

MOTHER AS REVEALED TO ME

English edition of

Bhaiji's Matri Darshan in Bengali

TRANSLATED

By

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**Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha
Kankhal, Haridwar**

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Preface to the first edition

On the eve of his departure for Kailash with Mother in 1937 when Bhaiji left his Bengali manuscript with me for publication, it was his express desire that the book should be published Hindi simultaneously. His unexpected death on his way back upset all, our plans. The Bengali edition was first published in 1937 shortly after his death. The Hindi edition was also published in 1957. Though the English rendering was ready it could not be published so long.

I trust it will be gratifying to Mother's devotees to learn that through the ardour and generosity of Sri Kamlesh Parasram Punwani---a devotee of Mother from Sing , West Pakistan , the English edition of *Matri Darshan* is published now. This edition will, it is hoped, carry Mother's message beyond the shores of India.

My grateful thanks are also due to Sri Girija Shankar Bhattacharya, Professor [retired] of the Presidency College, Calcutta, who in spite of his frail health, spared no pains to help me in getting the book published in no time.

44 Hazra Road,
CALCUTTA-19
4th May, 1952

GANGA CHARAN DASGUPTA

FOREWORD

To write a biography of Sri Sri Anandamayee Ma or to draw the attention of the world to Her infinite powers is not the object of this feeble attempt on my part. I have, in this little sketch, introduced only a few facts of my own direct experience to show how She opened up a fountain of life in my almost parched-up soul. All the blemishes that appear in this work, are traceable to my own personal limitations for which I sincerely implore her pardon.

I lost my mother when I was but a small boy. I have heard my relations say that my eyes used to swim in tears whenever I heard infants babbling our “Ma, Ma” with their soft, shrill voices; and that I would soothe my heart by lying on the floor and weeping silently.

My father was a saintly person. The deep religious spirit of his life implanted in me, during my very childhood years, seeds of divine aspiration. In 1908 I had my initiation in *Shakti Mantra* [*mantra---speech symbol representing a deity*] from our family Guru [*Guru---- family preceptor who initiates one into the spiritual life*]. On that account I had to worship the Mother Divine; and when I could pour out all my devotional fervour with "Ma, Ma" , during my prayer time, I found great relief and happiness. Even then I could hardly realise that mother is the fountain head of supreme joy and happiness for all living beings. There was an over-powering desire in me to find such a Living Mother who, by her loving glances, could transform my storm-tossed soul. I approached many saintly persons and was desperate enough even to consult astrologers for an answer to this query, “Shall I have the good fortune to meet such a mother?” All held out high hopes.

With that object in view, I visited many holy places and had the opportunity of meeting numerous spiritual personalities; but none could satisfy my desire.

I worked in a Government office at Calcutta. It was transferred to Dacca in 1918 and I was posted there. By the end of 1924 I came to learn that Ma Anandamayee had been living for some months in Shah-bag near the city, observing silence for a long time, always seated in some Yogic posture and would, on some rare occasions, draw a line on the floor round Her seat and have very short talks with people after reciting some *mantras* or sacred texts.

One morning I went there in a prayerful spirit, and was fortunate enough to see Mother, through the kind courtesy of Her husband, whom people addressed as *Pitaji* or Father. It sent a thrill into my heart to see her serene Yogic posture along with all the modesty and grace to be met with only in a newly married lady. It at once flashed upon my mind that the person for whom my heart had yearned for so many years, and in whose search I had travelled to so many sacred places, stood revealed before me.

My whole being was flooded with joy and every fibre of my body danced with ecstasy. There was an impulse to throw myself prostrate at Her feet and to cry out in tears

“Mother, why have you kept me away from you all these long, long years ?”

After some minutes, I asked Mother, “Have I any chance of spiritual uplift?” She replied, “Your hunger for such a life is not yet strong enough.” I had come with a load of thoughts struggling for expression, but all were hushed into silence under the spell of Her soothing grace. I sat there speechless and dumb. Mother, too, spoke not a word. After a little while, I bowed to Her and left the place. I could not touch Her feet though I had a strong desire to do so. It was not through fear or delicacy; some mysterious power pushed me away from Her presence.

I did not go to Shah-bag for long afterwards. I reflected thus: “As long as She would not draw me close to Her like my own Mother, removing Her veil, how could I clasp Her feet to my bosom?” There was a great conflict in me; a strong desire to see Her and a sharp pain at Her aloofness; - both were equally strong and in opposition to each other. No mode of approach seemed possible. In the meantime I used to go to the adjoining Sikh temple; and standing by the garden wall, I saw Mother from a distance so that nobody could notice it. During these days of indecision, I would analyse the movements of my mind and would often question myself, “What are things coming to?”

But I had no power of taking a decision. I would often get all news about Mother and listen with attention to every story about Her *Lila (play of divine forces)* In this manner I passed seven months in the midst of the din and bustle of every-day life with a prospect of meeting Her every hour. One day I brought Mother to my house. An intense joy thrilled my whole being to meet Her after such a long time. But it was not permanent. When She was about to leave my house I bowed down to touch Her feet, but She withdrew them. I felt as if pierced by a smarting pain.

Then I tried to ease the pangs of the struggle in my heart by reading various books on religion. I resolved to publish a small book on religion and religious practices. The book was written and published under the title, “*Sadhana*” and I forwarded a copy of it to Mother through Sri Bhupendra Narayan Das Gupta. Mother curtly said to him, “Ask the author to come and see me.”

On receiving this call from Mother I went to Shah-bag one morning. I came to learn that Her vow of silence of the last three years was over. She came and sat close to me. I read out the whole book to Her and after hearing the contents, She said, “Though after three years of silence, my vocal chords are not functioning properly, yet words are forcing themselves out of my mouth to-day. Your book is quite good. Try to develop even more purity of thought and action.”

During that interview with Her, Pitaji was present. I began to feel that a new world was opening out before me and that I was sitting like a little child before my own parents

Since then I used to go to Shah-bag. I requested my wife to go and see Mother with some offerings. At that time Mother used to put on a golden nose ring. My wife took with her one large silver plate, some curd, flowers, sandal paste and one diamond nose-ring as presents for Mother, and with great delight and respect she offered them at Her feet.

It transpired afterwards that Mother would have Her food placed upon the bare ground at that time and use no plate whatsoever. So *Pitaji* had said to Her once with great disgust: “You don't take your food from brass plates or bell-metal ones. Will you have it then on a silver plate?” Mother laughed and said, “Yes, but do not tell anybody about this during the

next three months and please do not make any attempt yourself to procure silver plates”. Now before the three months expired the silver plate was given to Her as mentioned above.

One day Mother said to me, “Remember, you really are a Brahmin; and there is a very subtle, close spiritual link between this body and yourself.” From that very day I tried to keep my body pure in all respects.

I learnt from various sources that many of Mother's devotees had been fortunate enough to find the images of many gods and goddesses revealed in Her body. But as I saw with my own eyes manifestations of great supernatural powers in Her every day life, I did not care to look for some special revelation. My humble aspiration was that if I could model my life after the ideals of patience and composure always manifested in Her, it would be more than enough for me.

Still man's natural impulse to see some material embodiment of divine powers in human life, prompted me one day to enquire from Her, when I found Her alone : I asked, “Mother, pray, tell me, what are you in reality?” She laughed out loudly and said with all affection: **”How could such childish queries arise in your heart ? The vision of gods and goddesses appears in accordance with one's inherited dispositions (*samskaras*). I am what I was and what I shall be; I am whatever you conceive, think or say. But it is a supreme fact that this body has not come into being to reap the fruits of past karma. (*Prarabdha or the results of actions of past births about to mature in this life.*) Why don't you take it that this body is the material embodiment of all your thoughts and ideas. You all have wanted it and you have it now. So play with this doll for some time. Further questions will be fruitless.”** I said, “These words of yours, Mother, do not satisfy my yearning.” Hearing this, She spoke with slight vehemence, “Say, say, what more you desire” and immediately a dazzling flood of heavenly light shone forth from Her face. I was struck dumb with awe and wonder. All my doubts were laid at rest.

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

In a second the whole vision had passed off like the play of some supernal magic. To me it appeared that I had dropped down from dreamland. I remembered at once that Mother had revealed Herself in response to what I had said a few days back. I began to recite a hymn and prayed to Her, ”May I be a worthy son of yours, worthy to be blessed with all your motherly bounty and grace.”

After a little while Mother advanced towards me. She picked a flower and a few blades of *durba* grass [*Durbadala -a common grass, the blades of which are used during worship*] and placed them on my head, as I fell at Her feet. [*Those sacred emblems were left with the wife of the translator when Sri J.C. Ray left for Kailash*]

I was beside myself with joy and rolled on the ground at Her feet. The day that is gone never comes back. How I wish for a happy return of that blessed day.

From that moment a deep conviction began to take root in my mind that She was not

only my mother but the Mother of this universe. I returned home. As soon as I collected myself, the same luminous image of Mother flashed upon my mind and tears streamed down my cheeks. From that very day onwards Her grace worked such a change in me and in so natural a manner that Her figure occupied the place of the goddess whom I had worshipped all these eighteen years, since my initiation in early youth. This change at times created some doubt in my mind as to whether I was pursuing the right course or not. But in a few days Mother took Her rightful place in my soul, possessing it fully.

(Mother (Her original name was Nirmala Sundari Devi) was born in the village of Kheora, District Tripura, in 1818 Saka Era (1896, April 30) in the early hours of Friday, 1 hour 12 mins. before dawn. The place of Her birth has recently been acquired; when She went to Kheora on the 17th May 1937, She, being pressed by Her devotees, indicated the exact spot where Her body first touched the earth, Her father Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya was a descendant of the well-known Kashyapa Brabmin family of village Vidyakut, in the same district. His early life he passed in the house of his maternal uncle. Both Mother's father and mother, Sm. Mokshada Sundari Devi, had very kind and loving nature. Their devotion to God, their simplicity and standard of social life were almost ideal. The maternal house of Mother at Sultanpur, Tripura, had a very high social status for a long time. There were many learned Pandits and devotees in the family. The report goes that a pious lady of the same family mounted the funeral pyre of her husband chanting hymns merrily. Mother was married to Sri Ramani Mohan Chakravarty of village Atpara of Vikrampur when She was just 12 years 10 months old. He belonged to the well-known Bharadwaj Brahmin family of that village. His life was dedicated to the welfare of people. He was afterwards known as Baba Bholanath, Rama Pagla or Pitaji.)

Mother's early life, was spent unnoticed in the villages Kheora and Sultanpur. After Her marriage She passed some time in Sreepur and Narundi, where the elder brother of Bholanath, Her husband, worked; some months were also spent in Her husband's house at Atpara. Before She came to Dhaka, She had stayed for about three years at Vidyakut and for about six years at Bajitpur with Her husband.

At Astagram was first manifested prominently Mother's liking for *Kirtan* songs (a musical mode of devotional songs introduced by Vishnava poets, saint and composers); at Bajitpur that mood was noticeable only at times; but the dominant tone of Her mind during this period was the natural expression of *mantric* symbolism and *Yogic* practices. [Various phases of psychic evolution of life with the corresponding transformation of the physical vehicle]. When She came to Shah-bag at Dhaka the state of Her quiescence and silence continued; but then a phase of intense peace and tranquillity became the all-pervading feature of Her life. It is difficult to convey in words an idea of the depth of that state. During this period what an interplay of divine thoughts and expression became manifest in all the ways of Her life!

At this time many of Her devotees began to flock round Her. Many of them took part in worship, devotional songs and sacrificial rites. It is difficult to describe the ways by which their souls became steeped in tranquil bliss in Her presence. All people would, at this time, address Her as 'Mother of the Shah-bag' and would express their delight by saying that such a wealth of Mother's grace they had never enjoyed before in all their life.

While at Bajitpur the whole history of the Siddhesvari Kali temple at Dhaka had dawned upon Her mind.

During Her residence at Shah-bag Rai Bahadur Pran Gopal Mukherji, who has since retired as Post Master General, was at Dhaka. He and Sri Baul Chandra Basak found means for the preservation of the Siddhesvari Temple.

When I met Mother first, She gave me a hint, saying,- "Your appetite for the spiritual is not strong enough." But to one tossed about by the turmoil of worldly desires, such craving for higher life was not possible, unless one could learn how to direct all the uncontrolled waves of ones emotions and impulses towards Her feet. I would always pray silently in the secrecy of my heart, -"Oh Mother, you manifest yourself as Hunger in every being; (*Ya devi sarva bhuteshu kshudha-rupena samsthitha.....*) awaken in me a real hunger for things immutable and everlasting." How Mother, in Her infinite mercy directed my ever fluctuating disposition towards Her all-pervasive presence, is narrated below:-

1. One night I was walking about on the open balcony of my house; there was a glitter of moonlight on all objects about me. I perceived some movements by my side and turned round. I found to my amazement, an image of Mother gliding along with me. She wore a red chemise and a *sari* with a series of thin red lines for border. But when I left the Ashram only a couple of hours back, I had noticed on Her person a white chemise and a *sari* with only one broad red border. This made me doubt the correctness of the vision. But when I went to Her early morning on the following day, I found Her dressed exactly like what I had seen in the preceding night. I was told that a devotee came to the Ashram after I had left, and made Her wear those clothes. When Mother was told about my vision, She said in a most natural way, "I went to see what you were doing."

2. One day Mother came to my house and conversed with us on the first floor; just then a car arrived to take Her to another place. I did not know that it had been arranged previously. Mother got ready to start; but I felt great anguish to find Her leaving my house after such a short visit. With a sorrowful heart I came downstairs to see Her off. She got into the car, but it did not move though the driver gave the start. She was looking at me with Her face beaming with a genial laugh. When the driver failed to move the car, a hackney carriage was brought for Her. It was painful to think that Mother would have to go in a hired carriage when the car stood ready. Just at that time the car began to move to my surprise and joy, and Mother left.

3. The pressure of crowds at Shah-bag increased from day to day, as people came to know about Mother. On one occasion I could not meet Her in the course of four days. On the morning of the fifth day I had resolved to go to Her but changed my mind. I sat down in despair in my room. I saw to my surprise the full image of Mother appearing on the wall opposite, like a film picture. She looked quite sad. On turning round I found Sri. Amulyaratan Choudhury standing by my chair. He said,-"Mataji has sent a carriage to take you to Her." When I reached the Shah-bag garden Mother said,-" I have been noticing your restlessness for the last few days. Peace and tranquility cannot come unless there is some restlessness in one's mind to start with. You should kindle fire by any means, either with clarified butter or sandalwood or even with straw. Once alight, the fire burns on; all worries, darkness and gloom gradually disappear. It will burn to ashes all obstacles. You know a spark is sufficient to start a conflagration reducing hundreds of homes and palaces to cinders."

4. At noon in the office, or at midnight in my bed-room, when a very strong desire to see Mother made me quite restless, I found Her appear before me on many occasions and She at once would say,—"You called me and I have come".

5. One afternoon when I returned from office, I was told, an unknown person had left a large fish in my house saying that he would come back shortly. But nobody turned up. The fish lay upon the floor. When nobody appeared till dusk was cut into pieces and sent to Mother at Shah-bag. Next morning when I went there, *Pitaji* told me—"Your Mother said to me last night, 'Look here, Jyotish is my God'". On enquiry I came to learn that on the previous morning a few persons got Mothers *prasad* [*Prasad is the food that is left after the Mother has taken some. It is distributed among the devotees.*] but when in the evening many people came to take part in *Kirtan* or devotional concert, they all desired to have Mother's *prasad*. There was no stock of provisions. Just at the time when Mother was preparing spices, condiments for cooking, my servant *Khagen* came with the fish and other necessary articles. And this evoked from Her the expressions stated by *Pitaji*. "I was struck with surprise", added *Bholanath*, "to hear how an unknown person had brought a fish to your house and how it could be sent with other necessaries to satisfy the devotees clamouring for Mother's *prasad*."

Such incidents were numerous. At Shah-bag, a man was praying for some *prasad* from Mother there was nothing available there at the time. Just then a desire impelled me to send some fruits or sweets. When my man reached there with the things he found that Mother appeared to be waiting for them.

6. One night at about 3 A.M., I was wide awake sitting on my bed and it flashed upon my mind that Mother was sleeping with Her head in a direction opposite to what She was accustomed to. At dawn when I went to Her I found Her exactly in the same position. On enquiry I learnt that Mother went out at 3 A.M. and on returning She changed Her sleeping posture.

It often happened that from my own room or from my desk at the office I could see distinctly what Mother was doing at Her place. I could see these things without any effort of my will; at times such pictures flashed across my mind without my ever thinking about them. *Bhupen* used to go to Shah-bag every day and I could verify the truth of my visions through him. There was hardly any discrepancy. Mother would often say to me,—"Your real home is at Shah-bag; you go to your own house just for an outing."

7. One noon I was busy at my desk. *Bhupen* came and said, "Mother has asked you to go to Shah-bag. I had informed Her that the Director of Agriculture would take over charge of office that day on the expiry of his leave; but Mother replied, "You are to carry the message to Jyotish, let him do what he thinks proper."

Without a moment's hesitation I left all the papers spread out on my desk and without informing any body at the office I started for Shah-bag. When I arrived there, Mother said,—"Let us go to Siddhesvari Ashram." I accompanied Mother and *Pitaji*. There was a small hollow, just where now stands a small pedestal and a *Shiva Lingam*. Mother sat inside the hollow and Her face was beaming with a smile, breathing radiant joy. I exclaimed to *Pitaji*: "From to-day we shall call Mother by the name of *Anandamayee*"; he at once said, "Yes, be it so!" She only glanced at me with a fixed gaze.

When we were about to return at 5-30 P.M., She enquired,—"You were all along so full

of Joy, how is it that you now look so pale?" I replied, that the thought of going home had made me think of the unfinished work at the office. She said, -"You need not worry about it." Next day when I went to office, the Director said nothing about my absence on the previous day.

I asked Mother why She had called me so unexpectedly the day before. She said, "It was to test how much you have gone ahead during these few months." She added with a genial laugh, -"If you had not come, who else would have given a name to this body?"

8. Once His Excellency the Governor of Bengal came to Dhaka. The Director asked me to attend office at 9-30 A.M., as he would go to pay a visit to the Governor. I promised to come. Next morning I was late in returning from Shah-bag and when I reached office it was 9-50 A.M. I was a bit nervous as to how I would meet my boss. When I was thinking about the matter he phoned to me from his bungalow to say that his car had gone wrong, that he was sorry to put me to trouble and that he would go to Government House at 11 A.M.

When Mother heard the story, She said with a laugh,- "Is it anything new to you ? The other day you threw out of gear the car in which I was to leave."

9. On one occasion Mother came to our house. In the course of our talk I said casually,-"It appears, Ma, that to you hot and cold are the same. If a piece of burning coal fell on your feet, would you not feel the pain?" She replied, "Just test it." I did not press the point further.

After a few days, taking up the thread of our previous conversation, Mother placed a piece of burning coal on Her foot. There was deep burning sore. For one month it did not heal up. I felt very upset about that silly suggestion of mine. One day I found Her in the verandah with her legs stretched out and Her gaze fixed on the sky. Some pus had gathered on the sore. I bowed down and licked the pus up with my tongue and lips. From the following day the sore began to heal up.

I asked Mother how She felt when the live coal was burning Her flesh. She said in reply, " I was not aware of any pain. It looked like nothing but fun; with great joy I watched what the poor wretched coal was doing on my foot; I noticed that at first some hairs, then the skin began to burn; it smelt of burn and gradually the coal was put out after doing its work. "When later a sore formed, it continued its course; but as soon as a strong desire arose in you that the wound be healed up soon, it took a rapid turn for the better."

10. It was the month of *Magh*, mid-winter, with biting cold. At early dawn I was walking barefoot with Mother on the grassy fields of Ramna, wet with dew. From a distance I noticed a group of ladies coming towards us. I thought , as soon as they arrived, they would take Mother to the ashram. As these thoughts were passing through my mind, the whole field was covered over with a very thick fog and the ladies could not be seen. After some three hours when we returned to the ashram, we heard that the party of ladies got tired trying to find us and when Mother was informed about my thoughts, she said," Your strong desire was fulfilled."

11. Once Mother was suffering much from cold and cough. Finding her very unwell, I prayed to her with a tremulous voice of entreaty, " Mother, may you be soon restored to health!" She gazed at me and said with a laugh---"From tomorrow I shall be all right, my child." And so it came to be.

12. One morning I found that Mother had fever. I came back to my house and prayed at night fervently that Her fever might pass into my body. Towards morning I had fever and headache. When I went to Mother in the morning, as usual, she said at once, "I am all right, but you have fever. Go back to your house, have bath and take your usual food." I did so and was all right by the afternoon.

Mother always says---"By force of pure , concentrated thought everything becomes possible."

13. A book named *Sadhu Jivani* [Lives of Saints] got into my hands. There appeared this line ,---He [*a sadhu*] used to advise his devotees always to give good food to the poor." I wrote the following note on the margin: Giving food only does not satisfy a human soul." This book was taken to Mother at Shah-bag and one of Her devotees read out my remark. Mother said nothing. After a few days I went to Shah-bag quite early in the morning. Just then a man like one in a fit of insanity, came and said, "Give me some food or I die with hunger." Mother searched the kitchen store and gave to the man what She could collect at the time. He wanted water to drink and Mother directed me to give him some; when I came to know that the man was a Muslim, had fasted for three days and had come into the ashram scaling over the enclosure, Mother said to me that he had come there to teach me the efficacy of giving food and drink to one who needs it. Everything has its proper place and time. Nothing is lost in the divine economy of the world.

14. One day I said to Mother,- "Ma, all these days the *mantric* sounds arise in me in a continuous stream. In the daytime as well as at dead of night the flow of the sound -naturally wells out of my heart, like the gushing jets of a fountain." When I said it, some slight tinge of personal satisfaction lurked in the inmost recess of my heart. Mother gazed at me and said nothing. When I reached home, the sound ceased and in spite of my best efforts, I could not revive it. The day passed and night wore on, but the joyful stream of *mantric* melody could not be restored. Next morning I requested Bhupen to inform Mother about my sad plight. Bhupen met Mother on the way while She was proceeding to a devotee's house in a carriage. She began to laugh. It was 10 A.M. Just at that moment I found that the choked-up stream began to flow with its former ease. I came to know from Bhupen afterwards at what time he had met Mother. In this connection Mother was heard to observe that in spiritual matters, even the slightest tinge of I-ness retards one's progress.

15. I give below another instance of the promptness with which Mother's benign influence helps the growth of our inner life. It is a pity that we fail to recognise its value and do not utilise it for our spiritual up-lift. After the first enthusiasm is over, we relapse into our former condition.

Once Mother said with a laugh, "As you chant the divine names or *mantras* [*special name or mantra with which one is initiated*] , your mind gradually loses its impurity; love and reverence for the Supreme Being awaken and your thoughts become subtle and refined. Then glimpses of higher planes of existence begin to dawn upon you and work for your up-lift."

The day I heard these words. I sat in a lonely corner of my house for evening prayers; to my surprise I experienced a new joy at the flow of divine names. They continued without any pause; sleep came on and as soon as I woke up, those joyous vibrations again thrilled my being. Next day the same joyful spell went on in an undertone due to the

pressure of office routine; towards dusk, when I disposed my mind for prayers, the bliss of the previous evening filled my heart, so that there was no inclination to sleep at all; at dead of night the flow was so intense, that I thought, I would feel relieved if there were a pause. But it went on with its own momentum.

I had never practised sitting in a *Gomukhi* posture. (*Gomukhi*---*pose of the body consists in laying the legs flat on the ground on either side of the body, with erect backbone, the face looking straight forward.*)

Towards the early hours of the morning before dawn I found myself in that posture. During those hours my body and mind were immersed in a sea of inexpressible joy. Tears welled out of my eyes without a stop. In one spell of meditation, I passed the whole time motionless and was completely absorbed.

16. One morning, in those early days of self-surrender, I sat in silence. My heart was full of a deep emotion for mother's love. (*kripa*---*divine grace*) A song in Bengali took shape, of which the translation is given below:-

Let Thy worship, Thy hymns of praise
be the eternal solace of my life;
Let my life brim over with the songs
of Thy adoration, thoughts of Thy Divine Grace.
I shall see Thee, Mother, in the
wide open sky with wistful eyes;
I shall not ask for any boon,
say not a word; I shall only lay myself
down at Thy feet with tears of bliss;

I shall move about in Thy endless expanse of heaven, scattering songs like flowers
representing Thy glory.

I shall steep myself in Thy bliss, chanting Thy holy names and sending their echoes
throughout the Universe.

All my actions, all my thoughts of religion are
Thy worship.

Oh Mother, give me *Bhakti*, (*spirit of adoration*) firm faith, so that I may make Thy
feet the sheet-anchor of my life.

I gave this song the title, "The song of a crazy fellow" and sent a printed copy of it to Mother. Afterwards I heard that when it reached Her, She was cutting and trimming a gourd for the kitchen with a bill-hook. While the song was being recited to Her, the gourd fell from Her hands and She sat motionless for some time.

When I met Her afterwards, She said, "The world is the embodiment of *Bhava (idea)* or the Idea of the Good. All created things are its material expressions. If you can once rouse your soul with the divine *bhava*, you will come to find that in this universe there runs one play of the *bhava*; without it man fumbles about and misses the real import of life."

A few days later we were all sitting at the Siddhesvari Ashram, when Mother said, "Sing that song of yours bearing the title of "*Pagler Gaan*" [*the song of a crazy fellow*]. I had long given up the practice of singing songs; besides, there were many people present and I hesitated. Mother laughed, saying, -"You have only composed a song of a crazy fellow, but are not yet crazy enough to ignore the criticism of the world." These words sank deep into my soul and with a trembling heart and tremulous voice I sang.

I composed many such songs and offered them at Her feet. She expressed Her delight over some, and others She passed over with mute approval. There were many occasions when Mother was away from Dhaka and songs welled out of my heart during my evening prayers or during long midnight meditations. I could see Mother's figure standing before me motionless and listening to my raptures. When Mother returned to Dhaka after touring different places, She would ask me to repeat particular songs I had sung on different occasions in my own room. It was really strange that She could name even those songs that had not in any form been presented to Her before.

My intense longing to be by Mother's side, sometimes wafted me away towards infinity. During this stage the few songs I composed were published in one volume under the title, "Towards Thy Holy Feet" [*Shree Charane*]. In addition to these, there was no end to songs, poems and short sketches which I wrote on Mother, but tore off later. When Mother heard about it, She said, "Not only in this life but also in many of your former births, there is no knowing how many such hymns for me were composed and destroyed by you. But know this for certain, through all this scrap heap, this is your last life on this earth."

Inspired by Mother's all-embracing love, an aspiration for the Life Divine was kindled in me, but my senses sought crude pleasures instead of higher and more refined and invigorating spiritual food. In some *Vaishnava* treatise we read, -"The man who hankers after the material objects of sense for indulgence of the tongue, stomach and sex, cannot find Lord Krishna."

Such was the case with me. Mother's boundless grace and affection could not hold me fast to Her Feet at all times of my life and in all my thoughts. It is indeed difficult for a man caught in the snares of *Avidya* [*The illusion that the body or the mind are the Self.*] to find an abiding shelter of peace in the Divine.

One day I said to Mother, -"Even a piece of stone would have changed into gold at such a hallowed touch as yours, but my life has proved a dismal failure

She replied,—"That which takes a long time to come into being, matures into an enduring beauty after an equally prolonged span of development. Why do you worry over it so much? Hold fast to my guiding hand like a trustful child." I listened to Her chastening words of encouragement with all eagerness, yet I felt a scorching dryness warping every fibre of my being. I cite below an instance to show how Her penetrating vision kept watch over my struggles.

When, under the impulse of a deep devotion I began to seek Her presence every day, men were not wanting who cast unworthy aspersions on my conduct. Their reflections made me doubtful and I began to feel that it was but a common human weakness to approach this man or that, for one's spiritual uplift.

I stopped going to Mother, as my mind was wavering under criticism. I decided to read *Yoga Vashishta (a treatise in Sanskrit on Vedanta)* and improve my higher life through the culture of the intellect. For seven or eight days I devoted myself to a close study of the book.

One afternoon when I was having a rest in my house, my servant informed me that an old Brahmin (Shri Kalikumar Mukerji of village Gaodia in Vikrampore , Dhaka) desired an interview with me for five minutes only. I met him. He told me that he had gone to the house of my friend Niranjan Roy and of Dr. Sasank Mohan Mukherji (*This gentleman, father of Gurupriya Didi, was later known as Swami Akhandananda Giri Maharaj*) but could not meet them. That was why he had come to trouble me. He added, "I have heard that you are a great devotee of Mother. Will you kindly tell me what Mother is like and what Her special qualities are?" At these words I sat speechless, tears rushing to my eyes. He spoke again,—"I have received an answer to my queries; but do please tell me why there are tears in your eyes.

"I have been busy all these days with other matters", I replied, "leaving off all thought of Mother, and you have chosen to come to me to make enquiries about Her. I have to hang down my head in shame and regret. How wonderful are Mother's ways! It was through Her own influence that you were led to me just in time to bring me back to my better self. For this I am indebted to you indeed!"

He said to me, "Please take me to Mother". After meeting Her, he said, -"I too lost my mother long ago, but as soon as I met Mother, my sorrow about my mother's death vanished altogether."

I narrated to Mother all that had passed in my mind and wept at Her feet. She began to laugh and said,—"In these days unless one is forced to move along a certain path, one cannot proceed."

MANTRIC POWER

As far as is known to us, Mother has not received initiation from a Guru (*a spiritual guide*) according to prevalent social custom. No study of any Shastric text or of any religious discourse has illumined the field of Her knowledge. Many men and women are of the opinion that She has come down to this world to spread Divine Light and Power for the regeneration of humanity in this age.

While yet a girl, various strange phenomena became manifest in Her body. But they escaped the notice of the common man. Already in the playful activities of Her early youth there was such an attitude of detachment and unconcern about Her, that many people came to look upon Her as one retarded in intellect. Even Her parents had misgivings about Her future. It happened at times that She did not know where She was, nor could She recollect what She had done or said a few minutes ago.

The report goes that in Her childhood She used to talk to trees and plants and invisible beings in the air as She walked about. She would also communicate with them by signs and gestures. Some times She would suddenly relapse into a mood of abstraction, snapping up all talk.

From the 17th to the 25th year of Her life various supernatural phenomena began to manifest in Her. At times She would become mute and motionless while chanting the names of Gods and Goddesses. During *Kirtans* Her body got stiff and benumbed. After listening to a divine discourse or after visiting a temple Her behaviour did not appear to be normal.

At the age of eighteen, She went to Bajitpur [*a small town in Mymensingh district, East Bengal*] and stayed there for five or six years. Towards the close of that period, many Mantras spontaneously came from Her lips and many images of Gods and Goddesses flashed out of Her body. Her limbs spontaneously formed into various Yogic poses. While these divine manifestations found expression in Her body, Her speech ceased to function at Bajitpur for about one year and three months, and when She came to Dhaka She continued in silence for another year and nine months - thus completing three whole years. During this period a glow of heavenly bliss and the serenity of the infinite expanse of heaven showed in Her appearance. It became evident then that the currents of the outer and inner worlds ceased to affect Her altogether. She looked like one reposing in the absolute calm of the Self. Her portrait at that stage is given overleaf.

During all these extraordinary happenings in Her life, *Pitaji* [*Pitaji is the name given to Mother's husband by her devotees*] - would often show great anxiety about their final outcome.

But in spite of all criticism and speculation, he never stood in Her way in any of Her actions. Fearing that Her body might be possessed by some evil spirit, the help of some sadhus and exorcists was sought. But was of no avail; on the other hand, when these men tried to give Her treatment they were forced to withdraw in fear and amazement. It was only by praying for Her mercy that they could recover their balance. During a period of full five months and a half, images of many Gods and Goddesses manifested through Her body. She had visions of them. She would worship those deities, after which they faded away completely. When the worship of one deity was over, another made its appearance.

During the ceremony She would often feel that She Herself was the worshipper, the



worshipped and the act of worshipping; that She was the *Mantras*, the oblation and every one of the ingredients.

In these acts of worship there were no material objects, nor was there any desire on Her part to perform the ceremonies. As soon as She sat in a lonely place, all the physical and mental activities involved in acts of worship manifested themselves by a mysterious process of self-sprung activity. It was ascertained afterwards from persons well versed in *shastric* rites and rituals, which all the various processes of worship as performed by Her, were quite in accordance with the *shastric* injunctions. Whenever anyone enquired how it could be possible for Her to observe those rites so perfectly, Her only reply was, -"Don't ask me anything now, you will come to know at the right time."

On the 28th Chaitra [1923 AD] Mother arrived at Dhaka and three four days later she came to Shah-bag [*the name of the garden belonging to the Nawab of Dhaka*]. Many devotees began to assemble there for Her *darshan* [*paying homage to Mother*]. In the year 1925 some devotees requested her to perform *Kali Puja* [*worship of the image of Kali, the goddess of the universe*), for they had heard that Her celebration of the puja was marvellous. She replied, "I know little of the *shastric* rites and rituals; it will be better if you secure the help of professional priests." Later, at Her husband's request, she however agreed to perform the *puja*.

When mother was worshipped by Her devotees, their joy knew no bounds. But when She Herself chose to worship a goddess for their illumination, the dignity of such worship increased a thousand-fold. It was too deep for words. All the devotees felt an inexpressible joy in their hearts at the beauty and solemnity of the ceremony.

An image of Kali was brought. Mother sat on the ground in a meditative posture, in absolute silence. Then, like one overwhelmed with devotion, she started the *puja*, chanting mantras and placing flowers with sandal paste upon Her own head instead of on the image. All her actions appeared to be like a doll's movements, as if some invisible hand were using her body as a pliant tool, for the expression of the divine. Occasionally some flowers were strewn on the image of the Kali. In this manner the *puja* was performed.

A he-goat was to be sacrificed. It was bathed in water. When it was brought to mother, she took it on her lap and wept as She stroked its body gently with Her hands then she recited some mantras touching every part of the animal's body and whispered something into its ear; thereafter She worshipped the weapon with which the goat was to be sacrificed. She prostrated Herself on the ground, placing the knife upon Her own neck. Three sounds like the bleating of a goat came from her lips. Afterwards when the animal was sacrificed, it neither moved nor uttered a cry, nor was there any trace of blood upon the severed head or body. Only with great difficulty one single drop of blood was last drawn from the animal's carcass. All that time Mother's face glowed with an intense uncommon beauty and throughout the ceremony there was a spell of great sanctity and deep absorption over all the people present.

In 1926 all the devotees prayed to Mother to perform the *puja* once again. She said nothing. Later when She was being taken to the house of a devotee, she raised her left hand, smiled and remained silent. When asked by Pitaji [*her husband was often addressed*

by devotees as *Pitaji*, which means father] as to the meaning of the gesture, she did not reply. Again when she sat in that house to take Her food, the same movement of Her left hand was repeated. After some days, Mother explained that on the way to the devotee's house, She had seen some 120 or 130 yards away, the living goddess *Kali*, floating in the air about 9 yards above the ground and stretching her hands towards Mother, as if desiring to come to Her lap. While taking Her food that day, the same image had stood before Her like a tiny girl. That was why She had raised Her left hand.

On the day preceding the *Kali puja*, when the devotees renewed their prayer to Mother, She requested *Pitaji*: "As they are so eager to celebrate the *puja*, you may officiate as the priest." He said to them, "Since your Mother has asked me to perform the *puja*, I shall do so. Please make all necessary preparations." They enquired about the size of the image, and *Pitaji* suggested that it should be as high as was shown by Mother on two occasions, when She had raised Her hand while sitting.

At that time Mother was lying on the ground in a motionless, inert condition. A rough measurement was taken. It was 11 P.M. There was much discussion as how in the course of one short day an image of the indicated size could be obtained. With great misgivings, Sri Surendra Lal Banerji went to the city from Shah-bag. In one shop a statue of the right measurements was found. There were twelve images in all, of which eleven had been ordered by a customer. The extra one had been modelled by the artist on his own initiative.

The image was brought in time. Mother sat down to perform the *puja*. There was a divine atmosphere about Her person. After some time, Mother suddenly rose from Her seat and said to *Pitaji*, - "I am going to my place, please perform the *puja* yourself." Saying this She stood by the side of the image and with a weird laugh, sat down on the ground. The whole atmosphere of the room was surcharged with a wonderful divine rapture too deep for words. Mother said, "All of you shut your eyes and chant the name of God."

The house was over-full; one man who stood outside, peeped into the room, unobserved. Yet Mother called him by his name and commanded him to shut his eyes. All present had their eyes closed; nobody knew at the time what had happened. But when everyone opened their eyes it was found that a pleader, Sri Brindaban Chandra Basak by name, lay on the ground unconscious. He stated afterwards, "When I peeped into the room I noticed a very intense glow of light radiating from Mother's face. It was so powerful that I fell down, unconscious. I do not know what happened afterwards."

The night wore out as the *puja* drew to a close. There was no provision for a sacrifice. When the time for the last *ahuti* [offerings to sacrificial fire] arrived, Mother said, "It must not be offered, let the sacrificial fire be preserved." That fire has been kept burning to this day. *

The next day, the immersion of the image was to take place. Niranjan's wife arrived with all the articles necessary for the ceremony. When she looked at the image, she said to Mother with emotion, "Ma, I feel extremely reluctant to immerse the image. " Mother replied, "These words from your lips show that the Goddess does not wish to be immersed. Very well, arrangements shall be made for its preservation and worship."

Through great changes of circumstances, this statue of clay was kept standing in the same posture for ten years.

* *It was as later brought from Dhaka to Vindhyachal and Varanasi, where it is still being carefully preserved in a special little temple at the Ashram. The same fire was used for the great Savitri Maha Yajna performed there from 1947-1950, about which a book has appeared in Bengali and Hindi called "Akhanda Mahayajna."*

Two incidents may be mentioned in connection with this image. It was in September, 1927. Mother was leaving Chunar for Jaipur. I was at Chunar then for a change and went to the station to see Her off. Mother indicated a certain spot near the hillock on which the fort was built and told me to go there on my way back. I would find a garland of flowers there which I should take and preserve carefully. I did as I was told. When She came back to Chunar, She saw the wreath. Afterwards when She returned to Ramna, it was discovered that on the particular day on which I found the garland at Chunar, no garland had been placed round the neck of the goddess *Kali* at Ramna though it was the priest's usual practice to offer such a garland to the image every day.

On another occasion Mother was at Cox's Bazaar in Chittagong at the seaside. She was strolling along the beach when She suddenly said with a smile, "Look my my wrist ; is it broken? Isn't it? Just examine it closely; there may be a fracture." That very same night a thief had entered the Kali temple at Ramna and stolen Kali's ornaments, breaking the wrist of the image.

This idol is still preserved in an underground cave at the Ramna Ashram. [*The once-famous ashram of Ma was razed to the ground by the Pakistan army during the liberation war in Bangladesh in 1971 and the whole ashram area is at the present under the custody of the Bangladesh Government. - Publisher.*] Every year during Mother's birthday celebrations, the door is kept open for all people to have a *darshan*. It was Mother's great desire that the gates of our temples should be thrown open to all classes of people irrespective of caste and creed.

On one occasion there was *Vasanti Puja* [*Worship of the Divine Mother during the spring season, which is now being done every year in the Varanasi ashram*] in the *Siddheshvari Ashram*. Mother was present during the ceremony of instilling life into the image. As She gazed at it, its eyes began to sparkle like those of a living person.

Mother says, -"The personality and figures of gods and goddesses are as real as your body and mine. They can be perceived with the inner vision opened up by purity, love and reverence."

THOUGHT POWER

Every single thought of Mother is the outcome of Supreme Beatitude [*playful expression of Supreme Bliss*] on closer scrutiny you will find every fibre of Her Being vibrant with Divine Bliss.

In order to play Her *Ananda Leela* with Her children She has taken on a bodily form, instinct with all the joys of the Divine. It is but natural that for the good of all human beings, the best ideas on life and spiritual culture should find expression, develop and, as it were, take shape through Her and finally vanish into the unknown.

If one studies Her closely one will find that She unfolds Herself in two ways: (1) The beauty of her outward behaviour towards all people (2) and the grace of Her inner life. The perfectly calm, sweet and natural manner which She manifests with all classes of people, with the most pious as well as the most sinful, with little children and restless youths as well as with old people bent down by age and infirmities, reveals a wonderful grace, exquisite beauty and dignity which at once captivate all hearts. Her other mode of life deals with the forces and powers of the invisible world,- those heavenly agents, incorporeal beings, that bring happiness and misery, blessings and curses on mankind.

The interplay of these two aspects of Her life is wonderfully coherent and close.

During Her younger days as well as after coming to Dhaka, Mother spent much of Her time lying on a bed. We came to know that She lost Herself for hours together in Divine ecstasy, which no words can express. In this condition She passed sometimes several days at a stretch in deep self-absorption, and during Kirtan songs and dances Her body took on various poses all indicating a state of Supreme Bliss.

In 1332 B.E. (1926), there was a *kirtan* (a kind of devotional "song" sung by all present] party in the Shah-bag garden on the occasion of *Uttarayan Sankranti* (last day of the month of Pous-about the middle of January] It was the first public kirtan celebration in Mother's presence. About this time Sri Shashibhushan Das Gupta came from Chittagong. At the first sight of Mother, his heart was filled with a spirit of deep devotion. There was quite a rush of people at the time; he was gazing at Mother's face and tears streamed down his cheeks. He said to me, -"I find before me what I have never seen in my whole life. She appears to me to be the visible embodiment of the Mother of the Universe."

Kirtan started at 10 A.M. while Mother was putting vermilion on the foreheads of the assembled ladies. Suddenly the vermilion case dropped from Her hand. Her body sank down flat to the ground and began to roll on it; then She slowly rose and stood on the two big toes of Her feet. Both hands were raised straight up, Her head slightly tilted to one side and a little backwards, and Her radiant eyes stared with a steady gaze towards the far end of the sky.

A little later, She began to move in that posture. Her body appeared to be filled with a heavenly presence. She paid no heed to Her clothes hanging loosely on Her person. No one had the power or the inclination to stop Her. Her whole body danced on with measured beats in a most delicate way and reached the place where *kirtan* was going on; Her body then noiselessly melted down as it were, upon the floor. It rolled on, led by some mysterious power, like the dry leaves of a tree moved slowly by a gentle breeze.

After some time, while still lying on the floor, very soft, sweet musical strains came from Her lips, "*Harey murare madhukaitabharey*". Tears rolled down Her cheeks in an unbroken stream. After some hours She recovered Her normal condition.

Her glowing face, Her sweet ineffable looks, Her soft, tender voice brimming over with emotion, all reminded the people assembled of the images of Sri Chaitanya Deva, as described in his biographies. All the physical changes observed long long ago in Lord Gouranga manifested themselves again in Her person on that occasion.

At dusk when Mother entered the *kirtan* hall, all the symptoms of the midday trance re-appeared. After a lapse of some time, she uttered words with such clear, soft accents and sweet thrills of divine emotion that the audiences were speechless with heavenly *bliss*.

After the distribution of sweets at the end of the *Kirtan* Mother Herself distributed *prasad* (*Offering to the deity after the Kirtan is over*) with so much grace and elegance and there was such an expression of divine motherliness in Her manner, that the people felt Mother *Lakshmi* must be incarnate in Her body. Shashi Babu and others present realised that day that Mothers body was but a vehicle for the infinite Grace of God.

About that time, Niranjana [*an Income Tax officer then posted at Dhaka. He hailed from Chittagong district*] came to Dhaka as Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax. One evening I went to Shah-bag with him, when New-Moon *Kirtan* songs were being sung. As the *Kirtan* progressed many changes became visible in Mother. She sat up very straight, then her head gradually bent backwards till it touched Her back; hands and feet, twisted and twined till the whole body fell flat on the floor.

In concord with Her breath, Her body was thrown into rhythmic surges like waves and with Her limbs stretched out it rolled on the ground in time to the music. Just as the fallen leaves of a tree roll on lightly, blown by the wind, so light and delicate were Her movements. No human being, in spite of his best efforts could have imitated them. Everybody present felt that Mother was dancing under the impact of heavenly forces, which moved Her whole being in wave-like thrills. Many tried to stop Her without any success. At last Her movements ceased and She remained motionless like a lump of clay. She appeared to be steeped in all-permeating, all-pervading Bliss. Her countenance was aglow with a heavenly light, Her whole body overflowing with *Divine Ananda*.

Niranjana stood dumb, watching the sight for the first time in his life and was reciting a hymn in praise of the Goddess of the universe. "To-day," he exclaimed, "I have seen a real Goddess."

On another occasion there was quite a crowd of people during *Kirtan* at Shah-bag. Mother went into a state similar to the one just described. But this time She reclined on the floor from Her sitting posture. Her breath was almost suspended; She stretched out Her hands and feet and lay on the ground with Her face downward. Then She rolled on nimbly in a wavelike motion. After a while, like one overwhelmed by a great upward urge She rose from the ground slowly, without any support and stood upon Her two big toes, barely touching the ground. Her breath appeared to have stopped completely, Her hands were lifted up towards the sky; Her body had only very slight contact with the ground, Her head was bent backwards touching Her back, the eyes were directed towards the mid-sky with a glowing stare. As a wooden doll moves about under the pull of a hidden string held by the operator behind the screen, She stepped along. Her eyes were radiant with a divine

glow, Her face beamed with a heavenly sweet smile and Her lips sparkled with joy. After a short while, supporting Her whole body on Her two big toes and keeping time with the *kirtan*, She moved like a being of the air, as if the whole weight of Her body was being pulled up by some invisible power from above.

She remained in this posture for a long time. Afterwards Her eyes slowly closed and She lay on the ground like a hump of flesh, Her head bent backwards. Next morning at about 10 A.M. She came back to Her normal state.

One day there was *kirtan* at Niranjan's house. All the inmates, especially his old mother, were very eager to see Mother in a trance. The old lady silently prayed to Mother that she might be blessed with the sight. Mother was lying on the floor in the adjoining room. Suddenly She rushed into the room where *kirtan* was in progress and with Her divinely reposeful voice took part in the song and began to dance with the party. After a little while She sank to the ground. On recovering Her usual state She remained silent for a long time.

Besides the symptoms mentioned here, the emanations from Her mind-body found expression in so many ways that it is impossible to describe them in words. When Her body rolled on the floor, it sometimes drew out to an unusual length; at other times it shrank to a very small size; sometimes it rolled itself up into one round lump of flesh; on a different occasion it seemed without bones, bouncing like a rubber ball as it danced on.

But the speed of all Her movements was of the quickness of lightning, which made it almost impossible to follow them even with the keenest eye.

During that period we felt convinced that Her body was possessed of divine forces, which made it dance in a variety of beautiful poses. It appeared to be so full of ecstatic joy that even the roots of the hairs on Her body swelled, causing them to stand on end. Her complexion turned crimson. All the self-initiated expressions of a Divine state appeared to be crowded into the narrow frame of Her body and they manifested all the exquisite beauties of the Infinite in countless graceful and rhythmic ways.

But She looked like one far above, completely detached from all these manifestations and untouched by the thrills brought about by their interplay. They appeared to come naturally through Her body from some lofty sphere of existence.

One day I asked Mother, -"When your body is physically asleep in *samadhi* [*divine ecstasy in which all physical and mental functions are suspended*) do you find any Divine Presence appearing before your vision?" Her reply was "As I have no fixed aim, there is no need for it; this body does not act with any purpose. Your strong desire to see this body in states of *samadhi*, causes its symptoms to manifest at times. Whenever any thought reaches its full intensity, its physical expressions will invariably follow. If one loses oneself in the contemplation of the Divine Name, one can merge oneself in the ocean of Heavenly Beauty. God and His symbolic names are one and the same; as soon as the consciousness of the outside world disappears, the self-revealing power of the Name inevitably finds its objective expression."

During *kirtan* a supernatural, Divine state used to come upon Her body. We have heard from Her own lips that there was a time when She would see fire, water, the sky or some unusual sight. At such times, Her body tended to become transformed into any of these. In the presence of a gust of wind She would feel an impulse to let Her body fly away like a

rag of thin cloth; or when She heard a deep prolonged sound of a conch-shell, Her whole body tended to freeze as it were, and became static like a marble slab. Whenever any thought-wave passed through Her mind, a corresponding physical expression swept over Her whole body.

On one occasion She joined some children in their laughing games and began to laugh so heartily that her laughter could not be stopped even after an hour's effort. She paused for a minute or two, only to start laughing again. Though sitting in the same posture, there was an unearthly expression in Her looks. Many of those present were startled by it. After some time She gradually recovered Her normal composure.

Another day She was on Her way to Dhaka from Calcutta. Many boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen came to the station to see Her off. They were all weeping at the prospect of the separation. Mother too joined them and began to weep so bitterly that it was impossible to stop Her. A crowd had already gathered. They said, "Most probably the weeping lady is a newly married bride who is being taken from her father's house to her husband's." The impulse of weeping that day continued from noon to dusk.

One day She asked me,--"Where is the centre of your laughter and crying ?" My reply was,--"Though all stimulation flows from the brain, the real centre lies in some vital spot near the heart."

Mother said,--"When there is real feeling behind your laughter or crying, it seeks expression through every fibre of your body." I could not follow the meaning and kept silent. After a few days I went to the Ashram early in the morning. I met Mother and was taking a walk with Her. I asked Her,--"Mother, how are you today ?" She responded with such an emphasis, "I am very, very well", that my whole being from head to foot throbbed and danced with the vibration of Her words and I halted on the way suddenly, almost losing myself.

Mother noticed my confusion and said, -"Do you realise now where lies the centre of our laughter and weeping? When any feeling or thought is expressed by only one part of our body, its full force does not come into play."

I have heard from Mother's lips that when all the thoughts of the devotee flow in one stream towards God, all the sense objects come under its influence. At that stage even the fall of a leaf from a tree creates ripples in the field of his consciousness. During the earlier stages of Mother's life whatever happened in the outside world found response in Her nature spontaneously.

After Her deep trance as soon as Mother recovered Her normal serenity, many yogic activities manifested themselves automatically; at that time one could hear some indistinct humming sound emanating from Her. A little later rumbling notes like the surging of sea-waves lashed by a storm followed; thereafter an uninterrupted, supremely melodious flow of divine truths emerged from Her lips in the shape of numerous Sanskrit hymns. It seemed that from the eternal sky divine truths were taking shape in sound symbols through Mother's speech. Such flawless pronunciation, such free flow of melody touching the inmost core of the listeners, received added charm from the Divine radiance of Her face. Even learned Vedic scholars could hardly have acquired Her free and easy mode of expression in spite of their best training and practice.

The richness of meaning in all these spontaneous utterances of Mother has been a

surprise to savants; the language, in which the verses were couched, could not easily be comprehended and therefore it was not possible to write them down fully and accurately.

Four such sacred hymns that could be taken down in parts have been recorded. We approached Mother for verification and correction. Her reply was,—"There is no trace of them now in my mind; they will be attended to later if necessary.

One of the four hymns is:

एहि भावनायं भायं एहि यं सं तानि तायं

भावमयं भवभयहरणं हे ।

यस्मिं स्त्वहं भाग पौं हं वां क्रीं आं हे

भां हां हिं हौं हं ह्रीं वं लं यं सं त्वं

तादरौ भाग सं वं लं हे देव भक्तमयं मम हे ।

स त्वं हि हं यं वं वायं कं भावभक्ति * * भावमयं हे ।

महात्मायं भवभयं हर हे ।

दैवतं मयं मं सं तं ह्रीं मत्तस्त्वम् भवोऽयं

यस्तानि त्वं तारणमयम् भवभयनाशं भावय हे

स्वभावशरणगतं प्रणवजासनं ।

भवानीभवं भवभयनाशनं हे,

हरशरणागतं * * तायं विभावतः ममायनं हे ।

यस्तारणं तन्त्रद्वयरूपं मयाहि सर्वाणि स्वरूपमयानि

मया हि सर्वः मयाहि सर्वशरणं हे ।

दासनित्यं * * प्रणवश्रुतकारणं

महामाया महाभावमयमय हे ।

मम भो भक्तौ तरणं मा मम सर्वमयं हे

यस्या रुद्ररुद्रत्वं प्रणवे रां ऋ कृतकारणं रुद्रं नौमि ।

प्रां वां हां सां आं हिं अं

भावमयं हे * * संसृष्टः केशवः ।*

The translation is given below:

"Thou art the Light of the universe and its controlling and guiding spirit. Do thou appear in our midst! From Thee a cobweb of worlds is spreading out at every moment. Thou art the dispeller of all fears; do Thou appear before us! Thou art the seed of the universe; Thou art the Being in whom I reside. Thou art present in the hearts of all these devotees. Do thou, whom I find present before me, banish the fears of all created beings. Thou art the embodiment of all gods and much more. Thou hast come out of me and I am the epitome of the created world. Let us contemplate the very Foundation of this universe, through Whom the world seeks liberation. Thou standest on Thy own eternal basic nature. Thou hast come out of the *Pranava* the seed-word and base of all existence and the truth of all. The Vedas are but sparks from Thy eternal Light. Thou dost symbolise the heavenly couple, *Kama* and *Kameshvari* who are dissolved together in all-permeating Bliss Supreme and signified by *Nada* and *Bindu* ** when differentiated for keeping up Thy Lila. Do Thou dispel the fears of the world!

"I seek refuge in Thee. Thou art my shelter and final resting place. Draw Thou my whole being into Thine. As the Deliverer Thou dost appear in two forms-the liberator and the devotee seeking liberation. By me alone are all created in my own image; by me all are sent into the world; and in me all find final refuge. I am the final cause indicated in the Vedas by *Pranava (Om kara)* I am *Mahamaya* and *Mahabhava* all in one. Devotion to me is the cause of *Moksha* (liberation). All are mine. To me *Rudra* owes all his powers and the self-same I sing to the glory of *Rudra*, who becomes manifest in all actions and in their causes".

* Note: On the 20th of Vaisakh 1336 Mother left the Ramna Ashram having stayed there for 24 hours after the installation of the deity. She was dressed in a sari only. Just at that time this hymn came from Her lips. She asked Her devotees to write it down. She was in an ecstatic condition then and only a portion of the hymn could be transcribed. One cannot vouch for its correctness. But She gave permission to sing it to the accompaniment of musical instruments before starting Kirtan.

**

सच्चिदानन्दबिभवात् सकलात् परमेश्वरात्
आसी च्छक्तिस्ततौ नादो नादाद्बिन्दुसमुहबः ।
क्रियाशक्तिप्रधानायाः शब्द-शब्दार्थकारणम्
प्रकृतेर्बिन्दुरूपिण्याः शब्दब्रह्माभवत् परम् ।
सोऽन्तरात्मा तदादेवी नादान्ता तदते स्वयम्
यथासंस्थानभेदेन स पुन बर्णतां गतः ।

From this translation it will be evident that Mothers thought-body has expressed itself in speech for the welfare, peace and progress of the world. Her boundless love and compassion for all living beings radiates in all directions and She sits Supreme at the centre embracing the universe.

In connection with these hymns, Mother said on one occasion, "The one Eternal Word is the prime cause of the universe; with the evolution of that ever-abiding Word, the progress of the material life of creation goes on in parallel lines."

During that phase of Mother's life when many such hymns were revealed, Her voice sometimes became as sharp and piercing as a sword; at other times it was as soothing as the evening zephyr; and on certain days it breathed a power full of tranquillity and deep bliss like the influence of the full-moon sky at midnight.

On some occasions hymns were revealed through Her lips accompanied by an unceasing flow of tears; a wonderfully bright, soothing smile with an alternate play of laughter and weeping, like that of sunshine and rain, gave Her blissful face a heavenly charm and serenity. When the singing of those hymns was over, She would either remain silent for a long time or lie down on the floor in a posture of inmost absorption.

YOGIC POWER

Mother has said that for some time Her body went through a stage during which the various Yogic poses (*Asanas, Mudras* etc.) manifested themselves naturally. They also often appeared when She was in seclusion, away from the sight of men. In this connection Mother stated on one occasion,—"Just as you have to keep a seed in darkness under a thin layer of earth exposed to light and air before it shoots forth sprouts, so also behind all the usual external activities of a devotee, many subtle changes come quite unnoticed upon him, through the influence of invisible powers.

At times, Her hands, feet and neck bent with such a stiff twist that there seemed to be no possibility of their regaining their normal positions.

On one occasion, Mother said, "Such a halo of light flashed from this body that all the space around it was illumined. That light gradually seemed to melt away enveloping the universe." In that condition She would cover up Her whole body with an extra piece of cloth and for a long time retire to a solitary corner of the house, away from the sight of men.

During this period Her body emanated such a divine power that at Her glance people forgot all about themselves and were steeped in heavenly delight; when touching Her feet some would even fall unconscious. The places on which She would lie or sit became intensely heated.

At Dhaka I have myself witnessed Mother in various yogic poses. At times Her breath was either suspended altogether for a long time or became so feeble or fluctuating that we were afraid Her life would be extinct through suffocation.

One day, when I showed Her illustrations of some yogic poses in a book, She pointed out certain defects in them regarding specific positions of the feet, thigh, head and other parts of the body.

Those people who have been fortunate enough to be near Her for some time, must have noticed how She would sit in a particular posture for several hours together without the slightest movement, or relapse into absolute silence in the midst of conversation. In this condition Her body became inert like a statue, Her eyes unwinking and steady, directed to the remotest corner of the sky, and Her appearance delightfully sweet and serene. In all these states it was quite evident that Her soul was steeped in Supreme Bliss, while Her physical body was performing mechanically the daily round of duties of Her social life. During those states of absorption in the Divine, She felt neither hunger or thirst, nor extremes of heat and cold, unless special attention was drawn to them. Even after physical consciousness dawned on Her, She took much time to regain Her normal condition.

We have also noticed on several occasions that if, during those phases of self-absorption, She was left to Herself for some days continuously, She would often forget how to talk, walk or laugh or even to distinguish between different articles of food and drink. Many people desire to witness instances of Her occult powers. To them I would suggest that they should spend a few days near Her and realize the wonderful spiritual

influences that radiate from Her at every moment, by which even the most barren hearts would blossom forth in a new lease of life. By Her natural will to secure the welfare of all sentient beings, people are imperceptibly guided into the ways of Her expansive spiritual life.

One afternoon I went to Shah-bag with Niranjan. Mother and Bholanath were seated. Some pictures had been drawn on the floor. Bholanath said, "Your Mother has drawn these figures of the solar plexuses in the human body." On hearing this She said "While walking about at noon, I sat down here in a yogic posture when I observed some lotus-like vital centres from the highest centre in the brain right down along the spinal cord to its lowest end, a few inches apart from each other. I saw clearly that from the lowest tip of the spinal cord upwards (*muladharar urdhwam*) there lay many finer and finer centres, of which only the six chief-ones have been drawn here. I have not drawn them deliberately my hand has automatically moved about on the floor and these pictures are the result of those movements.

"You should note that through these vital areas of interlacing nerves, function the inherited impulses, acquired dispositions, emotions, various urges, thought-cycles and notions of life and death etc. which find their way downwards from the highest brain-centre, in response to the stimulation from all the sense organs. Streams of life and of vital fluid course swiftly or slowly through those channels and guide the life-processes and thought-currents of man. Just as you find that earth, water, fire, air and the space beyond the atmosphere, interpenetrate one another, so also these six chief centres lie inside the body apparently one above the other, but functioning in mutual interdependence as one vital chain. A little reflection will convince you that the play of life goes on in the upper centres of your body when your thoughts are pure and full of bliss. Just as you find that springs of water lying at the bottom of a well or a tank keep up a constant supply, or just as the sap of plant-life lies underground deep down about the roots, so at the lowest end of the spinal cord (*muladharah*) lies asleep the fountain of the giant vital forces derived ultimately from the sun, from where issue forth the streams of your life. When with great patience and sanctity you strive to purify your inner and outer vehicles, the resulting vibrations of your thoughts strike ever higher and higher centres, releasing their tension, freeing the pent-up life force at the lowest centre to seek outlets upwards. Then all the lethargy, primal urges and *samskaras* of the devotee gradually fade away like mists before the sun's rays; along with the unleashing of the block, our attachment to the objects of the senses begins to relax, and the inner life starts taking shape.

"When the upward drive of the life-force reaches the vital centre at the parting of the eyebrows, the inner stream of the vital fluid flows with ease and purity quite evenly all over the human system, with the result that the devotee comes to realise something of the nature of the ego, the world and creation. If a man continues in this stage for long, all his prenatal, inherited dispositions and urges gradually become weaker and weaker; his mind reaches ever higher and higher levels of contemplation, ever deeper centres of the life-force.

"When the devotee reaches beyond the highest vital centre which is situated between the eye brows, (*dvidala or twin-petalled chakra*) his mental powers merge in the supra-mental, his ego dissolves in *Mahabhava* [*a state of deep love for the Divine*] and he finds his eternal refuge in *Swarupa* (*Supreme reality of the Atma*) He then goes into *Samadhi* a

state of perpetual bliss.

As the different vital centres begin to open up, different sounds are perceived inwardly and the devotee comes to feel the sounds of conches, bells, flutes etc. all merging in the cosmic rhythm of one great voice of infinite silence. At that stage no thought or object of the outside world can distract his attention. As he advances, his being gets dissolved in the bottomless depth of that blissful music that pervades the whole universe and he finds eternal repose."

Two or three years after this statement of Mother I showed Her the pictures of six vital centres published in Justice Woodroffes "Serpent Power." Mother did not even glance at them and said, laughing, heartily :-"Listen to what this body tells you." She then described each centre, the nature of the lotuses, their colour and the number of petals with the corresponding *Yantras* and *Mantras*. I found that the pictures in the book accurately represented what Mother described.

She added, "I have not read about these centres in any book, nor have I ever before heard anything about them from anyone. The description I gave, is from my actual experience." On further enquiry, She replied, "The colours of those vital centres that you find in the pictures are but their external tinge. The same substance of which our brain is made also forms these plexuses, but their shapes, structures and functions vary; each one has its special characteristics and distinctive qualities like the eye, or the ear of the navel or even the lines on the palms of your hands. In them there is the ever-changing play of various colours and sounds and their symbols called *Mantras* [*Beej or seed mantra*],- all being the natural results of the movement of the life-force and the flow of the vital fluid. During the earlier stages, when various *mantras* issued from these lips accompanied by transformations of the breath, at times questions like "What are these?" flashed across my mind. The reply came from within and the inner structure of all those solar plexuses became distinctly visible to me like the pictures you have put before me. When a person regularly prays, performs *pujas* and yogic practices, meditates and reflects on the higher truths of existence with sufficient concentration and steadiness, the mind substance gets purified, thoughts become refined and the centres unfold themselves; otherwise no human being can find an escape from the storm and stress of physical urges like lust, greed and anger."

One day Mother went to *Siddhesvari ashram* with all who were present. That place was then in a very neglected condition. An altar was there about 1¼ cubit square and 1½ cubit in height. Mother sat upon it. All the devotees sat around silently and- absorbed in their own thoughts. Her body gradually shrank so much in size that everybody had the impression that only Her *sari* was left on the altar. Nobody could see Her. All were wondering what would happen next. Gradually there was a stir underneath the cloth and very slowly and gently a body took shape and She appeared, sitting straight up. For nearly half an hour She looked towards the sky with a steadfast gaze and said,-

"For your life's work you have brought down this body."

Mother says,-"Just as a paper-kite flies high up into the sky, relying on a fine thread, the *yogi* relying upon his life breath and a slender thread of *samskara* can float in the air; he can shrink his physical body into a speck of dust or assume an enormous size or can even vanish out of sight."

We have heard that many people got initiation from Mother in the dream-state, while others got flowers along with *mantras* and have actually found those flowers when roused from sleep. But none of us have ever known Mother to directly initiate a devotee.

We have also heard from many people that in their own homes far away from Mother, they were startled to find Mother's figure actually present before their eyes for a very brief period.

While I was at Dhaka seriously ill with an attack of acute T.B., Mother was in North-Western India. When She returned to Dhaka, She said to me "At midnight on two particular dates this body entered your room by a particular door of your house and went out by another. Your condition in those two days was very critical."

On referring to the account-book where the daily expenses including doctors fees and medical charges were entered, it was discovered that on those two days doctors had actually been called at night.

There were also cases when Mother passed by a group of men, but only one or two of them could see Her. She says, "I am ever present with you all, but you have little yearning to see me. What can I do ? Know it for certain, I have my eyes fixed on what you do or omit doing".

On one occasion Mother was to get into the train at Goalando. The doorstep of the train was very high from the platform. There was rheumatic stiffness in Her right arm then. When at Her bidding Gurupriya Devi caught hold of Her left hand and pulled Her up into the compartment, Mother's body appeared to be as light as a baby's. On some occasions on the other hand, it was found to be awfully heavy.

Mother tells us that whether moving about or resting, nothing produces any change in Her. She is ever wide-awake. Sometimes after rising from Her bed She says that She has seen certain incidents happening in a particular place; subsequent inquiry confirms the truth of Her statements.

I used to see Mother by my side either like a flash of lightning or like a shadowy, steady figure; sometimes it took on a definite condensed form and moved about, making changes in my environment which lasted even after its disappearance.

Towards the end of 1930, Mother was staying at Cox's Bazaar, some 300 miles away from Dhaka. At Dhaka I was sitting on my bed during the early hours of the morning thinking of Mother. I heard Her whisper, "Erect a temple within the *ashram* area."

I started up when I heard it. I knew that Mother never commands anybody to do anything. I mused and mused over it. Such whispers must have come from Mother, I presumed. But a doubt crossed my mind, "Why should Mother's whispers be so indistinct?" Her normal voice was distinct, clear-cut, resonant, lively. But when I wrote a letter to Cox's Bazaar I came to learn that Mother had been observing silence for a few days and on that particular morning at 8 a.m. She had begun to talk. When Mother returned to Dhaka I was informed that She had begun to murmur some words much earlier in the morning, but few people could distinguish them. After hearing that command from Mother, the construction of the temple was taken up in right earnest.

She always says that She can see the ethereal bodies of many saints who died long, long ago. One day She remarked, "Just as you all are sitting around me, there are many

disembodied spirits crowding over there. They are as real as yourselves."

She also says that She can see the various shapes which different diseases possess. When they seek admittance into Her body, they are allowed free scope. "Since there is but One Life in this universe, diseases are neither called nor sent away by me. Just as you all are a source of *Anandam* to me, they too give me equal joy."

In May 1929, Mother left Dhaka, but for some reasons many obstacles hampered Her free passage; when She came back to Dhaka in the month of August, She had fever. Many supernatural symptoms began to appear in Her body. She commanded that Her body should be allowed to take up various *asanas*, sitting down or lying flat on the ground, according to its spontaneous urges. For full one hour this went on. Mother said afterwards, all those had been yogic postures. Seeing these manifestations people feared that She might give up Her body. Afterwards her limbs were found to be lacking in cohesion: whether standing or sitting all Her limbs would hang down loosely and could not move unless they were properly supported. Along with these reactions She had high fever, looseness of the bowels, passing blood with stools and urine and all symptoms of dropsy. Four or five days passed in this way when Bramacharini Gurupriya Devi implored Her, "Mother, we cannot manage the nursing of your body; have compassion on us." After this prayer, the flabbiness of Her body disappeared, but the fever and other symptoms continued as before: for five or six more days. Sixty to seventy bucketfuls of water were poured over Her head, between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. But the temperature never came down. Still She would not take any medicine. A Kaviraj was called in, who examined Her and said, "We can treat ordinary human beings, but the ways of Mother are totally different." Finding Her prostrate on the sickbed, all the devotees became deeply anxious and prayed to Her to heal Her own body.

On the following morning Mother said, "Prepare a rice dish for this body." She, who had been laid up with high fever and dropsy, quite prostrate almost without any movement continuously for seventeen or eighteen days, was prescribing for Herself Her normal diet of rice, dal and vegetables! Everybody was struck with surprise.

However, according to Her directions rice, dal, and vegetables were prepared; three or four persons were busy keeping Her body in position and putting food into her mouth. She ate a small quantity of each dish. Many apprehended some serious complications as a result of such a diet after protracted fever. But She recovered gradually.

Referring to the physical disorder described above, Mother said on one occasion: "This body moves in tune with Nature, its natural course must have somehow been thwarted from its normal functioning. To make you realise the unhappy consequences of causing obstruction to its natural urges, the derangements of all its vital functions became manifest. Had there been any actual disease this body would have either perished altogether or been disabled."

"While lying in bed, I was not conscious of any discomfort or uneasiness. I felt as if in a state of health. Amidst your anxious movements to and fro and the changes going on within this body I was aware of a symphony of music and delight."

From all Her actions it appears that Nature, obedient to Her will, as it were, helps Her body to function. My conviction is that if we pay proper heed to the natural expressions of Her will, refrain from disturbing the atmosphere about Her with the ripples of our

individual likes and dislikes, and carry out implicitly what She says, we can enjoy boundless happiness by witnessing the beautiful functioning of Her Will; at the same time we shall have the good fortune of obtaining many opportunities for self-culture.

In our childhood we played with dolls following our whims; we built tiny houses of sand and clay to satisfy our momentary pleasure and then turned to new toys; even now we are playing the same game in our dealings with Mother with equal thoughtlessness and impulse. At times such apprehensions crowd upon my mind.

At the Vindhyachal ashram in the course of conversation Mother said to Brahmachari Kamalakanta, "Even after so many years very few people realise what I wish; if they did, such thoughtless questions as, "What do you want ? What is your wish?" would never be asked. One must sincerely try to understand me as much as lies within the range of one's capacity and in order to grasp what I want, one must shake one's mind free from self-pride, desire for fame and glory, from anger and sorrow, from self-conceit and finally from self-will which leads a man to feel that he is a free agent in all his actions".

If under Her stirring influence we could constantly purify ourselves by following silently what She enjoins us to do, we would have realised our mission by finding in our own lives an opportunity to see the glory of Her Universal Motherhood.

One day I was having a walk with Mother on the Ramna ground. She did not speak. I realised that the spirit of absolute silence had come upon Her. She came back after walking about aimlessly for some time. For eight to ten days She was absolutely mute. No songs, gestures or suggestions, not even a smile emanated from Her. She used to sit quietly absorbed in Her own inner self. If anybody spoke to Her, Her eyes or attention were not drawn to it. She sat self-contained like the statue of the Lord Buddha. When eating Her lips parted only a little, to close again shortly after taking a very small morsel. During this state of silence it appeared that all Her connection with the outer world was completely cut off. After eight or ten days She began to mumble a few broken words. We had the impression that She was again re-learning to use Her vocal organs and to recover the power of speech. Thus passed three days when She gradually resumed Her normal way of speaking. I had the good fortune of seeing Mother twice or thrice in similar states.

During these phases of silence Her reposeful appearance. Her solid but serene composure, Her gracious looks and glowing face, all roused our love and reverence. The more one gazed at Her with wistful eyes, the greater would one's desire grow to look at Her face. At first, after Her marriage, when Mother kept silent for three years, many would express their sorrow thinking that She was absolutely dumb, and say, "Alas, it is a pity, a gross injustice of God; He has made this beautiful girl dumb, though He has bestowed upon Her all the best virtues of womanhood."

Mother says, "If you desire to observe real silence, your heart and mind must fuse so closely, into one thought that your whole nature, inwardly and outwardly may freeze, as it were, into the condition of an inert stone. But if you merely want to abstain from speech, it is a different matter altogether."

Four pictures of Mothers yogic poses are available. The first picture has been discussed in the first chapter; the second one was taken after a long spell of illness. But when the third and the fourth pictures were taken, She at first sat in a natural way, but the expressions of the supramental state of absorption came upon Her later.

STATE OF SAMADHI

When Mother was approached with a prayer to let us know the various stages of *sadhana*, She indicated four levels

(i) Concentration of intellectual powers on a focal point. It is like setting fire to dry fuel. When wet wood has been dried by the heat of fire, the flames blaze up brightly, Similarly when by the force of contemplation of the Divine, our mind is released from the mist and moisture of desires and passions it becomes light. It is a condition of mental purity which induces in certain cases a state of silent merging into a particular mood or into an excess of emotion and agitation beyond one's power of control. All these moods emanate from one supreme existence but only in special directions.

(ii) Concentration of one's emotional powers. It brings in a state of bodily inertness, of absorption in one holy sentiment arising out of one, indivisible supra-mental state. At this level the body may be likened to a burnt charcoal with the fire apparently gone out. In this state the devotee passes hours together in a state of outer inertness; but in the core of his heart surges up an unceasing current of sublime emotion. When this state matures the sentiment draws mighty powers from the All-Soul, and just as a vessel overflows when too much water is poured into it, it spreads out over the wide world in a mighty sweep under the intense pressure of expansiveness.

(iii) Fusion of the inner and outer life. This state is just like that of a burning coal. Fire pervades every atom of the inner and outer sheaths; -all are aglow with one Divine Light. The devotee lives, moves and has his being in one blissful ocean of Light.

(iv) Full concentration, when the devotee loses all consciousness of duality-of the functioning of the three *gunas* [*trigunas*] . It is like the state of coal burnt to ashes. There is no distinction. of the inner and the outer, of here and there it is a state of absorption in the Supreme, of All-Oneness. Vibrations of thought, feeling or willing vanish altogether. It resembles the perfect tranquility of a sleeping lake under a blue sky.

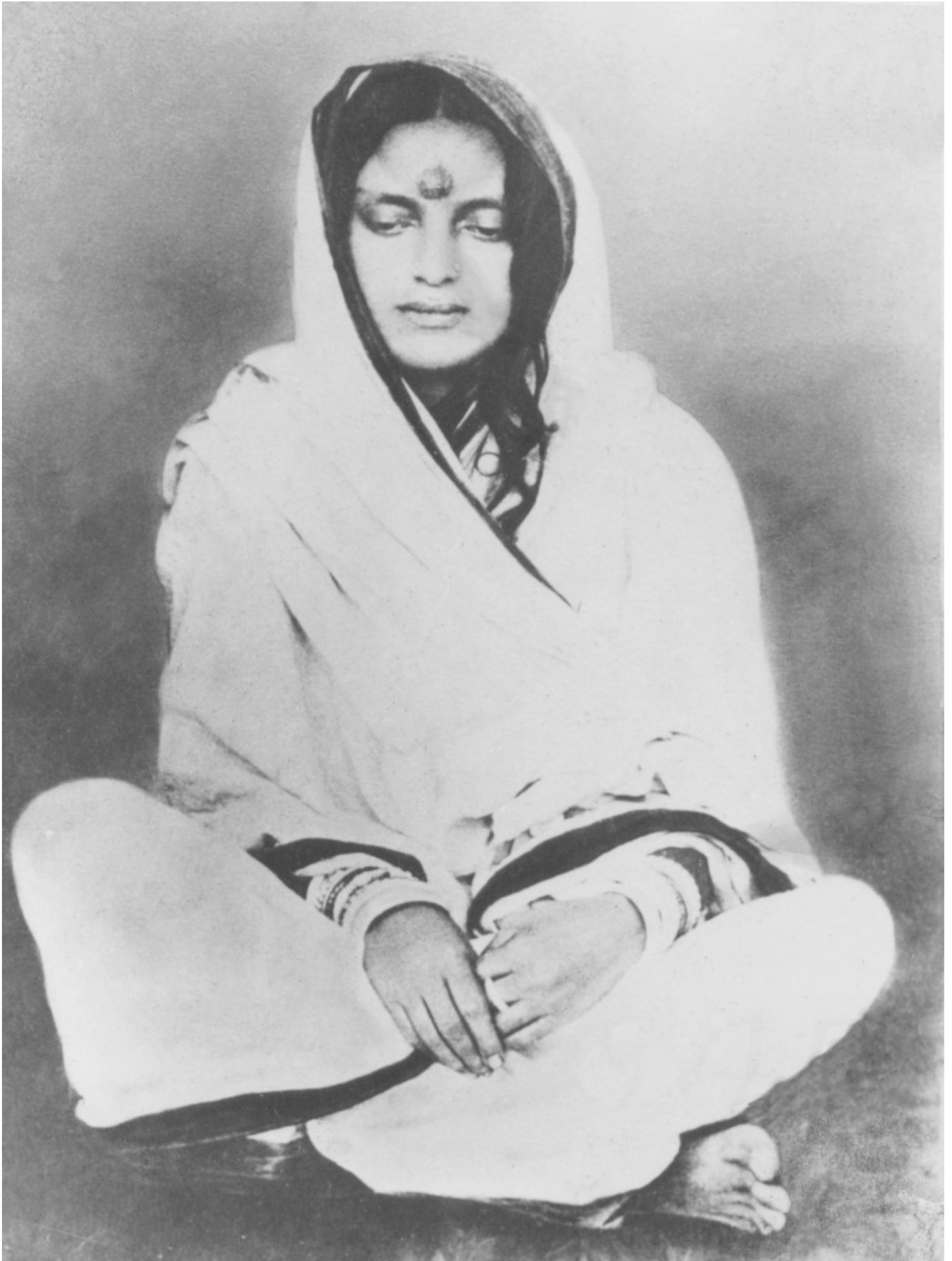
Mother's *samadhi* presents a wonderful sight: it was my extreme good luck to be able to witness such *sarnadhi* several times. I note below some of my experiences.

On some days while walking about or sitting in the room after casually entering it or after laughing and speaking a few words, Her eyes became wide open with a vacant stare and all Her limbs relaxed in such a supernatural way that Her body seemed to melt down on the floor as it were.

We could observe then that like the soft golden disc of the setting sun all the brightness of Her normal manners and expressions faded away little by little from Her countenance into some mysterious depths. A short while later Her breathing slowed down, sometimes stopping altogether. Her speech ceased completely. Her eyes remained closed. Her body grew cold; sometimes Her hands and feet became as stiff as logs of wood; sometimes they hung down loosely like pieces of rope,-falling flat in any direction one would place them.

Her face glowed with a crimson hue due to the intensity of inner *Anandam*: Her cheeks shone with a heavenly light; Her forehead looked bright and serene with a divine calm. All her physical expressions were suspended; yet from every pore of Her body

radiated an uncommon glow-a mute eloquence of silent, inner speech. Every body present felt that Mother was sinking into the depths of divine communion. Thus passed some ten to twelve



hours and then efforts were made to bring Her back to the physical plane with *kirtan* and the like, but all in vain.

I myself failed to rouse Her from that state of self-absorption. There was no response whatsoever when rubbing Her hands or feet hard, and even pricking them with sharp points. Her consciousness came back when the proper time arrived. It did not depend on any external stimulus.

When Mother came back to physical consciousness, Her breath returned and became deeper and deeper; along with it revived all the movements of Her limbs. On certain days, a short while after such an awakening Her body relapsed once more into its former inert condition and tended, as it were, to freeze again into the state of *samadhi*. When the eyelids were opened with finger-tips, there was a vacant unresponsive stare in Her eyes, and the lids soon closed again automatically.

When a series of symptoms of Her revival into normal life became manifest, She was helped to a sitting posture and by calling out to Her loudly, attempts were made to awaken Her to the world of sense and induce Her to speak. In this twilight condition of consciousness, She responded to the call of the outside world only for a brief spell of time, again to sink back into the inmost depth of her being. In this state it took much time for Her to recover Her normal condition.

On one occasion after such a spell of *samadhi*, She was made to walk with great difficulty. After taking a mouthful of food, Her body relapsed into an unconscious, inert condition for several hours.

But when after *samadhi* She recovered Her normal state. Her whole body appeared to be suffused with joy. On the threshold of reawakening, sometimes She would either laugh, or laugh and weep at the same time.

During *sarnadhi* Her face lost all freshness of life: the body appeared to be very frail and weak and in Her general appearance there was no expression whatever of either joy or pain. In that state it took Her much longer to recover Her former self. In 1930, when She came to Ramna ashram, She often appeared to have lost all signs of life during *samadhi* and passed four or five days together without any response to any outside stimulus. During the whole phase, from the beginning of the *samadhi* to its end, there was no indication that She had life or could ever recover it. Her body became as cold as ice and remained cold for a long time after consciousness returned.

After recovering Her full consciousness when She was asked how She had felt during *samadhi*, She would only reply,-"It is a state beyond all conscious and supra-conscious planes - a state of complete immobilization of all thoughts, emotions and activities, both physical and mental - a state that transcends all the phases of life here below. What you call *savikalpa samadhi*, is also but a means to reach that final objective-it is only a passing stage in your *sadhana*.

"Deep concentration on any one of the five elementals of sense, sound, touch, smell, taste and sight derived chiefly from air, earth, water etc. leads a man to merge his identity into it and as concentration deepens, the body as it were, gradually freezes with it. Then

that special object of sense pervades his whole being and his ego gradually dissolves in it and coalesces with one Universal Entity. When this condition settles down, the consciousness of One Universal Self too melts away and what then happens, no words, no expression or feeling can convey.

At times without any noticeable cause, many abnormal symptoms became visible on Her person. Her breath became deep and prolonged; Her whole body would twist right or left with an expression of languor and fatigue - She would then lie down on the floor or roll up Her body like a bundle. She had physical consciousness at that time and when any question was put to Her, She would respond with one or two words in a very faint soft voice.

On enquiry we learnt from Her later that while She was in this condition She would feel a fine threadlike upward current of life flowing from the lower end of the spinal cord right up to the topmost centre in the brain and along with it, a thrill of joy would run through every fibre of Her body and even through the pores of Her hair. She would feel at that time that every particle of Her physical frame danced as it were with infinite ripples of bliss. Whatever She touched or saw appeared to Her to be a vital part of Herself. Her physical body gradually ceased to function.

At this time if Her backbone was massaged or the joints of Her body were rubbed for a long time, She would remain quiet for some time and recover Her normal condition. It was at this stage that She was found to be brimming over with blissful joy and Her looks had all the indications of one lost in universal love.

In the midst of the routine of everyday life, while Mother was lying down, smiling and talking to people that came to see Her, it was found that Her limbs had become ice-cold, Her nails and toes blue. Even by vigorous massage the stiffness of Her limbs could not be lessened, although the hands of those who rubbed Her limbs became benumbed with cold. One day it took Her nearly twelve hours to recover Her normal warmth.

One evening, just at dusk, Mother was lying in a state of *samadhi*. Our Didima was on the bed by Her side. *Pitaji* was also in the room. At about 2 a.m. I was seated on the verandah meditating on Mother's lotus feet. I felt a thrilling sensation in my heart produced by the sound of Mother's footsteps. I opened my eyes and could not notice anything. I heard some feeble sound inside the room. When I left my seat I noticed two tiny foot-prints of Mother's wet feet.

On entering the room I found Mother in bed. I enquired from *Didima* (Mother's mother) if Mother had gone out; the reply was, "no". The night passed. Next morning She was on the plane of consciousness for a brief interval. Though She recovered Her sense on the following day it took three or four days more to regain Her normal ways of life.

A few days later I said to Mother, "I have heard that during *samadhi* it is not possible for anybody to move about in his physical body; how was it that I noticed two of your footprints on the floor that night?"

Mother said, "Is it possible for man to explain all things in words?" and resumed silence.

On one occasion, I asked Mother, "What are the signs of a *sadhaka*? (*one who strives hard for spiritual uplift*)" Mother said, "When a devotee reaches a certain level of mental

purity, he may behave like a child, or become unresponsive to worldly stimuli like a clot of inert matter, or violate all canons of social life like one insane, or at times be swayed by flashes of higher thought or emotion and pass for a saint. But through all these varying modes of life his aim remains fixed upon his central target. If at this stage he forgets his final aim his progress is arrested there.

"But if with intense effort he strives on and on towards his goal, all his activities will centre round his supreme objective. You will always find that even though he looks like a mass of inert matter, quite indifferent to external stimuli, he is full of cheerfulness and bliss as soon as he regains physical consciousness. Gradually as this joyous mood settles down in him all his relationship with men and things becomes imbued with a spirit of joy and happiness, so as to make him lovable and adorable to all. His inner and outer life becomes an expression of the One Supreme Bliss.

"At the next stage the devotee reaches a level where even the concept of one universal existence melts away. Then his way of life cannot be explained by ordinary canons of human reasoning. In this condition all the vibrations of his mind-body are suspended and there is every likelihood of the soul departing from the mortal frame. But if there is a residue of strong *samskara* (*Persistent desire acquired from this and previous births to alleviate the sufferings of humanity*) to secure human welfare, he may live for a certain period longer. Yet he remains unchanged under all circumstances of life. Although we think he is subject to change, simply because he retains his body.

"The only difference between such a devotee and the yogi who gives up his body, is that the latter leaves his body by his own effort of will. Even at the moment of exit from the physical, he retains the consciousness that he has a body which he is leaving, whereas the man who gives up his mortal frame in absolute *samadhi* [*complete withdrawal into the universal cosmic soul*] is neither conscious of an individual body nor of any effort to give it up. The *samskaras* about life and death cease to function in his soul and as soon as the *karma* of his past lives is worked out, the body naturally drops off."

On another occasion, Mother said in the course of conversation

"(i) Purity of heart and mind comes through concentration on one unit of thought or idea according to ones particular disposition.

(ii) Gradually as a man progresses, all his other scattered ideas come to be unified with this one object.

(iii) Next when various streams of thought flow along the same channel, the devotee becomes apparently motionless and inert.

(iv) Thereafter he finds a resting-place in the One Universal Being and is engulfed in one unitary existence."

Ordinarily Mother does not say these things to all men; She sometimes stops suddenly in the course of conversation. She is usually surrounded by many *bhaktas*. What She utters for their welfare cannot always be recorded and many of Her ideas are not intelligible to everyone.

Her instructions are of a universal type meant for all men, yet their real import is not always comprehended by people like us. Still, when some of Her words illumine the mind of a particular person, what he realises by his own limited knowledge, finds expression in

his life according to his own capacity to move forward. It is not easy to imagine how infinitely various are the streams of water flowing from the Himalayas to the plains of India through glaciers, cataracts, rivers, streamlets and springs, enriching and fertilising many sterile tracts. Although the Himalayas do not lose anything by sending out these perpetual streams, the welfare of the world is being secured by them. It is similar in the case of Mother and Her devotees.

We hardly find words to express the changes that little by little are coming upon us at every moment of our lives, through Her contact, Her suggestions, words and smiles. There is a false impression amongst us that if we try to express how Her blessings have moulded many little incidents of our everyday life, we shall be belittling Her Infinite Grace or Influence. But I am inclined to feel that by such efforts we should only be singing hymns to Her glory as well as advance our spiritual uplift in no small measure. At the same time it would be a way of linking our grateful souls to Her Grace at every moment of our lives.

MOTHER AND HER PLAYFUL ROLE

Whoever has watched Mothers bright face ever radiant with a smile, Her childlike simplicity, Her playful jokes flowing from a heart ever brimming over with joy, must have been charmed beyond measure. In all Her words and expressions, in Her every glance and gesture a sweetness reigns, the like of which cannot be found anywhere else. A divine perfume always emanates from Her body, from Her every breath and from Her clothes and bedding. When She sings, divine thoughts and ideas well up from the inmost fountain of our hearts.

Completely free from all ties, She lives a life of perfect detachment. Like the serene blue sky above, far away from the world below, yet shedding its calm serenity over the things of this earth, and producing heavenly reflections upon lakes and tanks as well as upon a small bowl of water, She envelopes all created things and draws them closer and closer to Her heart. She recognizes the play of one absolute life in the peoples of all races and creeds, in every animal and plant and looking upon all beings as ripples of one universal bliss, She treats them with equal love, regard and sanctity. No distinction of high and low, rich and poor colours Her vision.

Mother always says, “There is nothing new for me to see, hear or say. Still we find that even the commonest trifles absorb Her attention to a degree that makes one inclined to compare Her to a child enchanted with a lovely doll.

There is no end to Her playful frolics with Her devotees. On one occasion they desired to see Her dressed up as Sri Krishna as a boy and also as a youth on the threshold of adolescence. The devotees combined to dress Her up. There are two pictures showing the two different roles-[*See the Bengali edition of Matri Darshan*]. How striking are the expressions of Mother in those two different poses. The beauty of Her face reveals the charm of Sri Krishna as a child and when growing into a youth. It is really inconceivable from what hidden source such a divine glow shone forth to give Her looks so much tenderness, Her forehead such a peaceful and gracious expression, Her face such a halo of purity and sweetness, and Her limbs such light suppleness. It is not only uncommon but supernatural and beyond all precedents.

A photo of Her smiling face as boy Sri Krishna is seen. In Her hearty laugh every fibre of Her being joined and danced, as it were. Those who were present at the time could see the glow of sacred light that illumined Her figure; such a pure, hearty laugh could hardly be found in a human being. The photograph very imperfectly discloses only a fraction of Her actual expression.

Wherever Mother goes, Her presence carries an exquisite sweetness pervading the thoughts and ideas of people flocking around Her. Whatever might be the nature of ones thoughts, one feels pleasantly surprised to find ones mind being purified and refined by Her subtle influence. The sight of Sri Krishna awakened motherly affection in Yashoda, friendly feelings in Sri Krishna and Sudama and selfless love in the hearts of the milkmaids of *Brajadham*. Mothers presence too induces different phases of devotional love and adoration in different souls.

From Her very infancy She has been playing upon the main springs of human life. Her comrades knew no joy without Her company. Whoever came in touch with her, children, youths or old people, were so charmed that they often would ask when parting, "When shall we meet again?" Wherever She happens to be, a joyous multitude assembles; a wave of intoxicating delight stirs hundreds and thousands of men and women with a new inspiration and their souls dance, as it were, in response to Her sweet words and expressions. The moment She leaves a place, it feels empty. It was also noticed that people who, seeing Her dishevelled, clotted hair, her slovenly dress and careless ways, came to look upon Her as an erratic woman and tried to avoid Her presence, yet in spite of themselves could not take their eyes off Her.

Countless and manifold are the uncommon powers that are constantly manifesting themselves through Her playful activities. When She was questioned about them, She used to say, "This body is always in the same mood, without any change whatever. Your attitude alone leads you to consider any particular phase as ordinary or extraordinary." She added, "The universe is a Divine Play, you have a desire to play, and hence in all the playful activities of this physical body,- in its smiles and frolics, - you interpret its ways according to your own light. Had it assumed a grave motionless posture, you would have stayed away from me. Learn to merge yourselves in Divine Joy, in all its manifestations and you will reach the final goal of all play. Do you understand?"

What is beyond the experience of the ordinary person is called extraordinary. To him who has dissolved all thoughts and emotions into the one absolute, supreme bliss of *Atman*, which sometimes takes on the role of an individual being, sometimes of *Iswara* or Supreme Ruler of the Universe or sometimes of the impersonal absolute *Para-Brahman*, -all these phases are but the casual manifestations of one self-initiated Divine Play. Mother has no desires, no likes or dislikes. Sometimes supernatural powers play their part in arousing devotional attitudes or awakening pious thoughts in Her devotees. Sometimes their extremely prayerful attitude induces corresponding manifestations in Her simple behaviour. Mother says, "This body is like a drum; just as you will beat it, it will produce a corresponding sound. I find that there is but one playful master-tune ringing through the whole universe."

On the day before Mother left the Ramna ashram at Dhaka in June, 1932, at 5 p.m., She sat with many of Her devotees in the open compound to partake of the *prasad*. Suddenly the sky became overcast with dark clouds, with stormy winds, flashes of lightning and thunder. Everybody present apprehended immediate rainfall. Just at that time another party arrived and they also sat down to have *prasad*. Those who had finished eating were asked by Mother to leave, but She Herself stayed on. When all had finished, She stood up and said, "I shall have a free bath now." Many tried to dissuade Her from taking a bath so late in the afternoon. But She stood firm when a heavy downpour of rain started; the whole compound was flooded. Mother, like a restless, playful girl ran about in the rain with great delight; many old men and women, boys, girls and youths with all their fine clothes on joined the gathering and started singing *Kirtan*, which continued till 9 p.m. Amongst them were some with very poor health; but none of them caught cold.

We have seen many instances when by a mere glance Mother stopped rain, or by a gentle smile or loud laughter put an end to all disputes and display of ill-will amongst Her devotees.

Mother by nature takes very little food; one cannot even imagine how a person can live on such a scanty diet. In the early stages of Her life, when many yogic processes manifested themselves in Her body, She passed many days without taking even a drop of water. She did not feel any inclination to eat until those yogic processes ceased. During those days of complete or partial fasts Her appearance was bright and cheerful, Her body nimble, full of health and vigour as usual. We already knew about the courses of Her restricted diet.

She passed five months taking just a handful of food and that too towards the close of the night. For eight to nine months She took only three mouthfuls of rice in the day and three at night. For five or six months She lived on a little fruit and water taken twice daily. There were occasions when She spent five to six months eating a small quantity of rice only twice a week; on other days a few fruits sufficed.

From 1924 onwards, She could not eat with Her own hands; whenever She tried to carry food to Her mouth, Her grasp slackened and a large part of the food slipped through Her fingers. This was not due to any disease. At that time, it was arranged that the person who used to feed Her should, once during day and once in the night, give Her only as much food as could be grasped by the tips of two fingers. In this way four or five months were spent. On alternate days She would also drink a small quantity of water. For five to six months She took three grains of boiled rice in the morning and three grains in the evening and two or three ripe fruits that had fallen from trees naturally. Sometimes it so happened that food was allowed just to touch Her lips and then dropped. For two to three months She ate as much food as one could put into Her mouth in a single breath. For eight to nine months She partook of only two ounces of rice and dal mixed together and boiled in a small bowl over sacrificial fire, or of a small quantity of vegetable soup mixed with some boiled rice or milk. For several days together She lived on one or two pieces of *roti*. It may also be added, that for many days on end, She remained entirely without food.

After She had given up eating rice altogether, She could not even recognize it. There was a *Kahar* [an order of low class people in Bengal considered unclean because of their filthy ways of life] maidservant in Shah-bag, who was eating rice. When Mother saw it, She said smiling-"What is she eating? How nicely she is chewing and swallowing! I too shall eat with her." One day She found a dog eating rice, when She began to say plaintively, "I want to eat, I want to eat". When such impulses were obstructed, She used to lie on the ground for some time like a petulant little girl. Once Mother said of Her own accord, "Man tries to give up old habits. But my ways are totally different. I devise means so that my old habits may be restored. You must feed me with three grains of boiled rice every day, otherwise I shall lose the habit of eating rice, just as I have forgotten the use of my hand for taking food."

Those who used to feed Mother had to be on the alert to see that She was not given one particle in excess of what She had instructed. They had to lead a pure life of self-control; the cooking utensils had to be kept scrupulously clean and pure. Otherwise She could not swallow the food, or Her face would turn away, or She would leave Her seat automatically. Mother used to say, - "There is no difference between this body and a lump of clay; I can eat food placed on the floor or anywhere else in any way you like; but for your education, regard for hygiene, the observance of cleanliness, other rules and social obligations are necessary; hence my body automatically follows those regulations."

During the long periods of abstinence from normal quantities of food She did not shrink from Her usual household duties nor did Her body lose its natural loveliness. Afterwards gradually all the activities of Her family life began to slacken. Whenever She tried to do some housework Her body would cease to function and She used to lie down on the floor quite benumbed. Sometimes She would burn Her hands and feet at the kitchen fire; at other times She would get hurt through other causes, but She was not conscious of those mishaps.

Mother says, -"Nobody can give up work by the force of self-will; when his *karma* is exhausted, all work ceases automatically."

From May 1926 the rigours of the rules regarding Her diet began to slacken. But what She ate was, after all, extremely little; it might be called a small child's ration. Four or five years after She had stopped taking food with Her own hand, some of Her *bhaktas* expressed their great eagerness to see Her do so once again. At their request She agreed to try and sat down with the dishes spread before Her. But after putting a pinch of food into Her mouth, She gave some to others and rubbed the rest on the floor. She could not eat at all. After this nobody ever asked Her to eat with Her own hands. She said, -"I look upon all hands as mine; actually I always eat with my own hands."

From Her early days everybody noticed Her skill in neat home-craft, in the art of cooking and Her gracious manner of entertaining guests. Whatever She did, was done to perfection. She could spin very beautifully and weave cloth on a hand-loom; Her needlework, hosiery and cane-work were superb; they showed an extraordinary degree of intelligence and skill. When She found others unable to do a piece of work, She would come to their aid and to their surprise, accomplish it with ease. Dishes of food prepared by Her were delicious and therefore, wherever a feast took place, She was always requested to direct the cooking.

Mother felt great delight in distributing food to all persons, - adults as well as children. She would forego food and all personal comforts to satisfy others. On one occasion when a *sadhu* came from Gujarat to Shah-bag, Dhaka; with the hem of Her *sari* she rubbed his seat clean and entertained him with Her usual humility and sweetness. The dish of food was so neatly served that it appeared to be sanctified, as it were, by Her great love and selfless spirit of service. On leaving, the *sadhu* said,-"Today I have taken food from the hands of the Mother of the world; I have never in my life been served with so much care and purity."

As long as She could, She cooked for all Her devotee-children and with motherly affection served the food to them. *Prasad* received from Her hands roused unprecedented joy in the hearts of devotees. Many mysterious incidents happened at the distribution of *prasad*. One day the wife of the late Niranjan Roy brought some oranges for Mother. Mother Herself distributed them, for everybody present exclaimed, "I want *prasad* from Mothers hands". The number of oranges was very small; too many were the claimants. There was every chance of oranges falling short. But Mothers ways are inscrutable. Everyone got an orange and there was not a single one left over. Another day there was a *kirtan* party in Niranjan's house at Dhaka. Food for about fifty to sixty people was prepared, but the number of guests swelled to around a hundred and twenty. Mother noticed it and till the end of the serving stood in a corner of the room where the food was kept. When all had eaten, it was found that some food was yet left over.

By way of offerings to Mother, food and clothes came in abundance to the *ashram*. After partaking of a small particle of the food offered or wearing a piece of cloth for a short while, She would distribute everything amongst the people assembled. Thereafter She would laugh cheerfully. People offered Mother precious gold and silver ornaments, shell bangles, glass *churis* and many other things. At times these ornaments were massed on Her forearms. She received all things, great and small, precious or trivial, with equal grace. But She never cared to enquire who had presented them or what became of them afterwards. Many ornaments were given away and what remained was melted into a lump and spent over the ornaments for the images in the ashram temples.

She had never more than two changes of *saris* to wear. She would often give away one out of the two, but it so happened that as soon as the one was given away, another *sari* would be offered to Her.

When I went to Calcutta from Dhaka, I used to put up at the house of Sri Jnanendra Nath Sen. He was more than an elder brother to me. His wife, the late Mrs. Hiranmayi Devi, looked upon me as her own younger brother. Such a loving soul with such extraordinary simplicity, purity, devotion to her husband and an uncommon tactfulness to please the guests and the members of her household, was rare. Attracted by her goodness Mother also used to go and see her occasionally.

Once when Mother was staying at Calcutta I went to see Her. A devotee made Her put on a *sari* of a fine Dhaka fabric. It had been arranged that Mother would go to Jnan Babu's house. I went ahead as I was informed that Mother was going somewhere else on Her way. I purchased a *sari* of medium quality hoping that when Mother would arrive at Jnan Babu's place, this new *sari* would be presented to Her and Mother would naturally leave the finer and costlier one for Jnan Babu's wife. I did not disclose my motive to anybody.

Mother arrived at Jnan Babu's place. But to my dismay I found that She was wearing a very ordinary *sari*, as the fine Dhaka fabric, which She wore before, had been left at the place She visited on Her way. I was surprised but Mother laughed each time She looked at me. Nobody present could understand the meaning of Her laugh. I later confessed to Mother with what a foolish motive I had purchased the *sari*.

I have given above some instances of Mother's extraordinarily meagre diet. A few examples may also be cited showing how at times She took abnormally large quantities of food.

After She had for about eight or nine months eaten daily -one *chattack* (two ounces) of rice mixed with dal, boiled in a small bowl over sacrificial fire, it was settled one day that She should have a normal quantity of food. But everybody pressed Her to eat more and She asked them to bring all the food prepared, sufficient for eight or nine persons. She ate it all up. On another occasion, She smilingly took sixty to seventy puris and a corresponding quantity of dal and vegetables, followed by a large bowl of rice boiled in thick milk. There was an instance when She ate up rice pudding prepared from half a maund of milk (about 20 Kg) and when the whole of it was exhausted She exclaimed, "I want to eat more, please give me more *Kheer* !" According to folk prejudice, a few drops of the sweet dish were sprinkled on the *sari* covering Her head, lest the influence of the evil eye of the people witnessing the event cause any illness to Mother. It was found later

that the spots where the drops fell, looked as if scorched by fire.

A few minutes after She had taken food in abnormally large quantities, there was an extraordinary expression of Her face. She used to say on such occasions :-"At the time of eating I did not know that I was swallowing so much food. It was from you that I first came to learn about it. At that time, whatever things you would offer, good or bad, even grass or leaves, would have been all consumed". But there was no physical disorder to be noticed after such eating. Furthermore She would often perform many strange feats that came into Her head, but however abnormal, they did not result in any adverse consequences.

Just as offerings to God - sanctified by *mantras*, flowers, sandal paste etc. and dedicated with earnestness fill the mind with a serene pleasure, so also presents to Mother, if offered with whole-hearted devotion, bring immense satisfaction and joy to the devotee. We have seen that such commonplace and trifling things as fried rice or fried paddy and quite ordinary fruits were accepted by Her like a treasure. Ordinary vegetable curry without salt, or *Kheer* without sugar, were eaten up by Her with great avidity, and out of the fullness of Her heart, She would even invite others present to partake of the pleasure of eating. On the other hand, in many cases, when very rare and valuable foodstuff procured with much difficulty, was brought to Her lips, Her mouth closed up at the first touch.

Late Sri Tarak Bandhu Chakravarty, retired Dy. Inspector of Schools, who lived in Ganderia, Dhaka, came walking about five miles with some pure *sandesh* (a special type of Bengali sweet) prepared at his house from his own cows milk. It was not yet dawn when he arrived. Mother was still in bed. Like an impatient child the old man called out, "Ma, Ma, I have brought you some sweets (*sandesh*), prepared with special care; wont you eat them?"

Mother sat up on Her bed and without having washed Her face, mouth or hands, She at once began to eat the sweets from the hands of the old man. She clapped Her hands with joy; tears of gratitude for Mother's childlike love and affection rolled down Tarak Babu's cheeks.

Another day *Babydi* (Smt Sailabal Basu, wife of NK Basu of Dhaka) was coming to Mother with some sweets prepared by herself. When she was nearly half a mile away, Mother suddenly laughed loudly and said,-"Sweets are arriving for me." She sat up like a child eager to eat them. There were occasions, when on someone's arrival She would exclaim,-"Bring out what you have brought for me", She expressed Her delight at the presents with many merry, playful jokes. On the other hand incidents are not rare when people had to wait for a long time with their offerings, but Mother would not even care to look at them.

Once I was bed-ridden with a serious disease. Quite unexpectedly a desire flashed across my mind to send some *Kheer* to Mother. When it was ready I tasted a few drops to test if it had been prepared properly. My eldest sister was present and said,-"We cannot send this *Kheer* (milk boiled to consistency) to Mother; things tasted beforehand by men cannot be offered to a God." I replied, "Please send it." I came to learn afterwards that Mother consumed the entire offering Herself.

On another occasion I said to my wife, "Please prepare some *sati food* for Mother." It

was done reluctantly and sent to Mother. We came to learn afterwards that She did not touch a particle of it.

It has been frequently observed that people who with great devotion and love for Mother waited at a distance silently offering all their best sentiments to Her, felt Mother's blessings in the inmost depths of their souls while there were others who brought heaps of offerings, prayed and shed tears to obtain Her grace, but neither received neither Her instructions nor blessings. Everybody gets a response from Her according to the sincerity and intensity of his devotion; Her blessings do not depend upon the nature of any material thing offered to Her.

All people, men of piety as well as atheists, rich or poor, young or old, male or female, even infants have free access to Her. She is often heard to utter with a laugh, "Why do you bother about the time and opportunity to see me ? Don't you find that my doors are always open?" Although owing to the illusory attractions of the world, you often forget this little daughter of yours, you may rest assured that your worries and tribulations are ever before my eyes.

Nothing appears strange to Mother who watches all things without the help of the physical eye, who can read all thoughts without the assistance of the spoken word, who seeing and hearing, moves about like one soaring far above, totally unconcerned with the affairs of this world and yet in live touch with them. Day and night, unconcerned with Her personal comfort or fatigue, She appears to be waiting for all men, be they in distress or at ease.

People flock round Her from early morning till late at night. Some are painting her forehead with vermilion drops, others dressing Her hair, yet others offering to give Her a bath, or to wash Her face and mouth, or to clean Her teeth with tooth paste. Some may request Her permission to change Her *sari*, others express a desire to put some sweets or a slice of fruit into Her mouth, some whisper their secret requests into Her ear, others are eager to have a private interview with Her. Some may even be bold enough to disperse the crowd surrounding Her, saying:-"Please move away, don't trouble Mother in this manner."

But think of Mother! She sits up, hour after hour, day after day, in Her exquisitely peaceful manner in the midst of all this noise and bustle, rush and tussle; She remains steady and firm with a face brimming over with cheerfulness, meeting all the various demands or prayers with such loving grace that the whole atmosphere appears to be overflowing with heavenly joy and happiness. The hearts of the people assembled may not all be equally attracted by Her dignity, but Her sweet and compassionate glances fall with equal tenderness upon all human beings like the golden rays of the sun at dawn. Nobody has yet been found to come away from Her presence in despair or dejection.

Mother says ,-"God's world is made up of both, people who understand its nature and who do not. They have to be kept satisfied with just the toys they want." For this very reason nobody has yet been able to say, "Mother is not mine, but yours"; whoever has the good fortune to be in intimate touch with Her, must have felt, "Mother is mine and mine only". All have opened their innermost hearts to Her and have found new hope and peace in return.

It is beyond our power to realise how Mother plays with Her devotees. We have found Her responding to the two conflicting emotions- of joy at the birth of a son and of sorrow

over a child's death- at the same time, with equal warmth. We have also seen Her weeping with a lady mourning over the loss of her son and laughing joyously with a happy person. Such contradictory impulses find a wonderful synthesis in Her. We have found Her using sweet, soothing words of comfort to the distressed imploring Her blessings, while withdrawing Her feet from their grasp. She appeared to be quite unconcerned at another lying prostrate at Her feet for a pretty long time. One day a lady who had lost her son fell at Her feet wailing bitterly. Mother began to weep and shed tears so profusely with the bereaved mother, held close in Her embrace, that the latter came to forget all her woes; on the hand exclaimed, "Mother, be comforted, I shall not weep over my sons death any more."

Many of us have found immense joy simply looking at Her, touching the dust of Her feet or hearing Her sweet words, which cause an influx of pure thoughts and sentiments in our hearts.

Once a friend of mine who had lately returned from England with a mind soaked with Western ideas, came at my request to see Mother - He said that at the sight of Mother, the *mantra* which he had received from his Guru long, long ago before sailing abroad, and which he had almost forgotten, revived in his memory. There are many instances showing how by sitting at Her feet people acquired the power of concentration and devotion to enable them to worship God and to contemplate the Divine.

Keeping Her as an ideal to be followed whole heartedly, with a sacred regard for Her person, many people have advanced on the spiritual path. Once at the Siddhesvari temple when Mother was in a trance, a girl of sixteen or seventeen was so moved with wonder and joy that she embraced Mother. At the touch the girl was overcome with rapture and rolled on the floor crying repeatedly, "*Hari, Hari.*" For three or four days this blissful state continued.

We have also heard that at the sight of Mother or at the touch of Her hand many people repented. of their past transgressions and advanced in spiritual life. In a large city in the United Provinces (*now known as Uttar Pradesh*) a very respectable lady, the wife of a high Government official, came to see Mother. After she had sat by Her side for some time, she so deeply repented of some of her past sins that when she returned home she confessed all her guilt to Her husband, asking him to shoot her and put an end to her vicious career. Mother came to know of this, called both husband and wife and found means to restore their normal domestic relations. It is also well known that persons who were ordinarily-slighted by all as sinful or worthy of contempt, could find easy access to Mother and were induced to recover from their evil ways. Mother always says, "I want specially those very persons, who have no prop to support them on their path to good life." Instances are not rare of people, entirely ignorant of the spiritual life, who could feel an upward drive by an attitude of self-surrender to Her. On the other hand, many learned scholars or adepts in religious practices were found to come to Her for a few days and then go back filled with their own self-conceit. Mother says,- "Nothing takes place unless the appointed time arrives; everybody gets as much as he deserves."

During *Kirtan* we found animals like dogs and goats pressing close to Mother's body, placing their heads on Her lap or moving about Her person and eating the scraps of scattered sweets at the close of the *Kirtan*, seeking them out like men. Even poisonous snakes were seen crawling about Her. One day Sri Girija Prasanna Sarkar noticed a snake

rearing its hood over Her head while She was sitting under a tree in Siddheshwari compound, though the space around was neat and clean. In the house of Niranjan Roy a snake was following Mothers footsteps in a room on the first floor, lit with electric light.

What Mother says is so universal and attractive that one feels one's loftiest desires and aspirations expressed in Her words. Every single sentence from Her lips naturally illumines a new horizon that is ever-abiding and glorious. She does not enter into any reasoned argument or elaborate discussion, nor does She willingly give any instruction or command to anybody. A man obtains from Her as much as the intensity of his love and devotion entitles him to.

There have been many cases in which persons approaching Her with their problems, found to their surprise answers to their doubts and difficulties, in the course of Her conversation with other people present. On one occasion Mother went to Baidyanath Dham, when *Brahmachari* Balanandaji said to Her,-"Mother, open your treasure chest for us." The reply was,-"It is ever open for all."

Some of Her teachings have been published in *Sad Vani*. A few more are noted here below.

In the course of Her everyday talks in the shape of smiling suggestions and parables, She expresses ideas and thoughts about life and religion, that, if collected, would make a wonderful volume of spiritual treasure. Mother chooses the tiny incidents of everyday life as vehicles for expressing lofty truths and principles of human conduct. That our small social unit is a part and parcel of the great family of mighty worlds, that all beings, dwelling here below are, through all the storm and stress of life, moving onwards in quest of the Infinite Master of creation, are truths that always find expression through Her words, smiles, songs, *kirtans*, hymns and psalms as well as in all Her sweet ways of life. What She says or does is full of hints for our guidance and is applicable to our conduct both in the worldly and religious life. If we make even one of Her many-sided virtues the ideal of our life, it will be sufficient to lead us to Self-realisation. To those who have a great desire for spiritual uplift, She appears to have put on this physical body for the welfare of man to help him in his struggle for freedom from the miseries and distress that chain him down here for ages.

The central theme of all Her words and expressions is this:

Life and religion are one. All that you do to maintain your life, your everyday work and playful activities, all your attempts to earn a living, should be done with sincerity, love and devotion, with a firm conviction that maintaining one's life means virtually perfecting one's spiritual existence in tune with the universe. To bring about this synthesis, religious culture should be made as natural and easy, as taking our food and drink when we are hungry and thirsty.

Mother says,-"With earnestness, love and goodwill do life's everyday duties and try to elevate yourself higher and higher, step by step. In all human activities let there be a live contact with the Divine and you will not have to leave off anything. Your work will then be done well and you will be on the right track to find the Master. Just as the Mother nourishes her child with all possible care and affection and makes him grow up into a healthy boy and a handsome youth, so you will come to find the subtle touches of the Divine Mother shaping your inner life and making you reach your full height and stature.

Whatever work you have to do, do it with a singleness of purpose, with all the simplicity, contentment and joy you are capable of. Thus only will you be able to reap all the best fruits of work. In fullness of time, the dry leaves of life will naturally drop off and new ones will shoot forth."

We have often heard from Mother that when She used to attend to Her household duties She was fully absorbed in the work and had not the slightest thought of Her dress, food or even Her body. She would devote Herself wholly to the tasks assigned to Her and carry out the orders of Her seniors in the family with scrupulous care. Her neighbours would always say,-"This newly married girl lacks usual common sense."

Mother says,-"Just as there is a definite time-table for work at the office, school or the shop, so should we set apart for divine contemplation a few minutes out of the twenty-four hours of every day, preferably in the morning and evening. One must form a fixed resolve that this little time shall be dedicated to God throughout life. During this period no worldly activity should be allowed to encroach upon the contemplation of God. A fixed time must be allotted to all the members of the family including the servants. If this practice is continued for long, divine contemplation will become a part of your nature. Once the habit is established, the future course of your life will be made quite easy. You will feel the flow of the mysterious divine grace feeding all your thoughts and actions and giving you new strength. You get a pension or bonus after years of hard work, so that you need no longer earn your livelihood. In the spiritual realm the reward for good, sincere and selfless work is even far greater and can be obtained more easily.

"Your earthly pension expires with your life, but the Divine pension continues long, long after death. Those who would amass money, store it up in a hidden chamber of their house, add to this store what they can save from time to time, keep a constant watch over their treasure. So also reserve a little corner of your mind for God and always steal an opportunity to add to your stock in the shape of the invocation of His name or some pious work or Divine thought."

One day Mother was showing the various ways of saluting God and said,-"Lose yourself altogether when bowing down to God with a single-minded devotion and you will obtain joy and power in proportion. If you cannot do anything else, at least morning and evening at the appointed time, lay down your body, mind and lie flat before Him in salutation and think of Him just a little." In this connection She added ",there are two kinds of *pranams (mode of salutation)*: Offering to him, your whole body and mind with all thoughts, desires, sense-impressions, love, affection and devotion, just like emptying the contents of a full pitcher to its last drop. The other way is like scattering face-powder through the minute holes of a powder-box; the major portion of your thoughts and desires are kept back in a hidden chamber of your mind, and only a little dust is allowed to escape.

Pramatha Babu was transferred from Dhaka as Post Master General. He went to Mother to bid Her farewell. Mother said to him,-"Who salutes whom ? You bow down to your own Self." He was thrilled with wonder and joy to hear such a remark.

On one occasion Prof. Atal Behari Bhattacharji fell ill at Shah-bag during the Puja holidays. He keenly desired that Mother should come down to him, and like his own mother, massage his aching head. Mother went and passed Her hands over his whole body

from head to foot. On recovery he returned to Rajshahi, the place of his work. After some days this incident was discussed at Shah-bag. I remarked,- "The gentleman lacked common sense, his intelligence was equally poor. I fail to see what purpose he had to make Mother do that job for him during his illness." As soon as Mother heard my remark, Her face changed colour. She said,-"Shall I massage your feet?" With these words She advanced towards me. I began to move away, with Mother following me. Pitaji intervened and stopped Her. Even now I remember Mothers childlike face glowing with motherly warmth, always eager to nurse, soothe and serve all Her children. At that moment Sri. Shashanka Mohan Mukherji cried out, "Ma, Ma," and fell at Her feet.

In this connection Mother said,-"Just as a human body has different parts like the head, the hands, thighs, feet, fingers and toes, I find all of you representing my various limbs. You all belong to one body,-each one has to do work of equal importance."

On a different occasion the late Nirmal Chandra Chatterji of Benaras offered some flowers at Mothers feet. Just then a man was passing by, carrying flowers in a basket to perform the worship of his deity elsewhere. Mother picked up the flowers that had been presented at Her feet and placed them in the basket. Nirmal Babu enquired from Mother why She did so. Her reply was, "All people are worshipping One Being only; all hands and feet belong to One Body."

On another occasion, I observed Mother striking the ground with a bamboo cane when a fly was accidentally killed by a stroke. With great care and concern Mother picked it up and kept it in Her closed fist. Many persons were present. Four to five hours passed in conversation. Mother then opened Her fist and said to me, "Can you do anything for the good of this fly which has passed on to the other world?" I said, "I have heard people say, there is heaven inside the body of man." So saying, I swallowed the fly.

Mother began to laugh and said,-"What have you done ? Does not a man get ill when he eats a fly?" I replied,-"If through your goodwill the fly meets with a better life, no harm will come to me." I did not get ill.

Referring to this incident Mother said,-"Insects, flies, spiders and men all belong to one family,-nobody knows what they were, are or will be and how they have become interrelated to one another."

I had a very pious Muslim friend, the late Moulvi Jainuddin Hossain.. He used to pass nearly all his time in divine contemplation. One Thursday evening I went to Shah-bag with him and Niranjana. *Kirtan* was in full swing in the *Nat-mandap* (an open hall meant for *kirtan* etc). We three stood at a distance under a tree so that we might not be seen from the place of the *kirtan*. After about half an hour we found to our surprise that Mother suddenly came out of the hall with Her devotees following Her with a lantern. With quick steps Mother came towards us, touched my friend with Her right hand and then walked on. We three followed Her footsteps. There was a very well preserved grave of a Muslim saint in a corner of Shah-bag. Mother went there and assumed the postures usual to Muslims during their prayer, uttering at the same time all the particular words they use. My Muslim friend also joined Her. On returning from there the *kirtan* was resumed and my friend too sang with the party, clapped his hands with them and moved round and round. It so happened that the man in charge of the grave was absent that evening and did not light candles or offer sweets as usual. Under Mothers instructions my Muslim friend

offered some *Batasha* [a kind of sweet made of boiled sugar with imprisoned air] at the grave and lighted candles. He had a desire to see Mother eat some of the sweets. When he carried to Mother the plate containing them, She opened Her mouth and he dropped some sweets into it. He himself partook of the *prasad* offered at the end of the *kirtan*. He was an orthodox Muslim but had a high notion of Mother, and after this he came to have an unshakable regard for Her.

At the loving request of a Muslim Begum, Mother performed *Namaz* (prayer) at the same grave. The Begum was an educated lady. She said that there was wonderful correspondence between what Mother said and the sacred texts used during *Namaz*. Mother said, "Some four or five years ago when I was at Bajitpur I saw the ethereal body of the *Faqir* whose grave was over there. After we came to Shah-bag I met him and some of his disciples. He was a stalwart figure, an Arab by descent." On enquiry this was found to be correct.

Once Mother went to the house of Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Ghosh. There was *kirtan* that day. Suddenly a change was observed in Her. Some 150 to 200 cubits away a young Muslim dressed like a Hindu sat in the dark, quite unnoticed. Through the crowd Mother forced Her way to the youth and began to chant "*Allah, Alla-ho-Akbar*". The young man was moved to tears and joined Mother in saying the usual prayer. He told us afterwards, -"The ease and distinctness with which Mother invoked the name of Allah, was beyond our best achievements. And the joy such as I felt that day when uttering the name of God together with Mother, I never experienced before."

Mother introduced the name of *Hari* (God) in a very respectable Muslim family. While reciting the name they were moved to tears. They had great regard for Mother. In this connection Mother said, -"Hindus, Muslims, and all other communities in the world are one; they all worship one Supreme Being and call for His mercy. *Kirtan* and *Narnaz* are one and the same."

Sri Kali Prasanna Kushari and his wife Smt. Mokshada Sundari Devi, *Pitajis* sister, loved Mother greatly. In Her company they found much delight. Once Sri Kushari came to Dhaka, but was staying somewhere else. He had discussed religious matters with Mother and was about to depart. He said with a laugh, "You are credited with great power. If you have such power, just burn me to ashes." Saying this he lighted some *agarbati* (incense sticks) and started for his place with the sticks in his hand. Pitaji and Mother were to go to a different place and all started together. The sun was very hot. Sri Kushari held his umbrella over Mother. The two were walking ahead. Suddenly Kushari started and exclaimed, "Alas, from where is fire raining down upon my head? Are you burning me? Are you really? Please stop the fire. I have got ample proof of your power." To his consternation he found a portion of the umbrella burnt away.

On a different occasion a gentleman laid some flowers at Her feet. She picked up one of them and pointing at its petals, pollens and alluding to its scent etc., She illustrated the material, astral and spiritual aspects of life and made people understand the eternal play of the Divine.

Mother is always on the move from place to place. She said in that connection, "I find one vast garden spread out all over the universe. All plants and animals, all human beings, all higher mind-bodies are playing about in this garden in various ways, each has its own

uniqueness and beauty; their presence and variety give me great delight. Everyone of you add with your special feature to the glory of the garden. I move about from one place to another in the same garden. What makes you feel my absence so keenly when I happen to leave your part of the garden for another, to give delight to your brothers over there ?"

Towards the middle of 1931, while walking in the Ramna fields, Mother said,-"Prayer is an essential part of the practice of religion; its power is irresistible; prayer reveals the life of human beings. All the thoughts that arise in your heart should be offered to God. Pray for His Grace with all earnestness and in a spirit of self-surrender."

Just at that time I was reading in the newspaper that before Lord Irwin came out to India as Viceroy and Governor-General, he asked his father's opinion. The latter replied,-"Don't worry about the outcome of events; we have no control over them. Pray to God and you may get some glimpse of the future." Both father and son went to a church to pray. While returning from there, the father said, "You will have to go to India." The son confirmed, "I also feel the same."

When Mother heard it, She said,-"This is a good instance of the efficacy of prayer. But one must have deep faith like a child. By constant practice the foundation of faith becomes strong; when pure faith takes root in the mind, sincere prayer issues forth from the soul. Through devotion the real spirit of prayer awakens in one's soul, when the Divine Grace manifests itself in the desired results."

On another occasion Mother said,-"When you talk of Divine Grace it implies that something descends on man without any intelligible cause. At its own time it comes of its own volition. You find a child forgetting his mother when deeply absorbed in his play; but the mother, out of her own motherly love, bends down over him and takes him on her lap. The Divine Grace blesses a man just like that. A mother's affection reveals itself before the child has time to think of her. You will certainly say that blessings in the shape of Divine Grace are the result of one's good in previous births. From one standpoint this may be true, but from a different view-point one may say, that as God is absolutely free from all chains of cause and effect, one must not enquire about His motives; though such search for reasons often disturbs us, His mercy descends on all beings evenly. But when one develops a higher vision, one begins to feel the Divine Touch. Have something to rely on. Try to be in vital contact with it and you will find the free flow of His blessings upon your soul, just as a bucketful of water comes out of a well only when the rope to which the bucket is tied is being pulled."

In this connection a question was put to Mother,-"Can a person who has seen God, make others see Him?" She replied that a man could have a vision of Him only when the time was ripe. One who has that vision himself, can help others towards it only to a certain extent. The vision itself is possible through God's Grace alone.

On another occasion there was discussion about man's past lives. Mother said,-"Past births are real. There is no doubt about it. When a cataract in one's eye is removed by an operation, one's eyesight is restored. Likewise by deep concentration on the Divine, when the veil that obscures our intelligence is removed and the mind purified and focused on the Self, the significance of *Mantras* and of the allied forms of deities dawns on us and the impressions of previous births flash upon our consciousness. Just as while at Dhaka, you can have a mental picture of what you have seen in Calcutta, so also you can project a

more graphic image of your past lives upon your present mental screen." She added, "When I see you, I can get a vision of a series of pictures of your past births." On one occasion while in Calcutta, a gentleman and his wife came to Mother with their son aged about seven or eight. On seeing the child Mother remarked, "This boy was related to this body as a brother in his past birth." One of Mother's brothers died very young. He had a severe hurt on his arm and it was bent. The above mentioned boy also had a crooked arm.

At times Mother shows wonderful courage and a strong disposition. There is not a trace of fear in Her. What She wills or says must be carried out. Her thoughts and actions are allowed to function without any protest or hindrance, it contributes to the welfare of man. If obstructed, it causes harm. In Her younger years examples of this were of common occurrence.

When four or five years old, She used to go to Her *Bara Ma* (*great grandmother*) with a pot for fetching churned curds. One day She filled the pot almost overfull with it. This irritated the old lady who said, "You eat so much curd every day ! Today you won't get any." No sooner was this uttered than the old lady found to her dismay that the churning pot cracked and all the curds came out through the leak. She stared at Mother's face in surprise. After this incident She would often call Mother herself to take the curd, even when She happened to arrive late.

We have seen Mother become as stern as thunderbolt, although She is by nature as soft and tender as a flower. On one occasion She was so severe with me for talking thoughtlessly that She commanded: "Go, get out of my sight!" On another occasion I disobeyed Her and the result was that Mother observed silence for some days. There were many instances in which I was fortunate enough to receive Her highest chastisement. If anybody does any wrong and expresses his repentance, Her sweet, merciful looks shed so much ineffable grace that the transgressors mind changes altogether and becomes pure and blissful. But if ones mind is agitated with anger and self-pride at Her words, one feels terrible anguish until there is repentance.

Once *Pitaji* took my side and pleaded for me, but Mother said, "Severe punishment is awarded to those who are able to stand it. If you want to fell a tree, you have to use an axe at first; then a hatchet and a knife may be employed to cut off the boughs and little branches. Thus chastisement will be severe or slight, as the case requires."

For the relief of the sick and distressed Her kindness manifests itself in various ways. On many occasions Mother has said, "I don't do anything with a motive or by an effort or will. It is your thoughts and desires that move this body to say or do things for your welfare. I often see what will or will not happen in the future, but words do not always find their way out."

Cases are too numerous to mention, where boys and girls, men and women have obtained help and relief directly or indirectly in cases of disease, in their trades or professions, in their examinations or selection of studies, marriages and the like. To rid people of the ills of life, She made wounds in Her own body or took upon Herself the sufferings of the patient. Such cases are without number. Instances are also frequent in which it was found that appeals from strangers, when brought to Her notice through a third party, produced a picture of their sufferings in Her mind and they were relieved of

their distress. We have been told by Mother that when She heard sincere prayers for the redress of the misfortune of a person, relief in some shape would come to him. Many persons saw Her in their dreams and felt Her blessings in their bereavements or illnesses.

The parents of a girl suffering from paralysis approached Mother for a cure, Mother asked the girl to roll on the floor. The girl could not move at all; she could not even turn round. Mother was clipping betel-nuts into tiny pieces for the worship of a deity. A few pieces were thrown at the girl and she was asked to stretch out her hand and catch them. With great difficulty she could catch some. After that the family left. At her home the girl was laying in bed. On the following afternoon she heard the rumbling noise of a passing car; she suddenly jumped out of bed and ran towards it. Thereafter she gradually began to move about.

One day a carriage was driving along the road across the Ramna grounds. Mother asked me to hire it. She got into it. The coachman enquired, "Where would you go?" "To your own house", was Mother's prompt reply. Without saying a single word, he drove to his home. On arriving there, it was found that an old man was about to die; by his side his relations were weeping. Mother asked me to bring some sweets which were distributed amongst the people present and She came away. We learnt subsequently that the old man had recovered.

Mother had other ways as well to give relief to sufferers. She would ask a person in distress to use anything he could lay his hands on, at dusk, shutting his eyes. By using such articles he was found to recover. Sometimes She would ask a patient to eat the food prepared for Her and She would Herself eat the sick-diet intended for him. In cases of fever or serious bowel-complaints, patients following Mother's directions, ate food not considered beneficial by physicians, with the result that they were restored to their former health in no time.

When my son was fifteen or sixteen years old he was suffering from dysentery for about ten or twelve days. Mother came to see him one night. From that night he began to recover but Mother had dysentery for a few days.

It has also been found, if any patient was destined not to come round, he would either wilfully violate Mother's directions or fail, by the pressure of circumstances, to follow them. In these cases the final outcome could be foreseen from Mother's ways. The Hindu shastras enjoin that the results of our past actions in this birth or of those done during our previous births, can only be neutralized by steady good work in this life with the help of Divine Grace; but work that calls forth divine intervention is very difficult to perform, unless some saint out of compassion voluntarily aids such efforts.

Mother says, -"As long as you see this objective world, creation exists for you. There is conflict so long as the notions of you and I, happiness and misery, light and darkness, prevail. Consider yourself an integral part of Nature and let there be stress on Nature's work or on Her Laws of work instead of on your own self as the embodiment of your sense perceptions. Then all your senses will be quiescent and your inner being will gradually awaken; the problem of the self and of creation will be solved. Then all your wants will vanish, the impact of life's basic urges will gradually wear off like a smoke screen at the first breath of wind, your soul will resume its full glory like the morning sun and the time will arrive for you to fix your eyes upon the Supreme Being.

In Mother's early life, opportunities for Her education were rather meagre, neither did She pay much attention to it. But it was surprising to find that the examiners would ask Her questions from only those topics which She had glanced over beforehand. For this reason She was looked upon as a bright pupil in the class. From Her girlhood She did not, of Her own accord, read any book; nor did She practice handwriting. Still the groundwork of Her knowledge appeared to be quite sound. Whatever She studied She could master thoroughly.

One day Mother enquired, "What is Italy?" A few days later an Italian Professor named Tucci came to Mother at Shah-bag. He had come to visit the University of Dhaka. He asked a question in English and it was to be translated into Bengali for Her, but before this could be done She gave the proper answer in Sanskrit.

We prayed to Her several times to give us a specimen of Her handwriting in Bengali. She said, "I don't write anything with any purpose in view. When the time comes, you may get it."

Fortunately some 22 years back on the 4th of Ashad, 1337 (Bengali Era), we did receive a specimen.

(English translation :- "O thou Supreme Being thou art manifest in all forms-this universe with all created things, wife, husband, father, mother and children, all in one. Man's mind is clouded by worldly ties. But there is no cause for despair. With purity, unflinching faith and burning eagerness go ahead and you will realise your true Self."

There are many photographs of Mother; their number may be not less than 1,000. But what is surprising is that no two are alike. Sri Subodh Chandra Dasgupta of Dhaka, and Sri Shashi Bhushan Dasgupta of Chittagong amongst many other photographers took many snapshots. In October 1926 Shashi Babu came to Dhaka during the Durga Puja celebrations and some of us went to Shah-bag together to take a photograph of Mother early in the morning.

On reaching there we found that nobody knew where Mother was. At last we discovered that She lay in a state of *samadhi* inside a dark room. It had been arranged that Shashi Babu would leave Dhaka the same afternoon. He was therefore very anxious to take a snapshot of Mother that very morning. *Pitaji* was specially requested to approach Mother for permission.

He, himself with my help brought Mother out and seated Her for an exposure and we withdrew from the range of the camera. Mother was still in a state of self-absorption with Her body and limbs slack. Suspecting that She might have moved during the exposures, Shashi Babu used eighteen plates. He then left for Chittagong. Subsequently he wrote to say that of the eighteen plates only the last one produced a good portrait which contained a moon-like ball of light on Her forehead, and what was stranger still, my figure appeared behind Mother's. An extract from Shashi Babu's letter written to me long after, is given below.

Shashi Babu's letter ran thus:- "When Mothers photograph was being taken I loaded six plates at a time and in three shifts eighteen plates were exposed. In the first few plates there were no impressions, only a ball of light covered each plate. The next few plates

showed some hazy outlines; it was only on the last plate that the figure of Mother came out in full relief. You were far away beyond the range of the camera and on one side. From there you gave me the signal for giving the exposure. From the very outset I was feeling nervous when taking the exposures, as I had a dim suspicion that things were not all right, which caused me much pain. When the last plate was exposed, I felt a flood of joy filling my heart. At that time I just began to approach Mother's feet as my only refuge. During those days an incident like the one mentioned above almost overwhelmed me (the letter was dated 5.5.37).

When the photograph was received at Dhaka people suspected some trick of the photographer in developing it. But when Mother was approached about the matter, She expressed Hersef thus:

“When this body lay in a dark room in an almost frozen condition the whole room was flooded with light radiating from it. When you brought this body out into the sunshine, the radiance was there. But it gradually shrank into a ball of light on the forehead. There was an impression in my mind that at the time Jyotish was standing behind me. You may now judge what it meant.”



ASHRAM

Everybody was feeling the need of an ashram at Dhaka. Once when I went to Shah-bag on a moonlit night, Mother said, "Let us have a stroll in the *maidan*." *Pitaji*, Mother and myself went out. We sat down on the grass just near the place where a building stood in ruins (the site of the Dhaka Ashram). I most humbly told Mother that Shah-bag was the property of the Nawab of Dhaka, and as it would not be possible for us to have *Kirtan*, *Puja*, etc. there for much longer, it was necessary to have an ashram. Mother replied, "The whole world is full of ashrams, what will you do with a new one?" I said, "We do not require any big project; we just want a small place where we may assemble round your blessed feet and sing *Kirtan* and offer worship." *Pitaji* supported me. Mother said, "If you feel like erecting a building of this kind, the site of the old house that you see over there will be the best. It is your old home."

She laughed and remained silent. At that time there was a Shiva temple in ruins standing amidst heaps of rubbish, bricks and stones with jungle all around. The place was infested with snakes. After the ashram premises were built we saw many big snakes there. At that time on certain occasions Mother used to offer milk and bananas in that deserted Shiva temple.

One Monday some raw milk with five or seven bananas were offered in a new earthen pot. After seven days at about 9 or 10 p.m. Mother went there and found the milk and the bananas in exactly the same condition as when they had been offered. Not a single ant had touched the pot. Mother said She would have a sip from it. Many people tried to stop Her, thinking that the milk might be contaminated. But Mother must have Her way. She had a sip and many took Her *prasad*. What remained in the vessel was left there. Next morning it was found that the entire contents had been licked up. Not a drop remained.

On enquiry we were informed that the Shiva temple and the adjoining lands belonged to the Ramna Kali estate. When the priest, Sri. Nityananda Giri was approached, he said that he would not part with the property for a sum of less than Rs. 6,000.

When Niranjan was transferred to Dhaka a few months later we tried to raise the money. But we could not succeed. Towards the beginning of 1927 I was bed-ridden with a serious illness. One day Niranjan came to see me and said that the Zamindar of Gouripur, Sri. Brojendra Kishore Ray Chowdhury had sent Rs. 1,000/-. Niranjan added, "First try to recover soon; we shall then make an effort to raise more funds." Niranjan collected more money gradually, but Nityananda Giri refused to part with the property for a sum not less than Rs. 6,000/-. After suffering from ill-health for over a year and a half, I resumed my duties in the Agricultural Department at Dhaka. We inspected many a site for building an ashram. But none appeared to be better suited than the one suggested by Mother.

We were in a fix. Towards the early part of 1929 Mother was in Calcutta. Sri Benoy Bhushan Banerji went there and had a talk with Her about the starting of the Dhaka ashram. When he came back and told me all about his conversation with Her, my hopes revived. I decided one day that I must see the priest of the Ramna Kali temple and accomplish at last the purchase of the plot of land. When I stepped out of the house I saw the image of Mother floating over my head, which gave me the conviction that our purpose would be fulfilled. The priest said, "As you are unable to pay the large sum

required for an out-and-out sale, let there be some sort of lease with Rs.500/- as *salami* and Rs. 300/- as yearly rent. The Kali temple is also yours. Some permanent arrangement may be made later on." After a good deal of discussion it was finally decided to take the plot of land on lease for the time being.

Naturally such an arrangement was disliked by many. But if an Ashram was to be established at all, the site selected appeared to be the best suited for the purpose. The ashram belonged to Mother; so we believed that She would do all that would be necessary for it. It was useless for us to speculate on the future. With these thoughts in mind we took lease of the plot of land on the terms offered. Sri Mathura Nath Basu, Nishikanta Mitra, Brindaban Chandra Basak took a leading part in the transaction. On the 13th April, 1929 Mother was requested to set Her feet on the premises~ in ruins. Niranjana was then in mourning over the untimely loss of his wife. But he managed to be present there on the occasion. About two months later he also departed from this world. With the money collected by him the foundation of the ashram was laid. Wherever he and his wife might be now in the other world, their connection with Mother continues to this day. This is my belief.

Regarding the ashram Mother said,-"An ashram means a holy spot of land which awakens divine thoughts in man. All its inmates must strive hard to keep the atmosphere pure by continuous prayer, (*sadhana*) noble thoughts, meditation and religious discourse. In such a place it is sufficient if there be a few thatched huts for inmates to live in anyhow." It was on this account that a tiny hut was first erected for Mother in the ashram.

Sri Sri Ma's movements and the play of Her various moods are beyond human comprehension. It is futile to try and prevent what She proposes to do, or to enquire why a particular course of action is followed by Her. On the 2nd May, 1929 Mother entered the new Ramna ashram. There were shouts of joy all around. Sri. Baul Chandra Basak brought garlands and wristlets made of flowers and dressed Mother like Krishnaji. Mother too appeared to be in a playful mood. But I stood aloof, watching Her movements. It seemed to me that there was a shadow of a cloud lurking somewhere mysteriously. Mother's smiles and vision appeared to be floating away to distant places. I returned to my house at 2 A.M. Next day towards evening *Pitaji* visited our part of the town. Someone came with a message that *Pitaji* was wanted back at the Ashram immediately. I accompanied him. It was about 10 or 10-30 p.m. We found all persons in the ashram quite sad and depressed. A gloom of anxiety darkened every face. Mother was sitting on the open *maidan* outside the boundary of the ashram. We were told that She had come out of the ashram very early at dawn. Right up to 10-30 p.m. She had passed the whole of the time wandering about in the fields.

On seeing *Pitaji*, Mother said, "Let this body go on a journey with its father; you yourself may please stay in the ashram". *Pitaji* after many protests gave his consent, blurting out all on a sudden,-"Well, let your will be done." Many accompanied Mother to the station. *Pitaji* and I stayed back, but after some time we too went there. *Pitaji* tried his best to dissuade Her from the project, expressing his disapproval. But Mother remained firm.

The train to Mymensingh stood ready. Mother got into it. *Pitaji* asked me to accompany Her and told me to get into another compartment in case Mother should stop me. In obedience to his instructions I accompanied Her.

After I started for Mymensingh at about midnight with only a piece of loin-cloth with me and without informing anybody of my family about my sudden departure, there was great struggle in my mind and I hardly found words to describe it. The sun is called the source of all life and activity and when the night wore on, with the rays of the morning sun, demands of the office and family life revived memories of endless unfinished duties waiting for me. What slaves of routine we all are! The chains of the world are too stiff and too subtle to be broken asunder. My mind was strangely clouded with dark thoughts about the duties of that day, even when I got a unique opportunity to sit at Mother's feet. Year after year I had yearned to touch those feet, and She had practically snatched me away from the jaws of death. It seemed to me that our regard, reverence and love were nothing but fleeting emotional impulses; in actual fact we secretly worship our selfish desires. Mother too says,- "Your expressions of love and reverence float over your physical mind like gusts of wind; unless the inmost chamber of your soul be opened to allow a free flow of true devotion, how can you offer the real thing in place of a mere semblance?"

On reaching Mymensingh, I enquired of Mother, "Where would you like to go next?" Her reply was, "To the hills". I said, "The rainy season is already ahead of us; will it be advisable at this time to go to the hills with your old father? If you want to pass some time in seclusion, let us go to Cox's Bazar on the seaside." Mother remained silent.

We ordinarily find that Mother gives an instruction or suggestion only once. If we carry it out *in toto*, without any scruple, it finally turns out to be for our best; otherwise we get either disappointed with the result or fall into some unforeseen troubles.

We discussed amongst ourselves where we should go next and it was decided that we would start for Cox's Bazar by the evening train. When we reached Ashugunj Station there was a severe thunderstorm. Mother said, "The fury of the storm that you see today is a trifle compared to what you will meet with tomorrow." On reaching Chittagong we boarded the steamer for Cox's Bazar. When we reached the sea at the mouth of the Karnafuli river, a severe storm arose. There was considerable rolling, waves began to pass over the deck. The passengers were screaming with fear, but the joy of Mother at the sight of the stormy sea knew no bounds.

Watching the play of the storm with the waves, Mother said, "Look over there! The ever-melodious music of the Divine is going on over the bosom of the mighty sea. If man desires to secure his spiritual uplift, he must ever remember God's Name, sing His glory and try to listen to His mighty voice through all the turmoil of life in this world." We went from Cox's Bazar to Adinath, (*A temple on the top of a hill in the island of Mahesh Khali surrounded by the ocean.*)

Mother remained there. I returned to Dhaka. After a few days *Pitaji* also went to Adinath and took Mother to Calcutta. From there She went to Hardwar with Her father.

Afterwards She travelled to Sahasra Dhara (Dehradun), Ayodhya, Benares, Vindhya-chal and Nawadwip. From there She returned to Calcutta with *Pitaji* and then proceeded to Chandpur. On Her way from Nawadwip through Calcutta I met Her. I learnt that Mother was then eating only some fruits and a glass of *sherbet* and had been passing several days in this way lying on the ground day and night, quite absorbed in Her own thoughts. I also noticed that She moved about mechanically like a doll dragging a body made of clay but pulled by some invisible hand. Finding Her in such a state I was led to

the conclusion that when the Divine puts on a body vehicle on earth, He or She has to behave like an ordinary mortal in obedience to the laws of this illusory material world.

After some days both Mother and *Pitaji* came from Chandpur to Dhaka and stayed there at the Siddheshwari Ashram. *Pitaji* fell seriously ill; after much suffering, as soon as he was on the way to recovery, Mother became bed-ridden. This has been described before.

In October, 1929 the image of Kali was removed to a corrugated iron shed erected for the purpose in Ramna ashram. In 1930 all the gold ornaments of the deity were stolen and its wrist was broken by the thief.

There arose doubts whether the broken image could be worshipped at all. Many Pandits were consulted on the point. Mahamahopadhyaya Panchanan Tarkaratna said, "Since the image of Kali was not immersed after the annual puja due to the order of a saintly person, Her directions should also be followed in this special case although under ordinary circumstances worship of a broken idol is not permitted." According to Mother's directions the image was renovated and worshipped.

Long before, when I pointed out to Mother that the construction of the temple was necessary to house the image of Kali, Mother replied, "Wait for one more year". Within a year of this reply towards the beginning of 1931, thanks to the best efforts of Sri Bhupati Nath Mitra and Nagendra Nath Roy, the foundation stone of the temple was laid. When a trench was dug for laying the foundation, four or five tombs, large and small, were discovered, containing a skeleton each, some in a sitting posture and others lying down.

Regarding these Mother said to me, "The whole site has a sanctity of its own, having been the residence of a few *sannyasis* in the past. You were one of them. I have seen some of the saints moving about in the Ramna maidan. These sadhus desire that some temple should be built upon their graves so that men might come and pray to God here and maintain the purity of the place for the benefit of the people. This is the reason why you have been advised to set up an ashram here. Those who have taken part in the undertaking must have had some association with the departed saints."

I enquired of Mother, "If I was a Sannyasi, why should I be plodding on in this way now?" Her reply was, "Till the fruits of one's *Karma* are exhausted, one has to continue one's unfinished work."

While Mother was at Shah-bag before the Dhaka ashram was started, there was *Kirtan* almost every evening; it was prolonged till late at night on the full-moon and new-moon days. One full-moon night I lay on my bed. It was 11 p.m. I was wide- awake. For a long time a sweet tune came floating into my ears, repeating these two lines:

Harey murarey madhukaitabharey

Gopal Govind Mukund Sowrey

It occurred to me that Mother must be singing the song at Shah-bag. It sounded like Her voice. Next morning I learnt that Mother had actually been signing those lines at the time.

She sang only those two lines over and over again. I was really unfortunate. Though

Mother tried to draw me to the divine melody of *kirtan* songs, I hardly developed a taste for them. One evening I went to Shah-bag with Niranjana. There was *Kirtan*. Mother said, "Those of you who have not taken part in the *Kirtan*, sing the name of God all together." Niranjana and I sang with very subdued, almost inaudible voices owing to our natural shyness. But I felt sincere remorse because I could not carry out Mother's wishes fully.

All at once Mother said,—"Today is Saturday; it will be Sunday tomorrow; why don't you sit together and pass some hours of the night singing *Kirtan* ?" Niranjana returned to his house. I spent the whole night at Shah-bag singing *Kirtan*. Towards the early hours of the morning, Mother began to sing in a morning tune:

Hari hari hari hari hari hari bol

It awakened in me a new inspiration. From that day onwards I could feel that in spiritual culture *Kirtan* has a much higher place than other religious rites and observances. The present practice of singing *Kirtan* at the ashram every Saturday evening started from November; 1926. That day, along with the name of (*Hari*), the word "*Ma*" (Mother) was added for the first time. After a few days *Kirtan* was arranged by turns in the houses of one or other of Mother's devotees on each day of the week.

During *Kirtan* at Shah-bag the words "*Hari bol*" figured prominently. I came to feel that since Mother is the supreme object of our thoughts and adoration, all the prayers of our soul are directed to Her and therefore the word "*Ma*" should be the basic element of our *Kirtan* songs. I expressed these thoughts to some people, but they did not pay any heed to what I said. I myself could not sing well. So I had to drop the matter for some time.

When Sri Anath Bandhu and Brahmachari Kamala Kanta joined the Dhaka ashram, I asked them to introduce the word "*Ma*" into the *Kirtan* gradually. At that time, Sri Kulada Kanta Banerji came to Shah-bag. He had a deep regard for the performance of Hindu rites and rituals and was well versed in them. He too hesitated to introduce such an innovation in *Kirtan*. However, there was a combination of the names of *Hari* and "*Ma*" in some songs. It is really difficult to alter our set habits, mental make-up and modes of expression. Specially in religious matters, to allow oneself to run along customary grooves is rather an easy affair for most people. Besides to shake off the chains of tradition requires considerable force of will.

At that time I reasoned within myself in this manner: We try to concentrate our attention on Mother's figure, all our desires drive us to touch the dust of Her holy feet; an image of Her face floats before our mind's eye; our ears strain their utmost to catch every single syllable that falls from Her lips; all our love and reverence flow in an unbroken stream towards Her Grace. In such a state of mind, if during *Kirtan* we sing *Prana Gourang Nityananda* (Gouranga, Nityananda is my life), *aiso hey Gour, boso hey Gour, amaar hridaya pranganey* (Come O Gour, sit down O Gour in the chamber of my heart) and roll on the floor overwhelmed with emotion, can there be any harmony and rhythm between our song and the flow of our love and reverence?

The aim of all worship or concentration is to give our many-sided tendencies a unified direction, to divert all our feeble stray desires and longings towards the Divine Being we worship. Under these circumstances if, instead of allowing our sentiments and thoughts to

float away on fine imageries of the distant past called up by various topics, tunes and melodies of traditional songs, we try to concentrate on the Living Presence of Mother through thoughts, tunes and songs directly bearing on Her name and personal imageries that have constant appeal for us all, a new inspiration will enliven our worship and *Kirtan*. We shall be able to obtain repose and attract Her Grace;

If we mean to be real devotees of Mother, we should be capable of reviving in the *Kirtan* with the "Ma" -name only, the ardour and strength, the beauty and harmony of Vaishnavite composers of old. The word "Ma" is a natural word that forms spontaneously on the lips of a child from his very birth. It is the natural derivative of (*Om*) and is the breath of our life. The first cry of a child, as he emerges from the womb of his Mother, is "*Om-Ma*" which is the same as *Om*. It is the one sound-symbol for all human beings to draw the attention of the mother to her child.

If we really feel that Mother is the presiding Deity of our world, then *Kirtan* of the name of "Ma" should be the easiest and most natural mode of worship for us.

At about this time I composed the following song. adding the name "Ma" to ordinary *Kirtan* songs. Its translation runs thus

In joy and sorrow, in happiness and misery
Call out Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma,
Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma,

When the child drops from the mothers womb
Mother places the child on her lap
And initiates him with the mantra *Om*,
He learns to babble out "Ma, Ma, Ma's.
You learn to stand on your own legs,
And come gradually to forget the first word,
which started your life.

Therefore you search in the Vedas and Tantras,
to find out

The limit of the limitless "Ma".

If you ever desire to learn the truth of your heart,
Merge all names and forms in the "Ma" *mantra*,
Say always "Ma, Ma" and let your eyes swim in
flood of tears,

Find in Sri Anandamayi Ma the final refuge of your life's journey.

Towards the beginning of 1928, I was at Giridih. One morning both *Pitaji* and Mother dropped in. I pointed out to them that our ashram should have a special mode of prayer with a specific divine sound-symbol, as all ashrams have their specific forms of *Kirtan*. The one person round whom all the activities of the ashram revolve, should serve as a centre to give unitary direction to all *bhajans* and *kirtans* there. When such a harmony is set up, our efforts for spiritual uplift will receive new momentum. With a combination of "Hari" and "Ma" several *kirtan* songs were composed, and it was settled that one song should be sent to Kulada Babu at Dhaka. After Mother left, I was about to send a song to him, when I felt, an inner urge to try a new tune exclusively with the "Ma" name. It took the following form of chorus,-

Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma,
Call (Dako) Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma,
Say (Bolo) Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma,
Sing (Gao) Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma,
Worship (Bhajo) Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma,
Pray (Japo) Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma.
Call, Say, Sing, Worship, Pray Ma, Ma, Ma.

When this was sent to Kulada Babu at Dhaka, he wrote to say that the composition had made much impression and that it had been introduced into the *Kirtan* of the ashram.

This is the starting-point of the new form of *Kirtan* with the "Ma" sound-symbol. Without a sense of keen desire for Mother's Grace during Her absence, real performance was not possible. When these songs were composed, Mother was away from Dhaka for several months. Her devotees were passing through keen pangs of separation. The intense desire of the Bhaktas to have Mother back in their midst made those songs so sweet and touching!

After the Ramna ashram had been established, the Sanskrit hymns that had emanated from Mother's lips during the state of deep concentration, were sung during *bhajan* time. Towards the close of 1931 (Agrahayan 1336 B.E.) Mother called me to Her side and said, "The hymns which you recite during *bhajan* time are incomplete, owing to your inability to note down all the thoughts and expressions that issued from my lips. Can't you try some other composition?"

I obeyed Her command and came to the conclusion, that a song in Bengali would have a better appeal to a Bengali audience, than a Sanskrit one. Inspired by Her, the following song took shape one night at about 3 A.M.

The translation of the song is given below:

Glory to Thee, Sri Anandamayi Ma,
who dwellest in every soul, who art absolute purity through eternity.

Thy lustre, Mother Nirmala, illumines the universe with the radiance of all heavenly virtues;

Thou art Gouri incarnate, queen of all kingly Power, symbolizing Om in *Swaha* and *Swadha*;

Thou art, Mother, ever divinely graceful to all eyes and minds, ever-abiding and supremely beautiful, ultimate reality behind the manifested universe.

The Sun and the Moon, Mother, are Thy twin eardrops, the deep blue of the immense sky Thy hair and the universe Thy glorious body.

Mother, Thou art the glamour of all the riches of the world, sweetness incarnate, and radiant with all splendour of life.

Thou holiest, Mother, all the gods and goddesses in Thy person, art as full of charms as Lakshmi is to Vishnu, with boundless peace, repose and mercy.

Mother, Thou art the dispenser of all happiness and blessings of life, of divine wisdom, love and joys of salvation.

The universe is Thy offspring; Thou dost nurse it in endless ways, and in the end dost merge it all into Thy bosom, Mother.

Thou art, Mother, the life of Thy devotees, Divine Grace incarnate, the deliverer of this world and the two next.

Thou art the spring of all actions; Thou expressest Thyself in all activities, art beyond all synthesis and differences and art the prime mover of all divine forces.

All wisdom derives its charm from the sweet words of Thy lips, Mother; Thou art the charmer of all saints; all terrors of the world vanish at Thy glance.

All the *mantras*, all the Vedas reveal Thy power; Thou art the sustainer of all the worlds with Thy presence, Mother.

All *gunas* and forms emanate from Thee, Mother, but Thou art beyond all these and dost represent one Universal creative Thought-impulse.

The entire world sings always the hymn of Thy Grace, is ever thrilled with Thy touch.

Let all our hearts unite in a chorus of song to offer our *pranams* to Thy holy feet and to proclaim Thy glory over and over again, Mother, for ever.

ON THE WAY TO NEW LIFE

Since my first meeting with Mother, Her ever joyful, simple and soothing countenance cast such an ineffable charm over my life that even in the midst of various distractions and excitements through which I passed, I came to forget all my worries and temptations. There was only one consuming desire - to obtain a particle of Her Grace. Like the upward surging waves of the ocean, there was a deep outburst of my heart, roaring day and night towards Her feet and drowning all the tumults of the world. At times if I could shout "Ma Ma" like a madman and shed tears for Her and sing Her glory, I would find great relief. But such opportunities I could hardly get in my home. As I have seen in Mothers physical body various unprecedented *Bhavas* (*transformation of the body under the pressure of supramental forces*), I was struck with joy and wonder in Her presence. Before Her I came to feel that I was but an infant or an almost helpless, poor beggar, absolutely unfit to sit at Her feet. In fact in my whole life I could never sit down in Her presence. I always used to stand at a distance. Every morning I was fortunate enough to have the first *darshan* of Her feet, because very few people could go to the ashram so early. On some mornings I found Mother sitting alone on one side of Her bed with all the languor of sleep still over Her eye-lids; sometimes Her bright eyes and sweet face seemed to radiate motherly affection and grace profusely on all men; or on other occasions Her looks at dawn wore all the serenity and grace of a lovely autumn sky in the morning, infinitely bright and blue, yet quite isolated from the things of the world. The expression of Her face changed constantly with the transformations in Her inner thoughts and emotions. At times She would look like an old lady; again, in the midst of playful frolics and the loud laughter of a gleeful girl, She would suddenly assume such serious, thoughtful and determined looks as would arouse awe and fear in us. In this state Her body would assume such unusual dimensions, Her face wore such a solemn expression that it would make us all feel that Mother *Rudrani* [*consort of Shiva the God of destruction and dissolution wearing grim looks*] was possessing Her whole being. At that time Her wild laughter, Her rolling eyes, and the movements of Her limbs all conspired together to strike terror in our hearts. Yet after a short while Her natural expression of joy and sweetness was restored.

At all times however, I would feel such an attraction for Mother that if I failed to go to Her one day, I would be ill at ease and my mind would seek the earliest opportunity to obtain shelter and repose at Her feet. It appeared to me that She was ever calling out to my soul, "Come, come to me", and was constantly watching me, with Her eyes ever intent on my welfare.

On many days I tried with a strong will to black out all thoughts of Her, but She mocked at every such perverse attempts of mine and captured my mind and reasoning faculty all the more. I felt exhausted by such attempts and was left dumb and inert like a lump of clay. I could not find any means to slake my thirst for Mothers affection. Thus I began to grow weak and my body hastened towards a crisis.

At last on the 4th of January, 1927 I fell ill. At the very start I began to feel an acute pain in the region of my heart. No medicine could give me relief. Mother came to see me

one day and placed Her gentle, soothing hand upon my chest. All my pains subsided with the touch. But the disease continued to take a more and more serious turn. Doctors said, I had developed T.B. A few days later Mother came to me one night, sat by my bed-side and said something by Herself. Long afterwards I learnt from Mother that She had said to the disease [*Mother says each disease its specific appearance as distinctly visible to Her as a material form*] Thou hast done what thou couldst. Stop from now onwards." From that time Mother ceased to come to me. During the last few months of acute suffering I had not the good fortune to see Her.

It was necessary for me. The keen desire to see Mother made me forget the pain due to the illness, my mind in those days hovered round Her feet day and night. She pervaded my whole being both inwardly and outwardly. Later I was told that Mother said one day at Shah-bag, She saw blood on all peoples lips. On hearing this remark *Pitaji* at once came to see me at night. I was then vomiting blood and all my strength was nearly spent. On many occasions Mother used to guide me with Her suggestions for a remedy, long before She was informed verbally about the changes in my illness.

One night a very acute crisis came on. The doctors in attendance declared my case to be hopeless. It was 2 a.m. Heavy rain fell in torrents with a deafening noise. Dogs were barking to make the gloom more frightful. I began to see dreadful visions, all the hairs on my body stood on end. At that time I saw as clearly as in broad daylight Mother sitting on the right side of my pillow. An agreeable surprise stole in upon me. Before the first spell of surprise was over, I found Mother passing Her hands over my head. It was so soothing In an instant I fell into a deep sleep.

From that day on, for about eight to ten months as long as I was confined to bed, I would always feel that Mother sat on my bed near the pillow with a very calm, serene face and would not hand me over to death.

Sometimes when for hours together I could not stand the pain of coughing followed by the spitting of blood, I used to repeat the name of Mother and soon the intensity of the pain would pass off.

During my illness Mother asked Brahmachari Jogesh to go out for one year to Western India and live on alms only, without any fixed habitation. It might possibly have been intended to divert some of my sufferings.

After some months of illness when I occupied a Government house near Shah-bag, Mother left for Hardwar to attend the Kumbh Mela. My illness had a second serious setback and a telegram was sent to Mother at Rishikesh. But She did not come. I learnt afterwards that when *Pitaji* was anxious about me, She said to him, "I have seen Jyotish lying on my lap, quite unconcerned about his illness."

After about five months of treatment I wanted to test how much strength I had acquired through medical skill. I tried to walk a few steps leaning against the wall of the room. The strain of it caused profuse vomiting of blood the same evening. When the doctor was informed, he left instructions with the inmates of my house that I must lie flat on my bed.

Four or five days later Mother returned to Dacca and came to see me. She enquired, "How do you feel now?" I said, "I have not much pain now, but I feel very uncomfortable owing to my not having had a cold bath for a long time. It was the month of Vaisakh. The

heat was grilling. Mother sat for some time and then left. Next day at about 1 p.m. She came again with *Pitaji*. At that time everybody in the house was asleep. My daughter, aged 11 or 12, who was posted to keep watch over me, was also fast asleep. Mother said, "You wanted to bathe; if you are keen on it, there is a tank yonder, go there and have a good bath."

That tank was about 60 to 80 yards away. As soon as I heard Mother's words, a new strength was infused into my frail body with love and devotion for Her. My body then was but a skeleton. The warning of the physician not to leave my bed flashed through my mind for a moment and vanished away. In this condition as I tottered trying to stand up and take another loin-cloth to put on after the bath, *Pitaji* at once caught hold of me and led me to the tank. The floor of my house was above 4 ft. above the ground level. I got down the stairs and walked the whole distance. It was a reserve tank with the University Muslim Boarding House standing on its bank. There was also a notice put up by the P.W. Department to the effect that it must not be used for bathing and washing. But that day no inmate of the Boarding House could be seen. In my house too everybody was asleep; I got down into the tank and had a delightful bath. On returning to my quarters I spread out the wet cloth on the line hung up for drying clothes and lay down on the bed taking rest.

No sooner had I spread myself on my bedstead than my daughter awoke. She found Mother sitting by her side. As I walked through the lawn to have a bath, numerous seeds of love-thorn grass (*Chorkanta*) stuck to the loin-cloth I wore. When my servant Khagen saw the cloth studded with those thorns, his natural inference was that I had walked across the lawn at noon. This was brought to the notice of my wife, who showed that cloth to Mother and complained to Her that I had walked on the lawn at midday against the doctors express prohibition.

Mother began to laugh without saying a word. I was really struck with surprise, wondering how I could walk across the open lawn to have a dip in the tank in broad daylight quite unnoticed by anybody and how I could get the strength to stand such an effort. It was a feat quite beyond my comprehension. After three or four months when I left Dhaka for a change to a healthier climate, I told Niranjana all about it. Subsequently when after recovery I resumed my duties at the office, I stated the fact to my physicians who discredited the story altogether. My wife did not at first believe it either. When I described to them the full story they finally came to believe it.

Whilst the disease was in full swing, I developed a very strong desire to eat boiled rice. The attending physicians would not allow me to have it. Niranjana appealed to Mother, saying,—"Ma, Jyotish wants to take boiled rice; the doctors won't allow it. If he dies, we shall have one great grief that we could not satisfy this desire of his before his death." Mother laughed and said, "When Jyotish has a desire for it, he should be given rice. After a few days *Pitaji* brought some boiled rice from Shah-bag and made me eat it, but nobody noticed it.

In those days Mother used to come to see me once every day. One morning Mother came very early and after She had left, Brahmachari Kamalakanta brought me some *champak* flowers. It was with regret that I looked at the flowers, because I would not have an opportunity that day to offer them at Her feet with my own hands. In the afternoon Kulada Babu brought me a lovely rose. The same painful thought recurred. The rose was kept on the table by the side of the *champak* flowers. That such lovely flowers could not

be placed at Mothers feet disappointed me much. Just at that time Mother suddenly entered my room, went to the table and stood reclining to the left. She gazed at me for three or four minutes quite absent-mindedly and then left. I thought Mother had taken the flowers. The rose was missing. Next day when She came I enquired about it. She said, "I don't quite know what I took, but I must have taken something from here. I went to the house of the *zamindar* of Dhankora and gave something to a woman there; then I went to the house of a Deputy Magistrate where a woman was ill and I left something there too." Afterwards, I came to learn that at the first house She had given the rose and at the second a champak flower. The sick lady recovered soon.

In this connection Mother said, "Intense hankering after the Divine is the core of all worship, of all prayer. In our heart lie eternal springs of divine power and in our efforts lie the roots of all the creative, preservative and destructive urges of Being."

I am just reminded of another incident. During my illness *Pitaji* ordered that every day some rice *prasad* should be sent to me from Shah-bag; but it was offered at about 2 p.m. and the *prasad* used to reach my house much later. Everybody in my home got annoyed to find me waiting for *prasad* so late in the day. On a particular day there was some adverse criticism of the whole arrangement at my house. It caused me so much pain that I came to feel there was no need of *prasad* being brought to my house in the face of so much disgust and criticism amongst the members of my family. The day wore on; it was 2 a.m. at night. No *prasad* had arrived form Shah-bag. It occurred to me that my reluctance to have *prasad* with so much trouble was most probably the cause for the stopping of the arrangement. I wept and wept on my bed and the *prasad* arrived in half-an-hour. I learnt that Mother had just risen from Her bed and ordered, "Go quickly, carry *prasad* to Jyotish at once." I was given to understand later that when during the preceding midday Mother's permission was sought to send *prasad* as usual, She said, "No". So the practice of sending it was interrupted. In this connection Mother said, "I don't do anything of my own will; you laugh and weep according to your impulses and your desires are fulfilled".

During my illness I went to Vindhyachal for a change. I happened to meet Mother at Calcutta on my way and requested Her to go there too. She did not agree. On reaching Vindhyachal I passed one whole night weeping for Her. Just one day later Mother and *Pitaji* arrived there.

Mother remarked in this connection, "The aim of all religious practices is to sublimate all egoistic impulses and give them a unified direction towards the Divine. As soon as the ego ceases to function, the "Eternal Thou" will take its place.

From Vindhyachal I went to Chunar. Mother also went there. One day She said, "don't you often go out for a walk ?" I replied, "I am too weak to move about. How can I?" Next dawn She took me out with Her for a walk. On the level plains as well as on low hills we walked five to six miles and returned at 11 a.m. While coming downhill, I felt very weak and could hardly walk. Mother turned round and said,-"Our house is not far off." In ten minutes time an *Ekka* (*country vehicle drawn by a horse*) turned up quite unexpectedly in a small lane; otherwise we would have had to walk one mile more to reach a carriage-stand. I was afraid that the great strain due to such a long walk might aggravate my illness. But no such thing happened.

Mother said a little while later,-"Both in this work-a-day world as well as in the

spiritual sphere, patience is the crown of life."

At a little distance from my house *Pitaji*, Mother and myself sat on a lawn. Mother said She would like to bathe with the water drawn from the well near the fort. She began to press for it like a little child. I said, "Let me call my servant." She replied, "No, you must not." I felt puzzled. For in those places people finish drawing water from the wells before sundown. I felt sorry at the prospect that I would not be able to carry out Mother's wishes. But to my surprise a man with a lantern turned up at the well to draw water. He was persuaded to get water for Mother's bath.

Mother said,—"Whatever you seek can be obtained provided the thirst for the object of your desire pervades every fibre of your being."

During my illness I spent some days at Giridih. I became very restless for Mother one day, only to find to my surprise that Mother with Her whole party arrived the next morning.

After this change I returned to Calcutta. My physicians advised me to pass the remaining few days of my life at some healthy place. Even then there was spitting of blood when I coughed.

Mother ordered,—"Go back to your desk in the office and resume your duties there." I went to Dhaka both *Pitaji* and Mother accompanied me to the office and went back, after seating me in my own chair.

At that time Mr. Finlow was the Director of the Agricultural Department as well as my boss. He loved me and had a great regard for me. He told me,—"Do as much office work as you can; send the rest to my desk." He enquired, "Well, just tell me how you have recovered from that fell disease?" I said in reply, "It is through the grace of *Mataji* who lives at the Ramna ashram over there. She did not give me any medicine; though I followed the doctor's prescription, Her mercy was my only saving." He said,—"Amongst our people also one hears of similar instances. I believe what you say."

One evening an old neighbour of mine, aged about 80 years, Shyama Charan Mukherji by name, came to my place. When the conversation turned upon Mother, I said, "It is through Her grace alone that I happen to be still alive." He blurted out, "Can one through anybody's grace live longer than ones predestined span ?" In the course of this discussion he suddenly became silent and went away a few seconds later. He returned next morning to say, "Do you know why I left your place so abruptly? When we were talking about Mother, I found on the back rest of your chair an oval bright light like that of the sun. At that time there was darkness outside and no light in the room. I looked about and could not trace the source of such a light at that hour; so I decided to ponder over the phenomenon before telling you about it. After careful thought I have come to the conviction that everything is possible through the grace of a saintly person. Really, She has been protecting you all along."

A few months after first seeing Mother, Nirranjan told Her at Shah-bag, "Ma, we very frequently think that after your ashram is started, both myself and Jyotish will live there as *brahmacharis* during our next birth." Mother looked at me and asked—"Why are you silent ? Won't you be able to do so even in this body?"

Some three or four years later, when I resumed my duties after recovery, Mother

reminded me of the above talk and said, "Just think, how you have had your rebirth." Then Mother took a golden chain from Her neck and placed it on mine, saying, "From this day onward know it for certain that you are a *brahmachari* and that you have had your rebirth."

The little hut, eight by five and a half cubits, with verandahs on all sides, which I had created in the *ashram* According to my own ideas, was used by Mother. She would lie down on the two long verandahs on either side. She told me that I had been one of the *sannyasis* who used to dwell on that site, and the spot which I had unconsciously chosen for building the hut for Mother, was the very place where I had passed my life during my previous birth.

I feel that it was my unique good luck to find Mothers physical body resting on the very spot where I had carried on my *sadhana* during my previous existence. Probably my *karma* had directed such a course; for when I first saw Mother She appeared to me to embody all gods and goddesses in Her person and I felt that She had been my presiding Goddess all through the series of my previous births.

From the latter part of 1929 for full three years I used to go to Ramna very early in the morning with a desire to see Her first. For this purpose I rose from bed at 2 a.m. finished my usual prayers and worship by 4-30 a.m. and then went out. On certain days it so happened that I confused the two hands of my watch and misread the time and started much earlier. Hearing the clock strike in some adjacent house on the way, I realised that I had started far too early. In that case I would walk in the Ramna fields or sit at the gate of Ramna Kalibari, waiting for the light of dawn. I entered the Ashram at 5 a.m. and walked about in the fields with Mother, returning home at 10-30 or 11 a.m. On certain days I came back at 12 noon or even 1 p.m..

I never sat in Mothers presence. My whole body remained erect with a thrill of inner joy. When I was asked by anybody to sit down, I felt quite embarrassed. Mother would usually remain quite silent during our morning rounds. She broke Her silence only in exceptional cases. I used to follow Mothers footsteps without a word.

One day an old pleader, Babu Ashwini Kumar Guha Thakurta by name, came there for a morning walk and said to Mother,-"I have come, not to see you, Mother, but to meet your pet lamb and to observe with my own eyes how he comes to you so early every morning regardless of cold, heat, or rain and how he follows your every footstep in mute silence. The very sight gives me great delight." I told him,- "Kindly bless me so that I may pass the rest of my life in this manner." The old man clasped me to his bosom and said, "You are already a blessed fellow."

Sometimes there was a heavy downpour during the early hours of the morning, but I noticed on several occasions when I started with the name of Mother on my lips, the rainfall ceased for the time being and I had little difficulty in reaching Her place. During the rainy weather or through the dense fog of winter there was no obstacle whatever for me to walk with Mother every morning for full three hours.

There was a time when the Hindu-Moslem riot was rife at Dhaka. Before the outbreak started Mother one day exclaimed,-"Terrible ! Monstrous!" When I enquired about the import of such expressions She said,-"All over the town I hear wild shrieks, lamentation and wailing." But even when the communal bitterness was at its highest, I did not stop my

morning walks. My neighbour Sri Bhawani Prasad Neogi used to look upon me as his younger brother. He warned me one day, saying, "I remain very anxious for you till you return. Stabbing, murder, assaults are the order of the day throughout the city. Is it proper for you to walk out alone in such an atmosphere?"

I used to reflect that as Mother did not say anything against my morning visits, there was no fear for me. So I continued the usual routine of my life.

One day I was on the way to the Dhaka ashram. The street lamps were burning. There was no man in the street. I passed by the Dak Bungalow and walked about 100 yards further, when I noticed a stout fellow wrapped up in a piece of cloth slinking from behind a Mahogany tree; he was following me.

I asked him where he was going; he replied that he would go with me. I let him know that I was going to Ramna ashram; he said that he too would go there. His manner looked suspicious and I was very frightened. Suddenly, I screamed, "No, you must not go with me!" Saying this I strode on fast without looking in any direction. After I had gone far, I turned round and found that the man stood motionless like a log of wood on the spot where I had left him. When I reached the ashram, I found Mother standing at the gate with Her loving steadfast gaze directed towards me. I fell at Her feet and let Her know the details. She did not say a single word. I came to learn afterwards that there had been a murder in that very quarter.

TO DISTANT LANDS

We can observe in every walk of life that three things are necessary for success in the struggle for existence:- a noble aim, steady determination, whole-hearted devotion to duty. Even though in some cases, no tangible success may be achieved by these virtues, at least the disposition to do good and substantial work is developed thereby which bears fruit at the earliest opportunity.

After returning to my duties in the office I passed three years in full harness. One day at the ashram Mother took a flower, and plucking away all its petals, She said to me, "Many of your *samskaras* have dropped away and many more will fall off like the petals of this flower, till I shall remain as your main prop, just like the one stalk of this flower; do you understand?" Saying this She began to laugh. I enquired, "Ma, how can I reach that state?" She replied, "Every day try to live with this idea; you need not do anything else."

Really speaking, this thought sank deep into my soul and remained with me throughout the regular routine of my life. All the scattered thoughts were gradually directed to one end. Though various ideas often brought about distraction, yet there was great eagerness in me to keep myself steadily fixed to the master-thought that Mother was there in me like my backbone. From this I became convinced that what a man achieved by constant religious practice, by mental isolation from the objects of sense, could be accomplished through the power of one word from a saintly person.

After some six or seven months Mother said to me one day during our morning walk, "Listen, your active life is coming to a close." I heard it but it did not evoke any deep response in me.

At that time Sri Bhagawan Chandra Brahmachari too used to say to me very frequently, "Get ready, a saint is coming down from the Himalayas to take you away." He had a childlike nature and I thought he was making fun.

A few months later I went on leave for four months. I was on the look out for a hill station to have a change. In the meantime on the 2nd of June, 1932, at about 10-30 P.M. Mother called me through Brahmachari Jogesh and enquired if I could accompany Her. I wanted to know where She desired me to go. Her reply was, "Anywhere I choose to." I kept silent. She added, "Why are you silent?" I mused over the fact that I could not inform anybody about the matter. So under the pull of the world, I said, "I shall have to get money from home." Mother said, "Collect from here what you can get." I said, "All right", with my lips; but I felt that my son and wife peeped out from the depth of my heart saying, "Where are you going, leaving us all?"

However, with one blanket, one coverlet, one durrie, one loin-cloth I started with Mother and *Pitaji*. On reaching the station Mother said, "Book tickets right up to the terminus of this line." We booked for Jagannathgunge. On reaching there next day Mother said, "Cross over to the other bank." From there we left for Katihar. I had only a few rupees left, but quite unexpectedly I met an old friend who gave me Rs.100/-, and a large

quantity of fruits and sweets. From there we went to Lucknow, and then boarded the Dehradun Express. On the following day, after arriving at Dehradun we rested at a *Dharmasala* . It was a new place. all people were strangers and everything appeared new to me.

Mother said, "I find everything old." Where we should go next was quite uncertain. In the afternoon *Pitaji* and I went out for a walk and came to know that there was a *Kali* temple nearby. We went there and were told that some three or four miles away in the village of Raipur stood a Shiva temple which was quite solitary and a fit place for a secluded life. By drift of circumstances one Pandeji of Raipur came to meet us. We had a talk with him and accompanied him to Raipur the next morning. *Pitaji* liked the place. When Mother's opinion was sought, She said, "You settle it yourselves, for me all places are good." From the morning of Wednesday, June 8, 1932, both Mother and *Pitaji* began to live in the temple.

SRI SRI MA.

It is beyond our common intelligence to comprehend what Mother stands for and what She is in reality Though She always says, "I am only a senseless daughter of yours". Still in all Her ways of life, in Her ever delightful *Lila* amongst us, all the powers of the Divine find expression in tangible forms.

In Mother, we find in Her a perennial fountain of joy and sweetness though She is surrounded day and night by the noise and bustle and a thousand entreaties of all classes of people. Her calm and serene looks, Her gracious, ever smiling responses to all queries, Her playful humour, bring satisfaction and delight to every soul. Her ways of life are so universal and all embracing that She may be called Motherly Love incarnate.

Some say that She is the Supreme Goddess of the Universe in human form. Some are of opinion that She has reached perfection through spontaneous psychic evolution without any effort on Her part. To us She appears to be what everybody considers Her to be. At the first sight of Her one becomes animated with a religious fervour, even if one happens to be almost impervious to spiritual ideas. In Her presence thoughts of God and His Glory flourish with all their brilliance in hearts as dry as dust and the vibrations of one universal, all-pervading life overpower one's heart as it were with endless surges like a vast ocean of bliss.

When at one time She was asked as to who Her preceptor was, or from whom She had Her initiation, She remarked, "In earlier years my parents were my guides; in household life my husband; and now in every situation of life all men and things of the world are my *Guru*. But know it for certain, the one Supreme Being is the only Guide for all."

From the standpoint of worldly people Mother is an ideal daughter, wife and mother; to an aspirant after spiritual life Her words and behaviour have deep significance indicating various modes of spiritual culture and of Yogic practices as well as the basic truths of dualism, monism and dualistic monism and other philosophic doctrines. The physical changes that become manifest in Her body lead one to the inference that She is a confirmed *Vaishnava*; in the Tantric worship of *Shiva*, *Kali*, *Durga* and other gods and goddesses or in the performance of Vedic religious sacrifices She has evoked admiration from eminent philosophers of the East and the West. The only difference that is disclosed between Mother and the Great Masters who have reached perfection through *Bhakti Yoga*, *Jnana Yoga* or *Karma Yoga* in their special lines, lies in the fact that in Mother all the three paths of *sadhana* have reached a wonderful synthesis. It is through this harmony of the various modes of approach to the Divine that all types of people receive inspiration from Her presence.

Her genial and sweet appearance, Her uncommon patience and endurance, Her spirit of sacrifice and simplicity, Her ever-joyful, humorous ways of dealing with men, women and children, Her unsullied, clear vision, meaning good to all living beings, Her even-handed dealings, softened by love for all men irrespective of caste, creed, community and nationality, Her absolute freedom from pleasure, pain and the like, make Her a unique figure in modern times; one cannot say that She has attained perfection through self-effort;

for, those who have watched Her from Her infancy assert that She has been the same in Her thoughts and actions all through Her life. Nobody has yet noticed that She has performed any spiritual or religious exercise of any kind.

Those natural or super-natural phenomena that become manifest in Her, through Her bodily expressions, are but the spontaneous outcome of Her desire to secure the welfare of all human beings. Those manifestations do not depend upon Her will nor do they function against it, nor are they the result of any devotional effort on Her part. When clarified butter with other oblations are offered to the fire on the altar, the flame flares up by a natural law, but the perfume that emanates, purifies and enlivens the whole atmosphere. After a little while no trace of the sacrificial offerings remains, but the flames keep on burning in purity and brightness. In exactly the same manner when Mothers devotees bring their offerings to Her feet with the best of their love and reverence, the very touch of these gifts, causes the fountain of Her heart to burst forth, like the natural flow of milk from the mother's breast at the touch of her infants lips. So in the case of Mother, Her speech, Her looks, Her face all become moistened with love for Her children; and with a divine flame Her face brightens up for a time and soon after resumes its normal composure.

There is no conflict in Her, no urge to action or inaction disturbs the serenity of Her will. She is completely enveloped by a glow of that Supreme Truth which forms the bed-rock of all principles and practices of religion and of the moral codes of the world and which has been revealed to the human mind in different ages for the good of the universe. A glimpse of that Truth, a suggestion thereof, shines forth in all Her actions, words and songs. Her life illustrates the great fact how man, while doing his everyday duties meekly, joyfully, and maintaining social relations fully can yet advance on the spiritual plane.

A time has arrived for us to take stock of the amount of good that is being done to our social life by crowds of people that are swelling the number of *sannyasis* and *sadhus*. Stepping out of the boundaries of family life and the pale of civic rights and responsibilities, to try to open up easy paths of spiritual uplift for family, society and nation is not a very simple matter. There are persons who have reached high levels of spiritual greatness by retiring from the world and living a life of seclusion in solitary ashrams or mountain caves. Their individual greatness does not pull up the general level of culture of the masses of people to any appreciable extent, nor are the standards of mass-life raised higher. Through their inspiration many ashrams are established in different centres of the country, the spires of the temples erected therein may shoot up high into the sky, the glamour of worship and the hymns and devotional music sung morning and evening induce many people from far and near to spend more and more money upon the enterprise, free distribution of *prasad* may attract crowds of hungry men like flies from the surrounding regions; but the influence of such institutions built up at the expense of so much labour and money hardly goes to make our social life healthier and brighter, neither by spreading knowledge and literacy nor greater love for men nor again, by fostering a more ardent desire for the life Divine.

Our society is getting more and more crippled through mutual jealousy, rivalry and petty squabbles over trifles. Those who are strong at heart with a spirit of social responsibility and selfless service hardly find scope for real and efficient social work, being half paralysed by stagnant, social ideas of the class seclusion of orthodox olden

times. On the other hand one meets at every step opposition to all efforts at reform. The culture by which physical and mental health is made secure, which makes man strong and hardy through realisation of Gods grace in all the walks of life, which refines and transforms our narrow, selfish impulses into an unselfish spirit of service and self-sacrifice irrespective of caste and creed is fast disappearing from our country and there is hardly any doubt that the scope and field of such culture is gradually shrinking amongst us.

It is time for us to enquire as to what has brought about such a state of affairs. We have fallen into the narrow grooves of time-worn cults and prejudices. The ideas and ideals of olden times and those of the present age have met face to face and have produced a slack-water in our social and religious life. Mother stands at the parting of ways.

We always find in Mother's life and in all Her activities an ardent desire to secure the welfare of the world, throwing the burden of looking after Her body upon others and releasing Herself completely from all cares for Her own bodily comforts and ease. She has thus made Herself absolutely free to advance the cause of the helpless and oppressed, of the sick and destitute, as well as to help the rich and powerful who ever suffer from the various physical and mental maladies of their surfeited and pampered lives.

Her life is an eye-opener to us all. She shows by Her everyday activities how we can link every minute detail of life with the Infinite and how we can cultivate a new spirit, a new outlook in our relations with men and things and make this world a place of new joy and hope and peace.

From the worldly standpoint She possesses nothing to call Her own. All places of the common man, temples, *dharmasalas*, public ashrams and huts are now Her only places of residence,-places where all people from the highest to the lowest may flock freely to Her without any obstruction. She has devoted Herself wholly and completely to the good of the world. All living beings are Her own kith and kin. She says, as mentioned previously, "I find the whole world to be one vast garden, you are all flowers blooming in this garden with your individual beauty and grace. I move about from one corner of it to another. What makes you feel so sad when I leave you, only to be in the midst of your brothers over there?"

On another occasion She said, "I have no need of doing or saying anything; there never was any need, neither is there now, nor will there ever be in future. What you found manifested in me in the past, what you see now and what will be observed in the future is only for the good of you all. If you think that there is something peculiarly my own, I must tell you that the whole world is my own."

The glories of the creative activities of the Universal Mother that we find revealed everywhere in this world, can be noticed in all Her words and actions, in Her social intercourse with all classes of people everywhere. To those who are devoted to Her, She is like a little child demanding tokens of their love for Her; to those who are distressed owing to disease or other worldly troubles, Her motherly anxiety to give them relief takes shape in various acts of redress. All these attitudes proceed from a reservoir of a mighty spiritual power always working in the background.

She has shown equal regard and reverence for all religions, for all social institutions and laws, for all types of education. This illustrates the great truth that everything in this world is the embodiment of one Supreme Being. She says, "All religious thoughts flow in

one direction, as all streams flow into one ocean; and we are all one." If anybody puts the question to Her: "To what caste do you belong ? Where is your home?", Mother at once answers with a laugh, "From your worldly standpoint this body belongs to East Bengal and is Brahmin by caste; but if you think apart from these artificial distinctions, you will understand that this body is one of the members of the one human family."

At times She has been heard to say, "Have faith in this body. Your whole hearted faith will open your eyes." She also says from time to time, "I know nothing. I say what you pour into my ears." And then, -"This body is but a toy doll; just as the Master desires to play with it through you all, it goes on playing."

From these and other remarks it is evident that in Her Person the power that lies behind this phenomenal world has assumed shape. Her activities emanate from one fountainhead and flow back into it. She has no sense of duality. She often says, "You are the epitome of the Universe"; at another time She was heard to declare, "I am Truth Infinite."

On one occasion She said, "Is there any essential difference between myself and yourself? Because He is, the conception of I and you has sprung up." If with staunch faith, strong devotion and a heart overflowing with love, anyone of you can exclaim, "Mother, come, come to me Mother, I cannot pass my days without you," rest assured, the Universal Mother will spread out Her arms towards you and clasp you to Her bosom. 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,-She will take the brunt of all your responsibilities from your shoulders and give you strength to bear the cross.