified with Sukadeva by some and with Sri Krishna Himself by others. People of worldly nature used to think that some higher spiritual entity, human or celestial, was in possession of Her body and utilised it as an instrument to serve its own ends. A certain gentleman, then living in a house adjacent to my own and working in one of the local High Schools, went to the length of telling me that Her case was clearly one of obsession, though by a good spirit and that it was desirable to bring back the soul from the control of the spirit. This gentleman, who was old and had the reputation of being a practical tantrist of long standing, claimed to have the power of restoring Her to Her normal condition, provided that Her husband and father were agreeable. He was under the impression that the appointed course or evolution of Her life was being impeded in this way and that in the interest of Her own spiritual welfare this setback should be removed. It goes without saying that nobody cared to attach any importance to these words. One day, the great speaker, the late Swami Dayananda of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, came to see Mother and had a personal talk with Her. Though the interview of Swamiji was intended to be more or less of a private character, it was arranged that the late Sasanka Babu and myself would be allowed to be present on the occasion. Swamiji put several questions to Mother which She readily answered. Thus :--

Swamiji --Mother, what are you in fact? People hold different views regarding you and no agreement seems to exist. What have you to say of yourself?

Mother--You want to know what I am. Well, I am what you consider me to be -- not more not less.

Swamiji --What is the nature of your Samadhi? Is it 'Savikalpa' or

'Nirvikalpa' ? Does mind then persist ?

Mother -- Well, it is for you to decide this question. All that I can say is that in the midst of all apparent changes of state in body and mind, I feel, I am aware, that I am always the same. I feel that in me there is no change of states. Call it by any name you like. Is it Samadhi ? Several such questions were put and answered.

These few days of Mother's stay at Banaras sufficed to convince me of the greatness of Her personality and the unusual sanctity of Her life, I learnt Her past history from those around Her, including Bholanathji, Sister Gurupriya, Sasanka Babu and others, and I still remember with delight happy occasions when Mother Herself condescended to narrate the story of Her early life and its development at Bajitpur and Dacca. It was a story of gripping interest to us all.

This story which relates to Her earlier life at Astagram, Bajitpur and Dacca, much of which has since been recorded by Her admirers and devoted followers and the story of Her later life throw a flood of light on Her unique personality.

The greatest thing that struck me most in those days in Her was Her personality. Her physical features were magnetic. Her smiling countenance, the sweetness of Her expression, the simplicity of Her life and behaviour, Her unassuming and genial manners, the cordiality and warmth of Her relationship with all, coupled with Her extraordinary holy life and wisdom, made Her an object of universal attraction and adoration.

During succeeding years I was privileged to come in closer touch with Her and to know Her more intimately. But it is not possible for me to state what Her exact role is or what particular rank is occupied by Her in the spiritual hierarchy of this country, That different persons should hold different opinions regarding Her personality is of course natural. For in a matter like this, a correct analysis on intellectual basis is not possible and an ordinary human judgment cannot yield any useful result.

Still however an attempt is being made here at the request of friends to discuss briefly some of the most prominent features of Her life and character. It is expected, this discussion will not be taken as amounting to a final solution of the problem, for it offers no solution at all. It is intended rather to serve as a possible aid to a clearer appreciation of Her or as a suggestion in that direction. The basis of this discussion is furnished by the data in Her own utterances, whether embodied in books already published or awaiting publication, or otherwise.

Firstly, it is well known that Mother received no Diksa or initiation of any kind from an external Guru and also that She Herself does not give Diksa to anybody. In other words in the technical language of the Sastras She claims to be neither a Guru nor a Sisya.

But an informal Diksa, not one taken from an outside agency, -- She certainly had. We know that this informal Diksa took place in the year 1922,

when She was twenty-six years of age. Mother Herself admitted this fact shortly afterwards to one of Her cousins. This Diksa was not of the usual type known to us but it did represent the initiation of a certain spiritual activity within Her body, an activity which did not owe its origin to any source other than Her own self. In the conventional language of the world it may not be termed Diksa at all, but it is recognised as such in the traditional teachings of the mystical science. That a systematic course of Sadhana including physical and psychical disciplinary exercises, followed this event in Her life is well-known. In the tantrik literature it has been made abundantly clear that Diksa is a spiritual necessity, though it is true that in every case external ceremonials or other forms of activity may not be needed. Inner Diksa consists in an activity of self-purification. This kind of Diksa is determined by the intensity of the Divine Power of Grace descending upon the soul. So far as the fundamental variety of this purificatory process is concerned, we have to recognise four ultimate types, viz. Anupaya, Sambhavopaya; Saktopaya and Anavopaya. When the descending grace is extremely powerful the first type of Diksa follows as a natural sequence. With diminishing power the others are employed. In Anupaya Diksa perfection is realised at once. In Sambhavi Diksa or even in Sakti Diksa the necessity for external Kriyas as an aid to inner purification is not recognised.

In the History of mysticism it is recognised everywhere that in exceptional cases illumination is possible and this takes place even when an external source is lacking. We know of the Pratyekabuddha who neither received his wisdom from any previous Buddha nor communicated it to others. He was a Buddha no doubt, having attained to Enlightenment but he was neither a Sisya in relation to an earlier Buddha nor a Guru in relation to a future Bodhisattva or Buddha. Had he been a Guru he would have been a perfect Buddha. The illumination in this case had its source within.

In the Vedic literature we come across cases of Risis who having been blessed with spontaneous illumination, were the seers of mantras which are associated with their names. This self-generated wisdom is really an example of the so-called Pratibha Jnana of which we read so much in the Patanjali and other Yoga systems and in the tantrik literature. The origin of Pratibha Jnana is explicable as the result of Divine Grace descending on the soul of man.

The Grace or Sakti which comes down on the matured soul is of different degrees of intensity. These degrees belong in the main to three categories -- intense, mild and dull. Each of these three varieties is again subdivided into three classes, so that there are altogether nine degrees in all. If grace of the second degree counted from the beginning, descends on the soul, it is not required to have recourse to a Guru for illumination and one gets the Light from within. This light is spontaneous and does not come from an external source. In such cases the necessity of an external Guru is dispensed with. But the Prarabdha Karma remains and the body which is an outcome of this Karma persists till the Karma is worked out through Bhoga. When grace of the first degree descends the Prarabdha itself is destroyed. And with the exhaustion of Prarabdha the impure body also falls off. The question of an external Guru does not arise in this case, as in the case of the second degree of Grace.

In Sant literature we hear of Swayam Siddha Sants or persons who are saints from the very birth and not due to the accident of knowledge from an external source. These men take no Diksa from others, but they are in a position to give Diksa to deserving candidates. These great Souls descend from transcendent regions, specially from the Divine World, beyond the Cosmic Mind and the Great Void. And when embodied, their centres of consciousness never come down below the middle of the two eyebrows. In the literature of other countries also the record of similar cases is not altogether wanting.

I do not know if any of the above types of self-generated illumination is analogous to the nature of Mother's personality. It seems that Mother is not comparable to a Pratyekabuddha for, while a Pratyekabuddha is exclusive and isolated in his blissful seclusion, indifferent to the fact of Universal misery, Mother is too keenly sensitive to the sorrows of the world to remain contented with an isolated existence, even if it were possible. All Her thoughts and activities have their bearing on the amelioration and transformation of the world. And as a matter of fact She has always that Cosmic and Transcosmic Consciousness precluding any possible exclusiveness of outlook.

We know of cases of souls which are always perfect and which dwell permanently on the Divine Plane as eternal associates of the Divine Person to whom they are related as inalienable aspects of the integral whole. These souls are very similar in nature to the Swayam Siddha type mentioned above. As a matter of fact they are not subject to the action of ignorance or Time Spirit and are never required to come down to earth except in company with the Supreme Lord during His descent or at other times as directed by Him in regard to the time, place and manner of descent. Such souls considered from the standpoint of spiritual status and attitude are varied in nature. It would be unfair to place Mother under this category, for the simple reason, that while these souls are characterised by a sense of intimacy with the Divine which seldom encroaches on identity, Mother represents an integral self-awareness which never tolerates even in the slightest degree an idea of separation or distinction from the integral Central Being. Her confession concerning Her consciousness of identity with the Cosmic and the Supercosmic existence and with all the powers and attributes associated with it, is a clear argument against the inclusion of Mother in this category.

The view which accepts Mother's personality as a case of Avatara may be dismissed with a few words of comment. The question of Ansa or Kala may be left aside, but it seems to me that even the possibility of a Plenary Avatara is excluded in Her case. The fact is that every Avatara, unless he is of the plenary type, represents an aspect of the Divine Power and can never represent the Divine Essence or even the Divine Person in toto. In several cases the Avatars are self-forgetful Divine emanations whereas in others in which self-consciousness is retained, integral consciousness seems to be always lacking. In case of the Plenary Avatara also, if there be any, unbroken consciousness of his plenary nature does not appear to exist. A careful study of Mother's utterances and a critical attitude towards Her life and activities would perhaps reveal the fact that Her case is altogether different. She Herself has confessed to some that She never loses Her supreme self-consciousness. Samadhi or no Samadhi, She is where She always has been; She knows no change, no modification, no alteration; She is always poised in the self-same awareness

as a supreme and integral universality, transcending all limitations of time, space and personality and yet comprehending them all in a great harmony.

She has said time without number that Her body is not like that of an ordinary person generated through Prarabdha Karma under the dominating influence of ignorance and that She has had no previous life to account for Her present existence; nor will She have a future life in continuation of and for the adjustment of Her activities in the present life. The fact that She was aware of Herself and conscious of what was happening around Her immediately after Her birth is an illustration to show that Her self-awareness was born with Her and was not the effect of either Her so-called Diksa or Her so-called Sadhana in Bajitpur.

Mother says that all Her activities are really spontaneous and not prompted by will or purpose, nor influenced and coloured by desires. Will-power is not the spring of Her actions. The untrained will of the lay men and the trained will of the Yogi are equally absent in Her and what appears like the will is only an expression of the Great Power beyond the will working from within. She distinguishes between Mahasakti and Ichhasakti, saying that while the former is like the fire, the latter is like the smoke that issues out of it. Ichhasakti or Will-power cannot exist in a person who, whether considered as an individual or as the universal, is essentially impersonal. The power of the Impersonal or the power which is Impersonal expresses itself in the Cosmic Mind as the universal will and in the individual as the individual will, but in itself it can hardly be described as will of any kind. It is Pure, Ineffable and Absolute. Of course, there is such a thing as the Divine Will, but we have to interpret it as identical with the Supreme Power rather than as will analogous to the human will though it must be admitted that the human will and the Divine Will are in a sense the same Power.

Will implies self-limitation to a certain extent even though that limitation is an imposition by itself on itself. What is technically known as Karma is really an outcome of the individual will of man with an egoistic background and functioning under ignorance. Freedom of will implies a removal of this limitation. If the limitation is self-made its disappearance is equally self-initiated. In the Self which is really free from all limitations, the will is absolutely free. In other words it is not will in the ordinary sense of the terms but is an expression of the Divine Power, free and unobstructed in its functioning. That Mother has no will of Her own as distinguished from the so-called Divine Will shows that all Her movements take place spontaneously and that She does not hold Herself responsible for any of them. Her movements are guided neither by the predispositions of the past nor by any considerations of the future. They are confined to the present and they rest there as in the heart of Eternity.

From this it might be inferred that She is always in a state of purity and that what comes to pass in Her life is determined not by Herself as She appears to us but by the forces working from above. Her system is like a stringed instrument giving out notes, not of its own initiative but in response to shocks or vibrations received from outside.

It is very difficult for a man to conceive a Personality which is so impersonal or the Impersonal actually embodied in such a Person. In Mother

we have a curious combination of these contradictory elements, for which reason, one finds it so hard to form an estimate of the truth of Her Being. Will Power being really absent, the absence of Karma as a moral force becomes intelligible. That Mother is untouched by Karma of any kind need not therefore be an enigma. There being no previous Karma the origin of Her body is to be explained by the play of the Supreme Power, either in itself or as reacting to the collective aspirations of humanity. As to why the Supreme Power should have expressed itself in a particular human body is a question to which an ordinary man is not in a position to reply.

The experience of Sarvatmabhava to which all mystics look forward to, after their realisation of self, is found to be a normal experience with Mother even in Her earliest days. The fact is so patent to all acquainted with Her life that no illustration is needed to substantiate it.

The true ideal of Samadhi which Mother has held out before Her admirers is intended to show that She does not attach undue importance to the Static Brahman realisation or to the Dynamic one. She places the Supreme Truth as consisting of and yet exceeding both these lower truths. The gradual evolution of the human soul in the direction of this Absolute Reality is represented by Her as an integral spiritual movement in which there are certain relative poises. Chitta Samadhana, Bhava Samadhana and Vyakta Samadhana are the three successive stages of inward development leading to its culmination in what is called by Her as Purna Samadhana. The first stage stands for the incipient condition of the evolutionary movement in which the mind is dried up and rendered light and combustible, owing to the elimination from it of the waters of worldly desires and passions under the influence of inner culture in the form of meditation or otherwise. Just as dry fuel, free from all moisture, takes fire easily and burns, in the same way the mind thus purified catches easily the fire of knowledge and becomes aglow. This spiritual condition, usually known as Bhavasuddhi or purity or Bhava, is called Chitta Samadhana. It arises under the influence of the Supreme Reality through different channels of expressions. Human nature being divergent, it is not strange that in some cases this state should represent an overpowering of the mental structure of the aspirant under the pressure of divine sentiment.

The second stage, called Bhava Samadhana, represents a more advanced condition than the first one. In this state the seeker remains immersed in the integral Bhava, insensible to the stimuli of outer nature. The body becomes, as it were, paralysed under the domination of this Bhava. Outwardly speaking, the body loses its mobility and power of responsiveness and becomes more or less like an inert clot, though inwardly the Bhava which has influenced it, begins to flow on in an uninterrupted stream. When this state matures into perfection what is left behind is only the play of the Integral Idea having unified the outer and inner elements of human nature. In this stage the individual being is charged and permeated with the integral Bhava and there is an overflowing of it into outer nature. In other words, the integral Bhava fills up the entire mind of the Sadhaka and flows over into the world outside him.

The third stage is called Vyakta Samadhana. In this condition the fire of knowledge burns as fully within the individual as it does outside. The soul

is then absorbed in one undivided Universal Being. Even in this state the duality of Form and Formless persists. But in the next stage, which represents perfection and is called Purna Samadhana, all sorts of dualities melt away, having been for ever transcended in the Supreme Unity of Absolute Truth. This state is Transcendent and yet Immanent, is Nirguna as well as Saguna, Sakara as well as Nirakara at one and the same time, and yet it transcends both. This is really the so-called Bhavatita condition free from the ripples of thought vibrations. This is Samadhi in the proper sense of the word, for it signifies Samadhana or completion of every sort of activity and thought, a state beyond ignorance as well as beyond knowledge. The stability of the body and the mind is based upon concentration on a particular principle or vision which, in the end, universalises itself, dissolves the egoistic sense remnant within it and stands out in its unique splendour. In course of time, this sense of basic unity also disappears. What is left behind is beyond the power of mind to grasp or of words to describe. This appears to be the highest perfection of Nirvikalpa Samadhana. Mother says that in this state all the activities of the body, even the vibrations of the cells, are stopped and that if the condition continues for a long time the body is likely to be destroyed. But one whose descent has for its object the welfare of the world continues in body as long as such continuance is necessary in the interest of humanity. This is a state of Mahayoga and is to be sharply distinguished from the yoga of the ordinary class. While an ordinary Yogi retains his sense of physical identity to the last moment of his life and is subject to action, a Mahayogi is above such limitations and is immune from the necessity of any action initiated by himself.

It is evident from the above that the state of Mahayoga bears a faint resemblance to Mother's own condition, with this difference that while Mahayoga is the logical culmination of a series of prior Sadhanas, Mother's state as such, was not evolved in that way. It has appeared with Her and will disappear with Her.

There is a tendency in some quarters to consider Mother as belonging to the category of a Devta. These people are inclined to think, each according to his own point of view, that She is not a normal human being but is celestial in origin. In reply to the contention of these persons it may be said that there is no specific ground to regard Her in this light. That different devotees saw in Her person different heavenly manifestations is easily explicable on the hypothesis, of their unconscious predispositions crystallised into visions of the gods and goddesses associated with their subliminal mind and may also be interpreted as due to the action of the Supreme Power functioning as Will through Her body. That She Herself as an individual did not exercise any will-power is to be assumed on Her explicit disowning of the use of such a power. It is the intensity of Bhakti in a worshipper which visualises its object in a concrete form. The function of the Supreme Power is of course assumed. We know of three layers of being -- one connected with the earth plane, the other with the intermediate plane and the third with the heavenly plane, known respectively as Men, Siddhas and Devas. Knowing Mother as one does at present, one cannot pretend to say that from the standpoint of Brahmaildya, the distinction of the three classes counts for much. The phenomena attributed to Mother are easily intelligible on the assumption of Her being endowed with Brahmajnana irrespective of the fact that She is Human or Siddha or Divya. As

regards the question of Her descent as a Siddha or as a Devta it may be studied on the analogy of the problem of Her descent as Nitya Siddha or Swayam Siddha mentioned above.

There is another point which needs elucidation in connection with the question of Mother's identity. We always find that in spite of apparently diverse attitudes or poises in Her mind and body She always feels Herself as one and the same. This awareness of unity in the self is not affected in the least by Samadhi or Vyutthana nor even by the three normal states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. Samadhi and its effects on the system are not minimised nor are we going to attach undue weight to Her playful outer movements. Underlying both the same self-vision persists, neither clouded by the many-sided activities relating to the outer world, nor clarified by the withdrawal of the senses and the mind inwards. In the midst of tumultuous uproar She maintains an unbroken silence and in the depth of Her silence She speaks out eloquently. This shows that in judging of Her we should not allow ourselves to be led by our considerations of Samadhi or Vyutthana. This being so, we cannot explain the whole story of Her Diksa, Sadhana and Upasana and even of Her illumination and attainment of Supreme knowledge except as mere play, intended probably to serve as an example to ordinary humanity. One would thus find in Her a dual personality representing on the one hand the luminous peace of the Silent Self and on the other a self-imposed playful attitude displaying like a kaleidoscope the shifting visions of a series of dramatic pictures bound together by certain bond of affinity or sequence, the secret of which is hidden from the view of ordinary men.

We know very well that in every stage of Her life Mother played Her part admirably well consistently with the laws of propriety befitting Her role, and yet behind all these appearances She retains the self-same and eternally self-revealed consciousness. It is therefore a very difficult task to try to describe Mother as She really is. She has appeared differently to different persons and even if these differences are contradictory we can quietly accept them, knowing full well that in a higher synthesis even contradictories may meet together. These differences need not be obliterated in the interest of a particular view-point. Naturally we do not, and cannot, know all the phases of Mother's life; and that the little we know of a particular phase we know imperfectly. She is too near us to be seen in Her proper perspective and as for ourselves we too shall have to rise up to the height and attain to broad outlook in which an attempt may be made to study Her properly. What is really needed is to feel that She is Mother and we are Her children and that as mere children we cannot be expected to know Her as She is but only as She shows Herself to us in response to our cravings. It really becomes us to behave as infants crying out in the night and invoking Mother with an inarticulate language for Her actual descent and benediction.

Matri Darshan

Bhaiji
(Translated by Ganga Charan Dasgupta)

Sree Sree Pitaji

Pitaji has blest my life with his natural kindness in various ways. He looked upon me as his god-child. From the very first day of our meeting I have been able to obtain his affection. His love and affection has guided me through life. Once I had an impression that one could have father's affection only through mother's. But in this case I am compelled to admit, it is through Pitaji's kindness and love that I could find myself into Mother's grace. From a worldly point of view, I can state definitely that without Pitaji's ardent eagerness to secure the welfare of all men and his great kindness for all beings, no body would have been fortunate enough to see Mother.

We are all helpless people much weighed down with the burden of the world as well as with our numerous infirmities. It was Pitaji who pointed out many of the weak spots in our nature and helped us a lot to purify and ennoble ourselves. During my protracted illness of a very serious nature, his sincere good wishes and blessings helped me a lot in imparting a new life and vitality to my body which was almost tottering under the blows of death.

When I went to Siddheswari Ashram, Pitaji with great emotion pulled me on and made me sit on the lap of Mother, saying "I leave your child on your lap and now his life and future entirely depends on your grace." For Pitaji was much afraid that I might have a relapse of the disease, I had fallen a victim to.

I heard from Mother many years back that She had seen a light radiating from his forehead at the parting of his brows. In all acts of worship, of meditation as well as in the performance of religious rites, his earnestness and devotion was extraordinary.

We have not the capacity to ascertain what wonderful and hidden powers silently worked in Pitaji and made him so full of joy at all times by making others share his delight and happiness. He was always satisfied even with the most meagre response from persons he loved and blest. Those who came in contact with him, must have been convinced that in his character there was an inexhaustible store of sweetness. Every body was eager to have his blessings. With little boys and girls his frolicsome and pleasant manners, his laughter and fun with them, were a delightful sight to see. Mother found in him child-like simplicity and introduced him under the name of "Gopal" to all persons that came to Her.

His heart was so generous that he had no hesitation to worship Mother as the Supreme Goddess of all powers.

There were persons who thought that Pitaji had an angry disposition. But those who had an opportunity to mix with him intimately, must have noticed that behind his apparent expression of anger and indignation, there lurked a boundless store of affection and love for the welfare of the person whom he took to task. His only vow of life was how to wish good for others and how to do people a good turn.

Pitaji says, "Enjoyments and sacrifice are the twin faces of mind; it is like the outward garment of our soul. The more a man approaches God with strength and power, the more does he find the final outcome of the two to be for the good of man.

My little story

Many of my friends and relations, kinsmen as well as strangers, raise questions regarding the present course of my life. To them I must say something about me.

I should say first of all that I have no answer to the query why I revere Mother so much. But I find that I stand speechless if I be asked to try to get away from Her. My mind, my heart, my very life rests at Her feet day and night. At times I come to feel that if the flow of my thoughts towards Her were to stop, my life stream would also be choked up. I have no desire to secure any spiritual benefit from my association with Mother. That I have sought shelter at Her Feet because I have been cured of my disease, is equally misleading. It is not also a fact that I have been attracted by the endless manifestations of Her spiritual power.

But of one thing I am pretty well certain, that Her influence which pervades the Universe has closed in about me on all sides, just as a Mother's embrace does about a helpless infant.

I may add, - "The joy that naturally fills my heart at the sight of those blessed feet of Mother is so overpowering and so deep that even a small fraction of that joy I cannot obtain from the best things of this world or of the next nor even from the devoted worship of all the Gods and goddesses. That joy is my only bondage and this bondage I feel convinced, is the only path of my salvation.

Mother says, "I have brought you out of the narrow groove of the world. It was no easy job for me to draw an ease-loving fellow like you from the worldly chains." I too, realise fully that without Her natural kindness, it was impossible for a man like me, torn with infinite distractions, to find a lasting shelter at Her Feet.

Mother also says, "No body, up till now, has yet realised that had you been left in the midst of the worries of your family, you would have long been with your ancestors and gone to ashes." I fully appreciate the truth of this forcible statement.

My wife has helped me a lot in my path to spiritual uplift. From her birth she has had a great selfpride. She came from a very rich and respectable family. She was the first child of her parents and as such, an inordinate sense

of self-respect and family prestige was ingrained in her nature.

When I first saw her at the 8th or 9th year of her life, the picture of pure simplicity that she then possessed in her looks, continues to be the same even now.

When I first saw Mother, Pitaji was the chief helper in enabling me to approach Her feet. In the beginning of my association with Mother, my wife had a profound regard for Her, but of late, owing to her inherited pride for high predigree and prestige, there has developed a spirit of rebellion in her and she has been left in the shade to wear off the result of her Karma.

As I gradually developed a spirit of self-surrender towards Mother and became gradually indifferent towards my family and society, my wife began to look upon my change with great disfavour. One day she plainly said to me, "Cannot we develop our religious life by remaining inside the fold of a family and society? It is much better to abstain from religious practices altogether than to undermine one's health by religious excesses neglecting the duties to one's son and daughter.

I tried in vain to make her realize that as soon as a man tries to break loose from the chains of the world, one's conduct is looked upon as arbitrary by society. I told her that I was not leaving anybody in the family but only seeking my spiritual uplift to be able to look after their welfare better. I added, - "Really speaking, to make some progress in religious life in the midst of all the distractions and apparently sweet pleasures of life is very difficult unless one seeks to break away from them by temporarily stepping off from the customary grooves of family traditions.

But all my persuasions were of no avail. She said one day rather abruptly with some irritation, "From your present indifferent modes of life it appears that your living with us in the family circle or outside it means the same thing to us." I laughed and said, "If I happen to go away with the robes of a Sannyasi, leaving you all, will it not cause you pain?" She retorted with an air of self-pride, "We shall certainly not feel pain." My little son and daughter were there. I noted down the remark in a small book. Such discussions were frequent. Niranjana also tried to soothe her with soft words but her heart was too sore to find peace.

After sometime, I was attacked with Tuberculosis of the lungs. I was bed-ridden for a longtime. Her superhuman patience and endurance, absolute disregard for her own safety in nursing me day and night, her steady, whole-hearted, sleepless attendance by my bed-side without any sign of fatigue, month after month, her strong will to pull me up and her absolute indifference to severe blows that threatened her from other quarters, are indeed unique in these days.

A few months before I resumed my duties after recovering from the said illness, her younger brother whom she loved like her own self, died in the prime of life. That damped all her spirits. After this bereavement, she became quite indifferent to all family affairs. She already did not at all like my devotion to Mother; after she lost her brother, her dislike turned into

an attitude of protest and opposition. My son and daughter too developed like attitude towards me.

They came to believe that I was drifting further and further away from them. Not only they, but my own close relations came to look down upon my conduct as something quite unnatural. Even my elder brother Satish Chandra Roy to whom I was very much devoted since my boyhood by ties of deep love, affection and regard, and who led a very clean life in accordance with the dictates of Shastras, morality and religion, wrote me saying, "I fail to understand in what way your life is drifting. Relying on the wings of a woman, nobody has, up till now, reached spiritual eminence. At least there is no such record in our history and mythology. I am afraid that you may lose both this world and the next by your false step, like the mythical figure Trisanku."

I realised gradually as I myself failed to judge my own state of mind, how could I expect others to understand my position? So I put a stop to all discussion with other persons about Mother. The result was that my wife lost all self-control and took up a positively arrogant and hostile attitude towards me and did not hesitate to disclose publicly that my conduct has been unsocial.

According to Hindu ideas of religion and society the relation between husband and wife is indissoluble. Tradition has it that even in heaven one has to wait for the other to arrive there! So when there is a slackening of the conjugal ties the outburst in either case naturally becomes as damaging as the sweep of a tornado. I silently bore all outbursts. I used to pray to Mother to calm Her feelings by rousing better sense in her. By her opposition I was not at all pained; on the other hand I was released from various ties and I got a unique opportunity to avoid gradually all the childish frivolities of our nature which ordinarily dominate our family life.

It was never an aim of my life to renounce world for religion and view the worldly affairs as illusory. My education helped me to build up that aim. As long as I shall have a real existence, the world, too, would be a reality to me. But the supreme light that reveals this world of sense and illumines the inner world of thought has to be awakened in one's life to carry on the work of this world fruitfully. To achieve that objective temporary suspension of our normal duties to family and society and passing sometime in a place of retirement to enable one to devote wholly to spiritual culture, prove to be extremely helpful. Contemplation of the divine need be reinforced by a free life of seclusion. My people said to me, "You have left us." But I don't feel like that. I remained where I was all along, - only a small distance in space separated me for the time being. No religious doctrine advocates a life exclusively in the chained circle of one's family for ever.

Whenever I think of my wife, I come to feel that her opposition towards the course of my life is chiefly due to her desire to secure the welfare of her husband and children. It was not motivated by any desire for self. From the standpoint of the world she snapped all connections with Mother no doubt, but in all her thoughts and actions Mother was always present before her mind though not as a friend and helper.

Mother and Her Ways

Swami Paramananda

There are some remarkable features and aspects of Mother's personality. What strikes us most in the first place is the complete absence in Her of the various passions and qualities natural to all living creatures (Jiva) such as anger, greed, envy, hatred, desire, aversion, hypocrisy, falsehood etc. These have never been observed in Her either by ourselves or by those who have been in Her company for a long time. Even under the gravest provocation She is always the same, serene, unperturbed, firmly poised like the Himalayas. Mother's patience, endurance, simplicity, Her benign appearance, and Her care-free, cheerful face lit up with charming smile and Her nature ever free from dualities such as happiness and misery, likes and dislikes, are indeed unique. When we see Her we feel that She does not belong to this body nor does She live in this world of ours.

Equally remarkable and worthy of note is, in our opinion, Her universal toleration and love. Mother keeps Her door wide open for all, be they mad, stupid, absolutely unprincipled or worthless, -- persons whom everybody avoids. Knowing very well their real character, for nothing is hidden from Her, She welcomes them all with the same smile and pours Her healing compassion and grace upon them all. If we object to Her giving shelter to such people, She says, "Where will they go? This body does not call anybody deliberately. When they come, serve them as much as you can. Every one is His form or image. Knowing them so, try to serve them. He reveals Himself in diverse forms." Such an all-embracing love and mercy as mother's, which denies itself to none, is indeed rarely to be found. Almost everybody offers shelter and protection after first considering a person's worth, or fitness. But Mother extends Her protection and mercy to all who seek them, regardless of all considerations of fitness and qualities. Mother is above all sectarianism and tolerates every shade of opinion, variety of religious doctrine or creed. She had no Guru of Her own and had no disciple except Bholanath and makes none now. When requested to initiate somebody She says, "Nothing deliberate or intentional can be done by this body. In the case of Bholanath, "*Kheyal*", (an urge) came spontaneously. Even now if there arises a *Kheyal* it may happen again. No such vow has been taken by this body that it will or will not initiate anybody. Whatever comes off, comes of its own accord." Having no Guru of Her own, mother belongs to no particular sect (*Sampradaya*). When asked about it, She says, "Leave aside the question of this body. It is but a little child of yours. This body is what each of you thinks it to be. Further, there is but one sect in reality. Everyone is seeking Him. And this body says whatever has been said or is being said about Him is right. For He is infinite; He is one. So whatever anybody says is correct, no matter what sect that person belongs to. What matters is that he should think of Him. All thoughts, except those about Him, are fruitless and painful." Again She says -- "It is He alone who exists in all forms and He also resides in the formless. So what is needed is that you should think of Him in any way you choose, whether as one with

a form or without it. For He is indeed everything; therefore all who think of Him or seek Him belong to the same sect. Everyone should reason thus that since there is no end or limit to Him, so in whatever manner or with whatever notion, people seek Him, they all belong to the same sect; for after all they are all seeking Him alone."

Mother says further, -- "Some teaching or doctrine is inferior and some superior, or some path is more true and some less; this body has nothing to do with such controversies and conflicts. Whatever anybody says is right from his standpoint. Each person realises in his own way the Infinite and the Supreme Reality. So it is but natural, that there must be diversity or variety in men's attempts to express or reveal Him. In that Infinite Reality is to be found the unity and harmony that subsists even in the midst of conflicting and divergent doctrines and opinions. Nothing is outside the Infinite Totality or the Whole, not even the "non-existent."

As all sects and doctrines are equal to Mother, followers and aspirants of every sect come to Her and obtain peace and joy from Her.

Whatever be the path one follows, whatever be one's '*Bhava*' (attitude or sentiment), everyone feels blessed by receiving favour and grace from Mother, each according to his *Sanskaras* (tendencies and dispositions). We have heard from many people belonging to the different *Asramas* and orders of Hindu life such as *Brahmacharies*, *Grihasthas*, *Sannyasis* that the recollection or contemplation of the '*Ista*' (the chosen deity) of each is stimulated or is induced in them when they sit near Mother. Mother too, says that whatever the *Guru* has instructed is right. His instructions should be followed. One can find peace only by doing so. For this reason people of every sect and order of life find peace when they come to Her. Almost everybody feels that Mother loves him the most and so is extremely kind to him and favours him and holds the same doctrine as his.

Let us now say some thing about the word '*Kheyal*' which mother frequently uses. If anyone wants to know something from Mother or requests Her to do something saying, "Mother, you know everything and can do everything", She never says, "I cannot do it, or I do not know it or I have no power to do it." Such expressions as "I do not know or cannot do, have never been heard from Mother. Her usual reply in such cases is, "There is no *Kheyal* now; if circumstances allow, ask again." As far as we have understood, Mother has none of these, -- mind, intellect, egoism, found in us nor the three states, waking, dreaming, or sleep. In Mother there is only this state of one-ness with the Infinite or She is Infinity itself. So in Her there is none of the conflict between desire and aversion, mind and intellect etc., yet in a sense everything is there. Mother says, "Here (inside Her) it is all swept and rubbed clean; there is no thought of any kind. As you will play on it so you will hear." Mother's movements arise directly from the Ultimate Reality or the Supreme Will according to our *Sanskaras*. When our desires correspond to the Supreme Will, then they are fulfilled. That Supreme Will manifesting itself to us according to our *Sanskaras* is probably the "*Kheyal*" of Mother.

As Mother is absolutely devoid of the gross, narrow 'ego', so the expressions of this ego, as "I shall or I know, I can, I do etc." and their negatives

are never heard from Her. Generally Her remarks are liberally sprinkled with a few "ifs" or qualifying expressions such as "if circumstances are favourable," "if there is no obstacle," "one cannot be certain of a single breath", "let whatever happens happen." Not that She deliberately avoids one kind of language or uses the other, but such words come spontaneously from Her.

There is no end to the extraordinary aspects of Mother's Personality. In fact everything about Her viz. Her laughter, weeping, singing are all super-normal and extraordinary, as those who have had the good fortune to witness and hear them, will testify.

It is almost impossible to convey their special quality through words only. A few more interesting details may be added. Mother sees disembodied souls of saints, *sadhus* etc. She says, "they are sitting here round about this body just as you are. Only you cannot see them." Once She said, -- "There are so many of those saints and others sitting inside the room that there is hardly any space available." She sees also the forms of diseases and often describes them. She says, -- "Every disease has its own peculiar form, when such forms come before this body they are not forbidden or opposed, just as you are not prevented from coming. Occasionally however, they may be opposed or have their destination changed, -- suppose, for example, they might be coming in this direction but they are deflected in a different way.

It is impossible to understand the strange, extraordinary personality of Mother unless She of Her own accord reveals Herself to us. Mother's teachings are universal, simple and touching to the heart. She never preaches or gives instruction with any definite purpose. She also says, "One gets as much as one is destined to get from this body in the light of his *Bhava*."

The Guru actually emerges from within. When genuine search takes effect, his genuine manifestation is bound to occur; it cannot possibly be otherwise. The One, assuming Himself the shape of the Guru, of His own accord brings about His manifestation or becomes manifested.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

A Unique Being

Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma, M.A., Ph. D.

It was a cold evening in December 1924, when I was taken to Shahbagh for a *darsana* of the Mother by Rai Bahadur Pran Gopal Mukherji, the then Deputy Postmaster General of Dacca. He had already secured the permission of Her husband for the purpose and we were taken straight to the room where Mother was sitting alone deeply absorbed in meditation. A dim lamp was burning in front of Her and that was perhaps the only thing in the room. Mother's face was completely hidden from our view as in those days She used to veil it exactly like a newly married village girl. After we had waited there for about half an hour, suddenly the veil loosened itself and Mother's face became visible in all its brilliance and lustre. Hymns containing many "seed mantras" began to be recited by the Mother in uncommon accents, producing wonderful resonance which affected the whole surroundings. The stillness of the cold December night, the loneliness of the Shahbagh gardens and above all the sublimity and serenity of the atmosphere in the Mother's room -- all combined to produce a sense of holiness which could be distinctly felt. As soon as the recitations ceased, Mother's father who was present that day at Shahbagh began to sing a few songs of Ramprasad with an exquisitely melodious voice, and Rai Bahadur Mukherji remarked that the sweet songs of the old man must have been instrumental in bringing about the descent of the Divine Mother. As long as we were in the room, we felt an indescribable elevation of the spirit, a silence and a depth not previously experienced, a peace that passeth all understanding. We came away from Shahbagh late at night with the conviction that we had been in the presence of a superior Being whom it is difficult to doubt or deny.

I had the good fortune of seeing Mother next in the summer of 1926 at Deoghar, where She had gone at the invitation of Rai Bahadur Pran Gopal Mukherji. On that occasion She stayed there for a week. Sri Sri Balananda Brahmachari Maharaj was alive then and used to have conversations on spiritual topics with the Mother for long hours both morning and evening. *Namakirtana* was held in the Ashram and Mother went into states of deep *samadhi* during the *kirtana*. One evening after the *samadhi*, Mother was almost dancing with joy whilst singing '*Hari Om*'. She sang with such a sweet and melodious voice that it seemed to all present that She could not be any human being, but must be a Goddess in human form. Sri Sri Brahmachari Maharaj himself remarked that he had carefully observed that Her feet did not touch the ground and this was to him a conclusive proof that She was the Divine Mother incarnate. After singing *Hari Om*, *Hari Om* for about half an hour She took Brahmachari Maharaj to his room in the upper storey of the "Dhyana-Kutir" and there told him certain very deep things. As nobody else was allowed in the room, the substance of the conversation can only be conjectured. Sri Sri Brahmachari Maharaj was very much impressed by the Mother and it was at his special request that She agreed to stay for a week, changing Her original programme of remaining for three days only. Even after these twenty-five years *Hari Om* as sung by Her

seems to be still ringing in our ears, and it had such a charming and wonderful effect that even agnostic youths and non-believers felt its influence and some of them were heard actually chanting *Hari Om* in their sleep. At that period, for the major portion of the day, Mother used to live in a higher world as it were and whenever She had to reply to any questions put to Her, it seemed definitely that She was descending from a higher level and for several minutes She could utter words only with great difficulty. The look in Her eyes changed whenever She attempted to speak and proved beyond doubt that She was forcibly attempting to come down from a higher level. This transition is not noticeable now and it is quite likely that She now always lives on the higher plane and that this has become so natural and spontaneous that it need not be shut off even when there is work at the lower level, and that the two go on simultaneously.

In the afternoon of the day of starting from Deoghar I was granted the privilege of a private interview. I asked Mother what I could do for spiritual advancement and was told in reply that what I did was all right and that nothing further could be done even if She instructed me to do so. I betrayed signs of doubts. Mother noticed it and said, "Very well, I am telling you a very simple thing. Do not worship the portrait of a man who is alive." "I never do and why should I?" was my answer. Mother merely smiled and said, "Very well."

After two years and a half I met Her in the house of Her husband's brother at Calcutta. I remember two or three missionary gentlemen coming to see Her that evening and She was busy with them. As soon as I approached Her, She said, "Well, you do not worship the portrait of any living man, do you?" I was bewildered. During the interval of those two years and a half I had got a bromide enlargement of a saint (who was then alive) kept in my puja room and had been worshipping it every day. She did not wait for an answer and said to me, "You see, then, that what is ordained to happen, happens and nothing but that."

Mother is a great personality. It is impossible not to bow down in Her presence and not to obey Her commands. She is not the person to be persuaded by entreaties and whatever She wills must needs be performed. When She decides to go out on a tour alone and asks Her nearest associates to stay behind, however harsh and cruel the command may appear, it has to be carried out without a murmur. Nobody has the courage to go against the decision of the dynamic personality. Mother is kind-hearted, so soft and so tender, so merciful and so gentle, that it often seems impossible that She could wound the feelings of anybody. Again, at times She is so strong and so resolute, that She seems harder than steel and almost heartless and cruel. It may truly be said of Her that She is "harder than thunder and softer than a flower" gentler than the gentlest and more beautiful than the most beautiful and yet as dreadful as enraged Death Itself, as mild and sweet as the silvery rays of the moon and yet as harsh as Severity Itself merciful yet cruel. These seemingly contradictory characteristics merely show that She transcends the ordinary human categories. Her beauty surpasses the most beautiful of all earthly things and so She is truly described as more beautiful than the most beautiful. She is cruel when She has to fight against evil forces and then She knows no compromise. She is again exceedingly gracious to those who are

striving towards righteousness and Her infinite love encompasses all. When She travels hundreds of miles to see an ailing patient in the hospital or to console a mother who has lost Her only child, Her mercy and love are evident. But who knows whether Her mercy and love are not even greater when She does not yield to entreaties and appears to be cruel? Fighting against evil forces is also an indication of mercy, because it is the only way to the Kingdom of Heaven that has been lost.

Mother's answers to questions are so simple and so forcible that they cannot but touch the hearts of those who listen to them. Wonderful solutions of difficult philosophical problems by an almost illiterate woman show that there is in Her the great Light that illumines everything. Ceaseless activity without rest for 365 days of the year shows it must be the universal Life that is pulsating in Her. The motherly affection that is bestowed on all who come to Her and captivates the hearts of them all bears out that it must be Absolute Love that is working. The single-minded devotion to Truth, the utter spontaneity and freedom in all Her actions, the steadfast adherence to the ideal, the constant reverence for all that is great and holy, the respect for tradition and custom, the utter disregard of worldly praise or blame -- all these go to show that we have in the Mother a very unique being worthy of love and adoration, of reverence and worship.

Mother's Room

Umananda (Stephen Quong)

The golden Light of Mother's Room
Disperses All the world's Gloom.
The Eternal Peace of This Holy Shrine
Calms the Heart and Stills the mind.
I sit in wonder At the 'Presence' Rare
That Blessed This Room for so many years
Now Enshrined Forever in DehraDun Fair.
Is Mother's Light For All to Share.
Come, Drink of joy, Of Mother's Grace ;
Come Shed your sorrows, and Be Amazed ?
For a Fragrant Flower is Still in Bloom.
Because joy is Eternal, Love has no end.
Truth does not change, nor beauty around.
So, come Drink At the Fountain,
The Fountain of Peace
Where Mother will Grant you
Love's Sweet Release.

Mother—Then and Now

Gour Gopal Mukhopadhyaya

The first glimpse of Mother was granted to me at Dacca early in 1925. My father, Sj. Pran Gopal Mukhopadhyaya, was in service there at the time and Mother used to vouchsafe occasional visits to our home. Living in those days a purely domestic life, She was then unknown to the world and unsought. In fact, our first contact with Her was at a time when Her own family looked askance at Her, wondering if Her raptures were not perhaps pathological symptoms rather than signs of spiritual exaltation. They were naturally more at pains to conceal what to them at the time was a disturbing and embarrassing domestic problem than to publicise it. My first impression of Mother was of a person, shy and reticent but calm and self-possessed, with an aura of sweetness and peace that commanded spontaneous homage. The few questions She was pleased to ask me about my health and welfare were put through my mother.

Mother's light might have remained hidden for sometime yet, had not Providence decided to step in at the moment and take a hand in Her dawning revelation. Come to think of it, it could have been nothing short of a divine dispensation which brought my father, unbidden and fortuitous to Her sequestered altar. It was my father's habit to go out to Ramna for his morning walk and he was often accompanied by his esteemed friend, Professor Nani Gopal Bandopadhyaya of the Dacca University. This was in November 1924. Lowering clouds made my father cut short his walk one morning but the professor was not one to miss his full round. Mother was at Shahbagh at this period. Caught in the rain, Professor Bandopadhyaya had taken shelter under a tree, right in front of Shahbagh. By the way, the garden was then out of bounds for the public. A relation of Mother's, the elder brother of Her consort, saw the professor in distress and very kindly came out to take him along to their place. It went on raining and the tedium of a grey morning had inevitably to be lightened by casual conversation. Eventually, the same morning, the professor was taken into confidence and the perplexities of the family over Mother's disturbing seizures were laid bare before him. With patent embarrassment he was at first asked to keep the matter to himself, but the professor subsequently had their permission to confide it to a person who might possibly throw a helpful light on this obscure phenomenon. He came straight to Sj. Pran Gopal Mukhopadhyaya with his wondrous tale.

So they, the professor and my father fixed up a date and hastened to Mother's place at Shahbagh. Even after this passage of time, it is over twenty years now that he had Her first 'Darsan', there is a thrill of wonder in my father's voice as he narrates the account of his first encounter. Ushered into Her persence, on the very first day, he was enraptured with what to him, was an unmistakable radiation of spirituality or 'sattvika vikara'. By Grace Divine, a great spiritual planet had swum into his ken, and he was privileged to watch, in humble awe and holy wonder, its resplendent rise. As the days

passed, his devotion grew from more to more. At first Mother seemed tongue-tied and reticent, and it was with difficulty that She could be drawn out. But even Her silence was veritably golden, and a single word, bore a world of meaning and was redolent of Her Passion and Love for the Divine. As Lao Tze, the great Chinese mystic says, "One who knows does not talk The sage keeps his mouth shut and conveys by silence his instruction. To be taciturn is the natural way". The chanting of God's holy name seemed to ravish Her out of the world of senses and those winged words would transport Her to transcendent regions far above the thud and surge of this querulous world. She would be beatifically oblivious of all and She would dance in Her ecstasy like a little child in sheer inconsequential joy. Ultimately outer consciousness would cease, and there ensued a tempestuous rhythmic rolling on the ground of Her God-possessed body. Like a mountain torrent in spate, the flood of *Mahabhava*, the highest ecstasy would surge and swell through Her body, life and spirit in one majestic sweep. Then followed a state of utter calm, flickerless and still 'peace, perfect peace', -- like the sleep of the top at the highest spin. This is the state that has now been for long Her habitation and home. The Alone has taken its flight to the Alone, and for ever and ever, the beating of the eager wings is stilled, for ever stilled.

In those early days, my father was no less struck by Mother's tireless devotion to domestic duties while Her soul was ever tugging at the body's moorings in its eager voyage to the Infinite.

Another remarkable feature of Her life during this early period was Her almost total abstinence from food, only three to nine counted grains of rice being Her daily fare. Indeed Mother used to feel choked if She tried to force even one grain more down Her throat. This is all of a piece with the experience of the great mystics all the world over, an inevitable phase in their development. Yet She looked the picture of radiant health, and showed not even the faintest sign of fatigue at the end of a hard day's work. Her devotion to Her husband was also exemplary; no work on his behalf was too mean for Her. Her love of Truth, Her strength and courage, and above all her wonderful receptivity to Divine influence have left a fadeless impress on my father's mind, of these Her early days. My father was expecting to leave Dacca on retiring furlough early in June 1925, and Mother had not still emerged from Her domestic seclusion. To his importunate questionings as to when She would reveal Herself to the world She replied enigmatically that he would know it all about the 6th Asadha that year on which date the *Ambuvachi* commenced. At that time my father did not expect to be at Dacca till that date, but somehow or other, official relief was late in arriving and it was immediately after the 6th Asadha that he found himself in a position to leave.

On the whole of the appointed day Mother lay in trance, speechless and motionless. In the evening She betook Herself along with Her husband to the Siddheswari temple at Ramna, and there the floodtide of *Mahabhava* came sweeping over Her. Mother had an esoteric affinity with this holy spot, and, She had once indicated a site close to this temple as the seat of the *Sadhana* of Bholanathji in a previous birth. This place, then discarded and over-run, was subsequently cleared and fenced around and was later the site of what was Mother's first Asrama. Up till this time Mother's glory was a

jealously kept secret, and was shared by my father with just a few *Bhaktas* among whom were professors, Nalini Kanta Brahma, Girija Sankar Bhattacharya and Atal Bihari Bhattacharya. It was after the 6th Asadha that Mother's privacy was broken, and first in a trickle and then in an ever-swelling stream, people began to flock to Her and receive Her Grace. She *had* arrived.

The first visit that Mother vouchsafed to us after my father had left Dacca was when She came to Deoghar in 1926. The most memorable incident of this visit was Mother's meeting with our Gurudeva, Sri Balananda Brahmachariji Maharaj who welcomed Her with a warmth which only a feeling of spiritual kinship can evoke. For long after and on numerous occasions Sri Gurudeva used to recall the memory of this meeting and pay eloquent testimony to Her *Sattvik* exaltation. During Her visit to the Asram She attended a *kirtan* recital and went into a passionate storm of ecstatic rapture which eventually subsided into radiant calm. Sri Gurudeva later led Mother along with Her consort into his *sanctum sanctorum* and they were closeted together for some time. A year or two later Mother paid us a surprise visit to Deoghar with Her consort. She was then on Her way to Vindhyachal and spent a couple of days with us *en route*. My father happened to be away at the time and only my mother and my humble self were at home. She was ineffably kind and sweet to us.

It was after the lapse of a decade, years which had seen Her canonization and during which myriads of *Bhaktas* from all over India had flocked to Her holy feet, that I was privileged to have Her next *Darsan*. It was in Calcuta late in 1939. Not in the privacy of home or the quiet precincts of an *Asram* this time, but amid the din and bustle of the metropolis with constant streams of visitors surging around. It was a far cry from Her demure domesticity at Dacca, and what a sea-change had come over Her! Her frame now was like *Parvati's*, attenuated by *Tapasya* and ringed by an aureole of sweetness and light. Hers was a presence that radiated peace, the peace that passeth understanding, a balm to the 'fretful stir unprofitable and the fever of the world'. And above the storm, an upper-air serenity pervaded Her, and all the time one felt that She was here, yet not here; astronomically far, yet withal so near. An air of easy mastery and indubitable poise, the sure-footed tread on what the *Sruti* calls the razor-edge path, was Hers. Majesty was Hers as to one to the manner born and yet there was nothing forbidding about Her with Her childlike simplicity, buoyant good humour and never failing smile. She was an apotheosis of Light, Love, Power, Goodness, Beauty and Truth.

Puerile and pretentious it would be, and indeed laughably so, to try to show up the sun with the aid of a candle, and it would be no less futile to attempt to gauge the depth, immensity and expanse of Mother's illumination with the help of our circumscribed intellect and inhibited soul. All revelation is *Svaprakasa* -- Being at its white-hot incandescence, and only Being can know Being. Enmeshed in our sensuous sheaths as we are, it is only through fortuitous chinks that the Light streaks into our dark deeps and divinely disturbs our sleep of ages. To Mother's Grace we owe that even with the murky minds that are ours we have been able at times to mirror fitful gleams of the Light Divine which emanates from Her. This should be to us at once a solace and a spur.

Mother Incomparable

Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyaya

The year was 1924. I was then just a boy of six, when my father, who was posted in Dacca as Deputy Post Master General, accidentally happened to meet Mother Anandamayee, who was then just Nirmala Sundari Devi, wife of Ramani Mohan Chakravarti working at that time as Superintendent of the Nawab's garden, known as Shahbag. She was a thickly veiled housewife, hardly looking at any one with open eyes or even exchanging any words with any one. But being just a little boy I had the privilege to be on her lap and enjoy the full beauty of her extraordinary face and her still more extraordinary smile. From that day of my first acquaintance to her last day in life, She remained to me, therefore, as the mother par excellence, with her exquisite beauty and smile and her incomparable tender heart.

From that veiled state of existence, confined within the four walls of her husband's abode her coming out in the wide open unveiling her divine majesty is now a matter of history. But both as a child and later when I grew up I had little knowledge of her majesty, about which I would hear so much now and then and also read here and there. I was simply enraptured by her motherly beauty, which made me cling to her as a fond child till the last. She will comb my hair, feed me with all delicacies, make me sit by her side when she will take her food, give her own pillow to put my head thereon for my rest -- to mention just a few of the most trivial things of everyday life which only revealed to me her uncommon motherly concern for the comfort and welfare of her child. And like me, such children were numberless who thronged around her and to each she will attend with the same utmost care and attention.

True to the name given to her by the devotees, Mother Anandamayee came to the world only to make her children partake of the divine delight that lies hidden in the inmost depth of every human heart. In a letter which she wrote with her own hand to my revered father to convey her earliest inmost experiences, which she could not then communicate verbally, she expresses in poignant words her deep anguish for distressed humanity and how she felt like calling out to them to share her experience of divine ecstasy, the bliss that was everlasting. All the happiness of the world that one hopes to gain through wealth and health, honour and fame pales into insignificance when compared with this ecstatic bliss that one could taste through the utterance of the divine name. Her heart cried out to her suffering children to partake of the immortal nectar which she herself had tasted and realised as the only true and everlasting thing in this ephemeral world.

I feel that it was this supreme urge to entreat all to turn towards this divine bliss that made her throw off the veil and leave the narrow confines of her hearth and home. With no fixed abode for herself, she roamed constantly thereafter through the length and breadth of the country, meeting people

from all walks of life, from Gandhiji and Nehru and Netaji to the commonest man, from the tallest saint to the lowliest sinner with that one single and supreme message: "Talk only of Hari, for that alone is of worth; all else is useless and causes pain."

In her usual humour and bursting in peals of laughter, she once recounted to me her experience during one of her journeys in a train. Her devotees had put her in a first-class compartment and as usual some other well-to-do people were travelling in the same. When they came to know that Mother Anandamayee was also in that compartment, they all came one by one to pay their respects to her and receive her blessings. She then suddenly turned towards them and with folded hands addressed them thus: "This little daughter of yours wants to beg something of you. Will you kindly grant that to me?" On hearing this, she told me, some slipped away quickly, others were looking for their purse, still others were putting their hands in their pockets, being sure that she must be asking for some money from them as a donation for her ashram or some such purpose! One or two of them took courage and requested her to say specifically what she was begging from them. Then she enquired of them how much time they usually spend or devote to the various vocations they are engaged in, some in their office duties or in their business professions. To this they replied that they usually devote seven to ten hours a day or even more in their respective duties. Then she said: "May I beg of at least half an hour or even fifteen minutes from you every day and for that small period will you kindly promise that you will be exclusively devoting yourselves to the Lord and Lord alone and nothing else will be allowed to intrude or engage your attention during that brief period? Am I begging too much from you?"

This was her inimitable way of prevailing upon all who came in touch with her to turn towards the Lord. Her motherly tenderness felt the pang that all her children were suffering from and so she wanted to nourish them and sustain them by that divine ambrosia, which alone is the supreme panacea for all the ills of the world.

To me, the mother was the truest of all mothers, because she was ever awake to the welfare of all her children. She not only looked constantly to all the worldly comforts of her children with meticulous care but above all kept a constant watch on their movements. Her sole concern was whether they were moving away from the Lord or moving towards Him. For this she lived and dedicated her entire life.

Whatever role she played in life, she played it to perfection, setting up, as it were, an ideal for others to follow. When my revered father first met her, he was very much struck by her amazing devotion to her husband and her spirit of complete obedience to him. She will not answer any question asked by any outsider at that time without the permission of her husband nor would she move one step anywhere without being guided thereto by her husband. This even occasionally led to some annoyance among the devotees, who thought that She being the Divine Mother herself could easily take all decisions independently without any subservience to anyone, be he her husband or anyone else. But she always chose to remain the ideal and devoted wife, following ever the footsteps of her husband and carrying out all his commands, even though they sometimes appeared frivolous and arbitrary.

One could also take lessons from her in humility. Always calling herself as 'the little girl', she never imposed her greatness on anyone nor did she ever take the air of a superior. One had to learn from her how to honour the saints and scholars, how to adore the noble and the proficient. In one of her letters written through her husband to my revered father, she conveyed her invaluable instructions to all spiritual seekers thus :

"Those who are trying a little bit to move towards the Lord should never indulge in blaming or vilifying others. They must not try to judge anyone whether he is virtuous or vicious and should make no attempt to form any judgement whatsoever. Those who indulge in it gradually lose their attraction for the Lord and only manifest self-praise thereby. When one feels like judging the good and bad in others, he must instead keep a close watch and scrutinise threadbare his own good and evil at that time."

It is in such other hundred ways that she, like a true mother, tried to bring back her erring children back on the right track. But how many of us care to listen to her advice, which she has left in plenty and walk along the road indicated by her? Instead we feel that we have shown her due respect and paid enough homage by raising a memorial or a temple in her honour and singing some good words of praise. The true memorial to her, befitting her unique motherliness and incomparable graciousness will be only when we can fulfil what she wanted or begged from all of us: to become the true children, simple in their faith, sincere in their aim, serene and pure in their thoughts.

May we grow through her grace to what she wanted us to be!

The relation between Guru and sisya (disciple) deserves to be called eternal only when the Guru is possessed of divine power and can and does communicate this power to the latter at the time of his initiation. This power being eternal, the relation between Guru and sisya as thus established is also eternal.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Reminiscences and Reflections

Subimal Dutt

It was early evening three days before the Jhulan festival of 1957. A junior colleague of mine took me to the ashram at Kalkaji where I had my first darshan of Ma. She was seated in a small room upstairs. At first sight she seemed to me as one who was in this world but not of it -- an ethereal being with a halo round her, calm and serene -- with compassionate eyes and a soft benign smile. She spoke a few words of solace to me and immediately the cloud of depression which had enveloped me for a year, lifted. However, I had hardly savoured the delight of her company for a few minutes when an elderly lady who looked rather formidable entered the room and announced in half soliloquy that it was the time for Ma's refreshment. The lone visitor took the hint, bowed and left. It was only later that I knew that she was Gurupriya Devi, Didi to all, young and old, in Ma's circle. She combined total surrender to Ma with affection for all, devotees and visitors alike.

In the hall below a small gathering was singing bhajan songs. Who was that young man there singing with fervour? I recognised him. I had him dismissed from the Indian Foreign Service a few months earlier on serious charges of corruption. I was told that he and his wife, who was also there, had become ardent devotees of Ma for some months and were assisting the ashram in several small ways. I kept my counsel to myself.

It required another shattering blow in life to bring me close to Ma, never again to part. That was five years later. I then began to read avidly the first-hand accounts of Ma's early life in Mymensingh and Dacca, so vividly described by Bhaiji and Didi in their priceless books. I would also hear from some Brahmacharis, who had been with Ma since the forties, how they were eye witness of some extraordinary scenes centered on Ma, her ecstatic movements during kirtan, frequent samadhis and the very unorthodox rituals followed by her on the few occasions she was persuaded to perform formal pujas, etc. I felt a regret that one could no longer witness such scenes. Ma was now like an ocean of peace and quiet. A senior Brahmachari who had left his job, his family and his home to live with Ma, to whom I mentioned this, said, "Keep your eyes open, brother. You can see evidence of Ma's extraordinary and supernatural powers even today." I had not long to wait.

In July, 1966 I was staying for a few days in the Kishenpur ashram while Ma was in residence there. Every morning she used to send for Virajanandji and talk to him at length on abstruse spiritual topics. He would take notes and occasionally ask a question. I had the supreme good fortune of being asked by Ma to be present at these talks. One morning while we were in, someone began banging the door furiously from outside. I thought it very extraordinary. The door was opened and a young man came rushing in with

a telegram in his hand and announced that Monada¹ and Thakurma² had passed away the previous day at Varanasi. Ma said, she knew. The evening before Didi had wanted to send a telegram enquiring about the condition of these two old devotees who were lying seriously ill at Varanasi, but Ma told her to wait for the night. Obviously Ma knew that they had passed away. She then said that the night before first Monada and later Thakurma looked in through the window and asked her permission to leave. Ma sensed my bewilderment. She then said "If these walls were not in front of you, wouldn't you be able to see what is happening at a distance from the ashram?" I understood. Sitting at Kishenpur Ma saw what happened in Varanasi. Verily, our shastras have said that for a Yogi barriers of time and space do not exist. I can recall several such incidents within my experience in later years.

During those years I used to pay visits to the ashrams where Ma was in residence. The crowd of visitors grew from year to year and one did see among them some people whose reputation for honesty was not very high. Why did Ma extend to these people the same kindness and consideration as she did to others? There were audible comments on this among the lay devotees. Ma told me once -- it was extraordinary how she answered questions unasked -- she did not ask anybody to come to her or anybody to leave. Each one would find his way, she said. I then remembered the young man whom I had seen during my first visit to Ma at Kalkaji. Not having seen him anywhere subsequently I enquired about him and was told that he and his wife had stopped seeing Ma within a few months. Obviously, after his appeal against the order of dismissal was rejected by Government, he saw no further need for Ma Anandamayee's grace.

Still another case comes to my mind. In October, 1971 the 'samjam saptaha' had ended in Vrindaban and Ma asked me if I could escort Bunidi³ and a few other Brahmacharinis to Delhi. I agreed, of course. We were within sight of the railway station at Mathura when our jeep broke down. The train was due in a few minutes. I felt helpless. Bunidi then turned to me and said "Do you see that big factory across the road, Dada? Some years ago Ma formally inaugurated the factory with great fanfare. Thereafter, whenever Ma came to Vrindaban, the owner, a big industrialist, used to place three or four cars at Ma's disposal. His business has failed and his visits have ceased and, of course, the supply of cars." Suddenly, another jeep came from behind. The owner-driver offered us a lift and we reached the station in time.

But who am I to criticise? How few of us sought Ma's company in a purely spiritual quest? Was there no material motivation in us, expressed or unexpressed? It would, therefore, be wrong for anybody to assume a holier than thou attitude. As the Bible has said (Matthew - Sermon on the Mount) "Why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye and perceivest not the beam in thine own eye?"

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1. Late Monomohan Ghosh, an ardent devotee who rendered great service to the ashrams and, as Ma told me, migrated to Varanasi in utter penury after Partition.
 2. An old Brahmin lady who had become a widow at the age of six and devoted herself to Ma's service.
 3. As a young girl she left her parents and her home and devoted herself entirely to Ma's service. She passed away in the Vrindaban ashram while Ma was in residence there.

It was painful occasionally to hear loose talk among the inmates of an ashram. When I came to live with Ma at Varanasi in 1965 -- permanently as I had thoughtlessly hoped -- Ma one day casually told me that people with different backgrounds, some of whom had received initiation elsewhere, had come to live with her and one should not expect them all to look at things from the same angle. I thought it rather odd that Ma should make such a remark. Some years later, in 1971, before the annual Durga Puja at the Kalkaji ashram, a senior lay devotee spoke to me in sorrow, tinged with some bitterness, that Didi distributed the expensive sarees presented to Ma among her favourites. I was rather upset to hear of this and mentioned the complaint to Ma. It was not fair to say so, Ma said. Didi invariably consulted her before disposing of any present. Ma added that the ladies who gave expensive sarees would like to receive them back to keep as treasured mementos and, therefore, these were given back to them with Ma's blessing. One feels sad that we are always ready to believe the worst of others. Self-reformation is not an easy process.

As the pressure of visitors grew, the Swamijis tried to regulate the hours of darshan and private interviews by some sort of a schedule so as to ensure Ma some rest and quiet. All of us, however, are self-centred. What is worse, while we recognised the need for control, individually we would like relaxation in favour of ourselves. Often there would be heated arguments with the Brahmacharis guarding the passage to Ma's rooms. Immediately charges of favouritism were bandied about -- why was so and so being admitted while others were being kept out? Most discontented were some elderly ladies who knew Ma in the old days at Dacca. They would recall with nostalgia that they could see Ma at all hours of the day then; some would spread their beds at night in Ma's room. They would make no allowance for the fact that what was possible when visitors could be counted in tens was not possible with thousands milling around to see Ma and have talks with her. In their frustration many, men and women, would say in audible whispers that "our Ma" had now become a rich man's Ma.

Over the years all celebrations in the ashram, whether it was the annual Durga Puja, the 'samjam saptaha', Ma's birth anniversary, Didima's Sannyas utsav, etc., etc. had become very expensive. The number of Brahmacharis and Sannyasis permanently residing with Ma had grown and they accompanied Ma from place to place. To every important function mahatmas would be invited and their journeys had to be financed and they and their retinues had to be fed lavishly. Hundreds who came to see the celebrations would be fed. The ceremonies themselves were most elaborate and Ma would frown on economy either in Puja rituals or in service to the mahatmas. All these involved heavy expenses. Had it not been for the generous contributions by a few well-to-do devotees who had the money and the will to give, celebrations on this scale would have been impossible. If, therefore, the organisers showed them some special consideration, why should we humbler people protest? On occasions I would tell the critics, particularly in Agarpara, that were it not for the generosity of a few rich persons, we poor people would not have had an opportunity to see Ma at all. Of the thousands who used to gather at Agarpara, for example, not many could afford to travel to Varanasi, Vrinda-

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Some Recollections

Shri R. K. Trivedi
(Governor, Gujrat

"Surrender yourself to Shree Shree Ma and She will not only take care of everything but would also make a search for any other Guru irrelevant." This was the advice my father, late Pandit Mahavir Prasad Trivedi, gave to me almost 40 years ago and this was not only an advice to me but to anyone who came in contact with him because this was virtually an article of faith with him and it did not come to him casually or just in a fit of devotion, but after many long years of honest quest for a real guide and philosopher.

My earliest recollection of my father's desire to tread the spiritual path goes back to 1927 or so when I was only six years old and I still remember my father spending about four hours every night, after midnight, doing his prayers. Even though I did not understand the full significance, I realised through his narration of visits to many important personalities like Ramana Maharshi, Arvind Ghosh, Vishnu Digambar, the Sankaracharyas, J. Krishnamurti, and others, that his quest for spiritual light was persistent. After he had to leave Burma because of the Japanese war, he continued his search and met with well-known Sanyasins and saints like Swami Brahmanandaji, Swami Sivanandaji, Karpatriji, Nim Karoli Baba and quite a few others in the Ramakrishna Mission. I think it was sometime in 1942 that he happened to meet Shree Shree Ma in Lucknow and after a couple of his visits to her his quest actually stopped at Her feet. That was the time when I had joined Service in July 1943. Even though he gave me the advice which is quoted above, it was only some years later that I realized its significance and mustered the strength to go and meet Shree Ma in Varanasi in 1949 and the very first meeting, thanks to Ma's gracious blessings, made me a convert. It is difficult to forget the day when, in the Varanasi Ashram, she blessed me with a divine smile and with the silky touch of her hands saying, "it is good you have come."

Of course, by then she had completely taken my father in Her hands because after a brief stint in Burma after the war, he sought premature retirement and came back to Lucknow to continue his onward spiritual march under the guidance of Shree Shree Ma. It was characteristic of her to gauge the level of attainment of a devotee and to guide him further according to his attainments and capacity. I believe it was in 1949 or so that she asked my father to go to the Ashtabhuja Ashram in Vindhyachal. Simultaneously he was asked in a mysteriously significant dream, confirmed later by Shree Ma, to observe a vow of silence which he did for 12 years. In the early stages he was allowed to break the 'maun' during the day for an hour, but later on even that was stopped.

One has to be in Ashtabhuja to experience not only its solitude but also its serenity. Perched atop a lonely hillock away from the township, it

is said that Shree Ma had indicated that particular place as sanctified (in fact, when construction work was going on, many antiques and sculptures were found) and desired the Ashram to be located there. Very few people seem to know that location of every single Ashram was not only determined by Shree Ma but that every such spot had a link with the hoary spiritual past. My father's stay in Vindhyachal for about six months was not only a test in austerity but also a preparation for the rigorous spiritual discipline. In spite of the physical inconveniences he cheerfully practised whatever Shree Ma had told him and when he came back from there, he was a transformed person and quite pleased with the peace he had acquired and the blissful experiences that he had undergone. Swami Bhaskarananda (Bharatbhai) (who not only unquestioningly surrendered himself completely to Ma but later, became one of the most respected Ashramites around Shree Ma judged in terms of spiritual attainments, respect and love of the devotees, thanks to the grace and trust Ma bestowed on him) was the sole companion during that period and between them they developed a great deal of spiritual intimacy which was further strengthened over the years.

It might be worthwhile recapitulating a couple of incidents to indicate Shree Ma's concern for the devotees generally and for my father in particular. My father had made it a rule to go for the annual birthday celebrations wherever they were held and on several occasions it did appear that something or the other might stand in his way. But on no occasion was his rule breached because a solution of the problem that could have held him back was invariably found before the crucial date. On one occasion he had even missed the train, but out of nowhere a special train that day was somehow commissioned for a group of tourists going that side. My father used to retire around 8 p.m. to get up at about midnight for his meditation. In Varanasi he had gone for the birthday celebrations and went to the Ganges below the Ashram around midnight to take a bath. He lost his depth and was literally washed away. But even at that hour he found someone throwing a long piece of cloth at him so that he could retrieve himself. He told us later that when he came out he did not find anyone there and therefore, the next morning, considering this to be entirely Mother's grace, he could not resist wanting to ask Shree Ma whether she had saved him through Her grace. Even before he could mention it to her, she said: "Rath me bach gaya" (saved during the night). No further clarification was needed and all his doubts were stilled.

On several occasions Shree Ma would ask some of Her devotees to go to my father during the celebrations or later. This was because my father had interest in astrology as a hobby though he never made predictions regarding individuals and most of the time it was mundane astrology, particularly with regard to the destiny of our country that interested him. At one time Shree Ma had asked Shri Gopal Swarup Pathak, the then Vice-President, to meet my father and thereafter, every time that Shri Pathak went to Ma's Ashram he made it a point to spend hours with my father and discuss not only the spiritual identity of Shree Ma but also the experiences shared by them. Whatever the reason, Ma had told several people that my father was Vasishta and sometimes humorously she would even extend her palm towards my father and jocularly remarked: "Tell me my fortune." My father invariably managed to wriggle out of the embarrassment through a patent excuse that Ma as "Param Brahma Narayan" transcended all laws of astrology and palmistry

- She was even "Dharmatit". But once when she insisted that he had to predict something, he did tell her a period when she would take on some serious affliction of some devotee on herself in order that the devotee may not suffer and of course, he said that this was one of the many ways she had shaped the destiny of a large number of people. Also, that Pap and Punya of people would become "Kshiin" in Her presence. Several Ashramites used to pester him with their personal problems and sought their resolution in terms of astrology. Several of them told me later that my father had almost precisely predicted the date when Mother would attain Mahanirvan.

After his premature retirement my father built a huge residential accommodation at our native place. After his return from Ashtabhujia he decided to give it for Ma's Ashram. It took some time for the sale of the property, but when he got the cheque, he presented it in that form itself with an endorsement to the Ashram. A big plot in Lucknow was purchased for the proposed Ashram, but somehow later the idea was dropped and the sale price of the plot was offered back to my father. By then the value for real estate had gone up considerably and even though the amount was almost equal to ten times of what my father had gifted, he returned it back saying that it might be kept as an endowment for feeding the Sanyasins in the Ashram. In fact, as a result of Ma's blessings he had practically no attachment left either for the family members and even less so for material things. In fact, once he made a very pregnant statement to me saying that one should only keep the blessings of the saints as 'Prasad'. Perhaps he had picked up this idea from one of Ma's Pravachans when she had said that one will have to continue with the cycle of births so long as one has a debt to repay. I remember an interesting episode in this connection. On one of the Rakshabandhan days my father went and tied a Rakhi on Ma's hand. She just looked at him for a while and then burst in a peal of laughter saying "Pitaji is very clever. He wants me to grant Raksha not only to him but to his entire family." No wonder, not only my father but every member of the family received Her gracious blessings.

In 1973 Shree Ma asked my father to surrender all his 'Japa' to her and she also asked him to go to the Ashram in Varanasi. When I got posted to Delhi for the second time, I thought to myself that Mother may have so ordained it because she would have foreseen that I would be moving out of the State and that my father would not be inclined to go to Delhi with me. Later on I realised how superficial this anticipation was. Actually she had foreseen the end of the journey for him and therefore wanted him to leave his mortal remains in Varanasi which according to the Shastras is the coveted desire of all those who wish to break the cycle of Punarjanma. My father spent his last days in the Varanasi Ashram and on one of Her visits to the Ashrams, Shree Ma walked into the room of my father, blessed him and before coming away tore his shirt at the back. No one realised what all this was about. My father, after a brief illness thereafter, expired. And then we realised that the symbolic act of Shree Ma was only meant to convey her blessings that she was relieving him of the physical bondage or the 'bandhan' of 'Jivan-Maran', for good. This was the mysterious way in which Shree Ma not only guided Her devotees but also granted them liberation from the cycle of birth and death - real 'Mukti'.

Shree Ma had a similar design for my elder brother. He retired as a Judge and moved to our home in Lucknow. Ma sent for him and asked him

to go to Varanasi and look after the hospital there. My brother was working out his plans when Ma sent me a telegram to see her in Bangalore. I went there and she repeated her desire. We never realized the sense of urgency that Ma displayed. And tragically enough, my brother who had all along enjoyed radiant health, suddenly fell ill and passed away even before we could implement Ma's mysterious directive. We discovered then that every word of Ma had a covert significance, our gross ignorance notwithstanding.

My father until his very last moments was in possession of all his faculties in spite of acute abdominal affliction. Before lapsing into his eternal sleep, one of his last acts was to ask for a photograph of Shree Ma. He paid his last obeisance and slipped into eternal sleep peacefully. Shree Ma was at that time in Calcutta, but she asked floral offerings to be made to him as Her blessings before the final rites.

When I met Shree Ma shortly thereafter, she consoled us and particularly my mother, with the words which still continue to reverberate. She said: "Pitaji was Vasishta and had by his 'Tapasya' become Ramayanmaya. All of you should therefore be happy that he has attained Moksha". Some time later when, according to the tradition, I asked Her for a Bhagwat Parayan for my father, she said that those who have been liberated already did not need it. But, in deference to the 'Lokachar', if I wished to have it, she would ask the necessary arrangements to be made in the Ashram, and that was later done at Vrindavan in her most august and gracious presence.

When I went for the Mahasamadhi of Shree Ma at Kankhal I felt how that holy place itself has regained its mythological glory by becoming a Jyotirpith. Everyone present there, from Indira Gandhi down to the common man, felt an uncanny experience, blissful and truly Anandamayee. I for one fell into the memory-lane and recalled the various mystical experiences which my father had felt during his visits to Kankhal. But, accepted traditions inhibit me from narrating the almost incredible mystical experiences which my father had experienced in the presence of Ma and which he had narrated to us. Suffice it only to say that they were nothing short of "Bhagwati Darshan". May we all prove worthy of our blissful association with Shree Ma by furthering Her message of total surrender to Her will for the attainment of "Param Anand."

Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu Matrirupen Samsthitha,

Namastasyai, Namastasyai, Namastasyai, Namo Namah.

Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee— The Eternal Flame

Govind Narain

To say anything about Ma Anandamayee is like showing a feeble candle to the radiant sun - it is a futile attempt. Ma is everything and much more and all descriptions of Her are mere fragments of a limitless infinity. Ma's mahasamadhi is a phenomenon of the physical world. Ma is eternal. She exists as a brilliant flame within us. We need the perception to see Her. Her fragrant presence is always with us. We have to get rid of our ego and self-deception to be conscious of Her closeness. She is there - purity personified - to guide our thoughts and actions only if we are big enough to be humble and to surrender ourselves completely to Her care. To such a One I offer my devout salutations.

Our country has had an unbroken tradition of great sages and seers from times immemorial. These great ones have preserved our wisdom and ensured the continuity of our values and culture. This has been the backbone of our unity and national integrity. Each great one has devised his own system of conveying maximum benefit to the yearning humanity. Some spiritually realized Souls have taken birth amongst us for our salvation and their advent has been heralded by sages who came before them.

When my father-in-law, Dr. Panna Lall, was a student at St. John's College, Agra, he was fortunate to come under the wings of Prof. Surya Kumar Karfarma, who was a "Grahastha" but had secured spiritual advancement through his "Sadhna". Dr. Panna Lall learnt a lot at his feet not only in his studies but also in the path of spiritualism. The relationship continued and later Dr. Panna Lall introduced his whole family to Prof. Karfarma, whose teachings influenced them all. In 1925 Prof. Karfarma, who had retired long ago, came and visited Dr. Panna Lall in Unao where he was posted. During some intimate conversation Prof. Karfarma told my father-in-law that as far as he (Prof. Karfarma) was concerned he had imparted all the knowledge that he possessed but a great enlightened one who was already born, would in due course take care of him (Dr. Panna Lall) and lead him on further. Prof. Karfarma was referring to Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee. Later when Dr. Panna Lall narrated this episode to Shri Ma, She only smiled benignly. Thus Shri Ma's coming to Earth was known to other spiritually high souls, who were on a common wavelength.

It was in 1938 that Shri Ma came to Allahabad where my father-in-law Dr. Panna Lall (Father) was posted as Commissioner. Swarnalata Jaspal (Brahmacharni Billo Ji) and her family used to visit Ma. Billoji was a class senior to my wife Chandra. Billoji mentioned to my wife that a great Saint had come and she should visit her. My wife went to have Ma's darshan with Billoji and then she took her parents along to have Shri Ma's "darshan". At this first meeting with Father Shri Ma laughed and told him, "Pitaji, you and many others were present at the Sanyas-taking Ceremony of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu". This observation of Shri Ma sent an electric current through Dr. Panna Lall's body.

which kept him charged with devotion throughout his life.

During 1941-43 I visited Ma at various places along with Father but there was apparently no direct link between Ma and myself till then. I was shy and introvert. I remember attending Ma's 'satsang' on the roof top of Hari Ram Joshi's house in Lucknow. There used to be about 25 devotees. During "Kirtans" Ma would often go into "Samadhi". Soft "Kirtan" would continue and Ma would return to the physical world after short periods. I remember intimate sessions with Ma, again in the company of Father in Vindhyachal, Dehra Dun and elsewhere. I was getting more and more charmed by Ma's ever present sweetness and extreme graciousness but I must confess that the real spark had not awakened in me.

In December 1943 - January 1944 I was posted as Magh Mela Officer in Allahabad and my wife and I with our two girls were camping for a month at the Sangam. The whole atmosphere there looked sanctified with 'Bhajans' and 'Kirtans' starting from early morning as streams of devotees went for their holy dip in the severe cold weather. A new township had cropped up with lakhs of people - Sadhus, devotees, Pandas, tradesmen and various services. Elaborate arrangements had to be made. On one day, as we had finished our midday meal, we found Ma standing at the gate of our Camp accompanied by only one Brahmacharni. My wife and I rushed towards Her. Ma laughed and exclaimed, "I heard Govind Narain lives here, so this body came". We were dazzled by Her charm. We didn't have anything much to offer her except two left over bananas. In her graciousness Ma blessed us both and our girls and disappeared. The spark was kindled.

In 1946 Ma was celebrating Holi in Vrindaban and Father was going there. My wife and I along with our small daughters Chandan and Nandini also went there. The atmosphere in Ma's presence is always divine and the presence of a large number of Mahatmas and devotees added to the grandeur of the occasion. During one of her smaller sittings Ma revealed that all those who come to her have been associated with her during so many previous births and each one according to his/her Sadhna is escalating the spiritual ladder. What a magnetising impact this had on us who listened to her. The link was getting stronger and stronger. After a couple of day's bliss the time came for us to return to our work. Ma enjoined upon me to leave after taking "Prasad". I was in a hurry as I had to attend a meeting in Hathras on way to Aligarh. So I persuaded my wife to leave early. Our small Morris car was being driven by a driver. We had travelled about 7 miles from Vrindaban when suddenly an oldish woman crossed the road in front of our car. The front bumper hit her and she was carried forward about 10 yards before the car stopped. We were scared. The woman was howling and was soon joined by her son. I put my family under a road side tree and took the woman and her son back to Vrindaban to the local dispensary and got her thoroughly examined. By Ma's grace there was no injury - not even a scratch but there was shock. I got the woman admitted to the hospital for care and comfort till she decided to go. Then I went to Ma's ashram to report the whole matter to my father-in-law. Ma saw me, smiled and repeated that I should take "Prasad" and then go. So the lesson was well taught. I took the "Prasad" for the whole family and returned to Aligarh. My wife retorted "what happened to your being late for the meeting in Hathras". Ma's ways are inscrutable!

In early 1947 I was posted in the Secretariat in Lucknow and living in 2, Olliver Road. Ma blessed us again. At half an hour's notice She visited our home and with our modest means we welcomed Her and paid Her our obeisance. Her divine grace was apparently preparing me for bigger responsibilities.

From 1951 to 1954 we went to Nepal. I was deputed as Adviser-cum-Secretary to His Majesty King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah of Nepal. Winter used to be rather cold in Kathmandu and my wife used to stay with her father for a few months. In 1953 she went with her father Dr. Panna Lall to Vrindaban to Ma's ashram. Ma had arranged the "Sthapana" of "Shivalingas" there. On the day fixed, my wife was expressing her concern to her father that she had no flower garlands for the "Shivalingas". Soon thereafter an oldish man appeared at the rest house asking if she needed any flower garlands. My wife was overjoyed and bought the two big and beautiful garlands that he had. With this confidence my wife went with her father to the ceremony in the Ashram. There she found that there were three "Shivalingas" and she had only two garlands. She shared her worry with her father who advised her to watch quietly and keep the garlands hidden. Ma was examining all the articles that had been assembled for the "Pooja". When she saw the garlands that had been arranged by the ashram she did not approve of them and wanted better and bigger garlands. Dr. Panna Lall again asked my wife to keep quiet as there were only two garlands while there were three "Shivalingas". On her own accord Ma explained that one "Shivalinga" had been established earlier and the Pooja had been done. So that day, only two "Shivalingas" had to be worshipped. Father and my wife exchanged happy smiles and they offered the two garlands to Ma. Ma was very pleased and said those were the garlands befitting the occasion. Was this all a mere coincidence? I wonder! It was Ma's 'lila'.

In 1954 Kumbh in Allahabad, my Father, my wife, our children and other members of the family were in Ma's ashram at the 'Sangam'. Ma took them all for a dip in the 'Sangam' and returned to her camp. After some time Ma looked very restless and exclaimed that so many people were trampling over her body. Later it was learnt that the big tragedy - the stampede - killing several hundred pilgrims had occurred on the slippery slopes of the Bund. I was in Kathmandu and naturally got panicky on hearing about the tragedy from the radio. Ma's immediate flock was safe but Ma remained concerned about the bigger human family.

Once my wife and I went to Varanasi Ashram with Father on the occasion of Shivratri. In the day Father was sitting in the courtyard and Ma emerged from her bathroom with a wet towel. Father, as usual, said something witty. Ma laughed and squeezed her wet towel over his head. Father felt thrilled and prostrated before Ma for the extreme kindness and blessings. Those who are familiar with the theory of "Shaktipat" or of awakening the "Kundalini", will easily appreciate the significance of this "Lila".

Ma's arrangements for Shivaratri Puja were always made with meticulous care under Her instructions and supervision. All participants in the holy worship were required to observe complete fast since the early morning and not even a drop of water was permissible.

I remember once in Delhi Shivaratri puja was organised in Kalkaji Ashram and Smt. M. S. Subhaluxmi had also come to join us. I was not too well and had just got up from an illness. I asked Ma if I could take milk. Ma did not say 'NO' but smilingly She said in that case I might watch the puja from outside the hall. The message was firm and clear. I kept Nirjala fast and thought I might sit for one Prahar puja only. My wife and daughter were also there. After one Prahar we exchanged glances and I conveyed to them that I could sit for another Prahar. M. S. Subhaluxmi was regaling us with her Bhajan in between the puja and Ma was going round and talking to the worshippers. After the second Prahar I felt strong enough to sit for third Prahar and then the fourth. And so with Ma's grace the whole puja was completed. I marvel how this became possible in my poor state of health? There are no limits to Ma's Kripa if one would only follow Her instructions.

While in Nepal we had procured two 'Chauris' with silver handles (these are used in religious worship of the deities). Father, Dr. Panna Lal, had donated two idols of Ashtadhatu - Mahaprabhu's and Nityanand's to be installed in Vrindaban Ashram. Ma had very kindly arranged for the proper installation with all traditional worships. We all assembled in Vrindaban. The idols were beautiful and with great love and feeling Ma described the whole procedure of their installation in order to prepare us for the ceremony lasting a few hours. When, on the previous evening, Ma was doing the stocktaking of all the arrangements and all the articles that were required, various Ashramites in charge were reporting to Her what had been done. It was revealed that while everything was collected, there was no "Chaur". As it happened, my wife had packed one of the "Chauris" with her baggage but Father asked her to keep quiet for a while. He wanted to see Ma's leela. Ma was talking about the "Chaur" and showing Her concern. Then She stated that the Lord Himself made all His arrangements and no one need worry. Something will turn up. At this stage Father quietly asked my wife to bring the "Chaur" and present it to Ma. My wife did this. Ma laughed and was happy and remarked "Didn't I say that the Lord made all His arrangements Himself". We were amazed how Ma, the All-knower, staged this leela to carry conviction to the whole gathering.

When one begins to talk of Ma one loses sense of time and space. There is so much to say about One who is all pervading, limitless and all knowing. But I have to restrain myself for the present. May Ma's grace extend to one and all. Jai Ma.

(Continued from P. 29)

ban or Kankhal. It was because Ma could come to Calcutta that thousands of her poor devotees had a chance of seeing her.

Memories come flooding in, but I must stop. In Sankaracharya's famous verse 'Sivaparadhakshamapanastotram' there is a line "The days that are gone will not return again. Time consumes the world." With me, however, the memory of those glorious days will always abide.

Ma -- Ma -- Ma

MA

Amidst Everything Yet Amidst Nothing *

Bandhu (Friend)

It was Bhadra Shukla Navami in 1982 that brought the darkest eclipse of our lives -- for it was on that day that "MA" decided to withdraw Herself 'physically' from our midst; yet amidst that all-pervading darkness, many of us have still been witness to 'beacons of light' -- 'kripa', which is truly 'ahetuki' (without any reason).

Even to attempt an appraisal of MA's personality would be the height of arrogance. I would merely endeavour to behold certain facets of HER persona, which prove beyond the shadow of all doubts, an eternal truism, which emanated from MA Herself. For truly, whatever 'role' She played, She was the epitome of perfection. Yet, in no particular role was She attached or immersed in - it was, as I see it, truly "amidst everything, yet amidst nothing". It was perhaps part of Her 'lila' for which She performed these roles, but never out of necessity or compulsion.

I shall try to behold certain visible roles that my limited and mortal vision has allowed me to perceive - roles, where She was perfection personified! MA as a 'householder', 'teacher by example', 'supreme philosopher', 'Divinity', and dearest of all, 'Mother par excellence'.

In her early years as a *householder*, examples abound of Her excellence and perfection; She was always the perfect hostess, resplendant in culinary talents, taking care to see that everybody is carefully fed and looked after, before She attended to even the smallest of Her needs. This was manifested, even later in Her life when in the Ashram the well-being of everybody was Her uppermost and daily concern, right down to everyday's menu, which inevitably was one of the main points of Her discussion with Swami Paramanandaji every night of the year.

But, yet She never 'lost' Herself over such chores, much as it would seem to several people. In fact, when some people had on occasions, suggested to MA that instead of discussing such mundane chores, the time with Swami Paramanandaji could perhaps be spent more fruitfully in pursuit of 'higher thoughts' -- to which She had replied, "Do you think that this (i.e. daily chores) is bereft of IT (the spirit of the Divine)?" Again, whilst immersed in Her role as a householder, She demonstrates the essential "ONE-ness" of The Spirit.

As a *teacher by example* Her excellence knew no bounds. She preached simplicity and She truly epitomised this quality in Her life-style. While She rested on precious little other than a 'sattranji' (jute carpet), a straw mat, and

*MA's saying on several occasions in several different contexts.

an immaculate white sheet and adorned only a simple white cotton 'dhoti' and 'chaddar', yet She was resplendant in it, with majesty which was beyond compare !

She was also extremely careful that food should never be wasted. She tried to inculcate this virtue in everybody and saw it fit to again teach by example. I could not have been more than ten years of age, but till today this incident has always been visible in my mind's eye.

Ma was about to enter Kanyapeeth (the Ashram girls' residential school, based in Varanasi) after 'satsang'. A young brahmacharini was busy washing and cleansing the rice and in the process, inadvertantly dropped a few grains of rice on the floor. The epitome of perfection that She is, Ma promptly stepped down to collect those few grains of rice, and, departing from Her normal convention, put those grains in Her mouth. I have yet to see a more effective lesson taught in so unassuming a manner.

Ever so often, we have seen Ma imploring ever so humbly, "This body is a poor unlettered girl and only says things out of turn ('utpatang baath')". Yet, a perusal of Her sayings demonstrates a unique capability of elucidating the highest *philosophical truths* in the simplest of words. Her erudition in the highest forms of Hindu philosophy and religion have been recognised and acclaimed by successive presiding authorities of Hindu philosophy and thought. Yet again, She conclusively proves that while She can immerse Herself in a particular role, yet She is never 'bound' in it or by it.

MA has been perceived in very many forms of *Divinity* yet at no time has She laid claim to it personally. But here too, Her 'lila' has been faultless! It is a documented fact that amongst Her first devotees in Dhaka, they had had the unique blessing of seeing MA as "*Dasa Mahavidya*", simultaneously, whilst engaging in 'satsang'; the celebrated Mahatma, Shankar Bharati, also had a vision of "*Lalita Tripurasundari Devi*" asking him to visit Her in Bhadaini, Varanasi, at a time when MA was residing in person in Her Bhadaini Ashram (in Varanasi). Thereafter, Shankar Bharati merely came to the Ashram and stood in front of MA, in perfect silence-- their 'communication' was complete!

However, the dearest of Her manifestations, was truly of a '*Mother par excellence*'. She could be compassionate, She could cajole, She could give you motherly love, She could admonish you, She could take care of you and She could forgive you, unconditionally, like no other mother! Personal instances would be far too numerous to recount, but this particular manifestation was apparent to all. Ma 'embraced' you, as it were, with a unique kind of transcendental bliss, which left oneself shorn of all the troubles and cares of this world. She bestowed upon all and sundry an inner feeling of Peace which perhaps attracted people to Her the most and above all, She made everyone feel very special in their own way. It can only perhaps be adequately described as "**PERFECT AND COMPLETE LOVE**" - the kind only She and She alone is capable of giving!

She had manifested Herself in all these roles and many more with a degree of perfection which was faultless. And yet, She was always shorn of any particular preference or attachment to any specific role. She is, in my mind, "*in all and all in one*!"

Matri Vani

Whatever is to happen to anyone, anywhere, at anytime is all fixed by Him; His arrangements are perfect.

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So long as one's real home has not been found, suffering is inevitable. The sense of separateness is the root cause of misery, because it is founded on error, on the conception of duality.

* * *

With staunch faith, strong devotion and a heart overflowing with love, if anyone of you can exclaim, "Mother come, come to me Mother, I cannot pass my days without you", rest assured, the universal Mother will surely spread Her hands towards you and will take you up on Her lap. Don't look up to Her only as a mysterious refuge in your hour of distress. Remember always She is very very near you, guiding all the forces of your life. With that conviction proceed, - the burden of all your responsibilities She will take up from your shoulders and give you strength to bear the cross.

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For every individual the road to illumination is different. Wherever you may be, from there itself start advancing. For there is only He and no other. He Himself is holding you. He never, never forsakes you.

* * *

Do your utmost to remain anchored in truth and spend much time in the contemplation of the Lord in a quiet secluded place.

* * *

Men and women are equally endowed with the capacity to realize God. It is the duty of a human being to make human birth, which is such a rare boon, successful. Otherwise he has to continue in the round of births and deaths.

* * *

It is God's law to end suffering by suffering. Your present condition is His gift of the results of your past actions. Bear in mind that it is because God will take you unto Himself that He is purifying and cleansing you.

* * *

God's mercy pours down everywhere and at all times. One becomes aware of this by making oneself receptive to it. To pray constantly for His grace is man's duty.

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In perfect, all-embracing darsana the Beloved stands revealed.