

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

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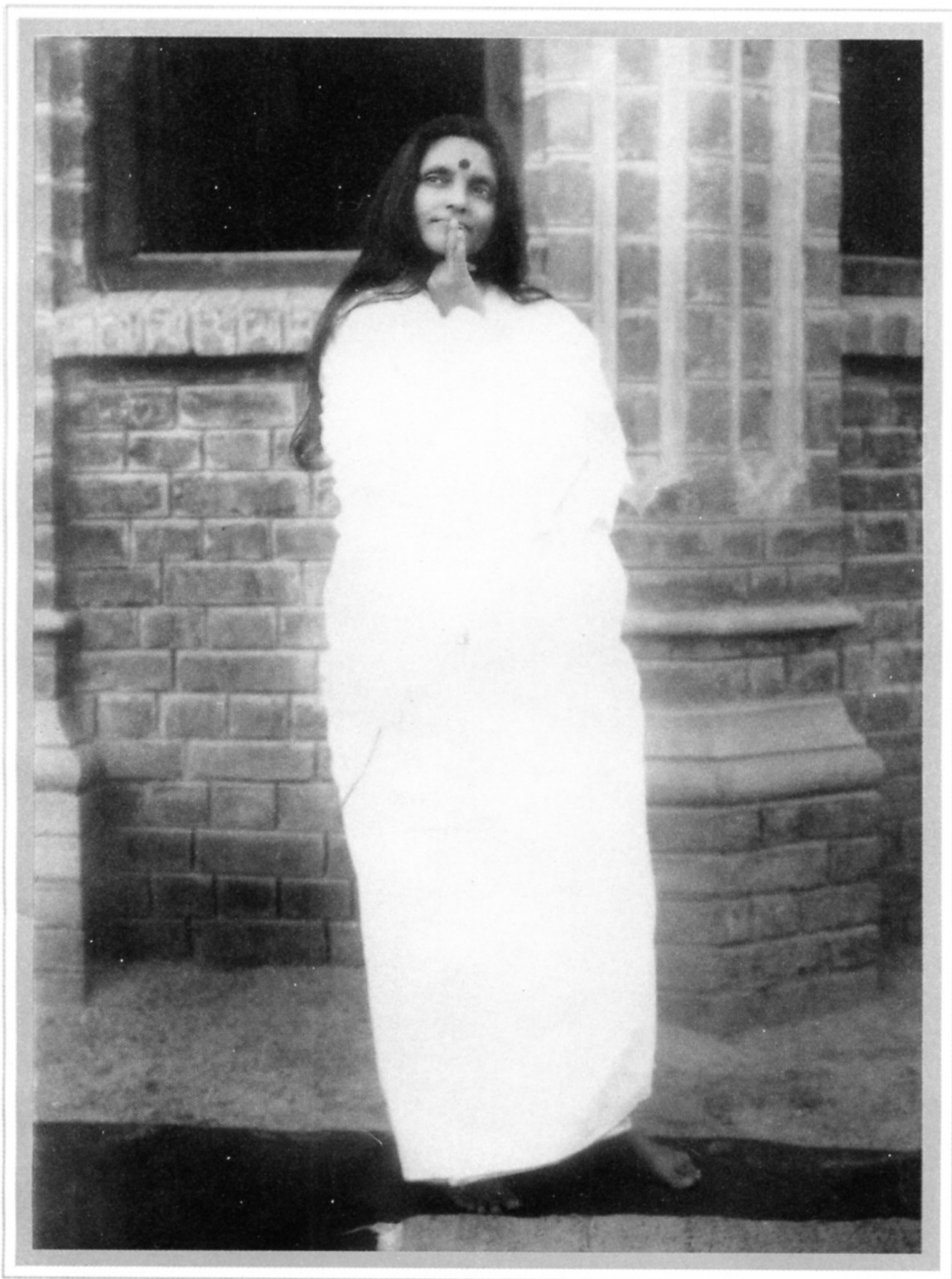


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CONTENTS

1.	Matri-Vani	1
2.	Pages from Ma Anandamayee Prasang — <i>Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupta</i>	3
3.	The Divine Mother — <i>Dr. Prem Lata Srivastav</i>	9
4.	My experience of Anandamayee Ma — <i>Antoniette Ford</i>	17
5.	On the Divine <i>Leelas</i> — <i>Prof. Bireshwar Ganguly</i>	18
6.	The fundamentals of Indian Philosophy — <i>P.C. Mehta</i>	24
7.	Bring me home (A song)	31
8.	Our sixth trip to India — <i>Shraddha Davenport</i>	32
9.	Ma Anandamayee — As revealed to me — <i>Dr. Rakesh Kumar</i>	37

MATRI VANI

Without fail pray to God. He drives away all sorrow.

* * * * *

Rest assured the Will of the Almighty reigns supreme. At all times rely wholly on Him.

* * * * *

It is man's duty ever to meditate upon the One Reality.

* * * * *

He should let his thoughts dwell on God as much as possible. His feelings are fine and he expresses them in beautiful, sweet sounding words. But does he practice *Japa* and read the *Gita* regularly ? He would do well to devote some time daily to the study of the Scriptures.

* * * * *

Such is the Will of the Almighty. Verily, whatever comes to pass is an expression of His Will. Abiding in patience perform your duty. Depend on God absolutely and hold Him in remembrance — Him and Him alone !

* * * * *

It is possible to practice God's Name under the most adverse circumstances. He causes everything to happen and hence is ever near.

* * * * *

Silent *Japa* should be engaged in all times. One must not waste breath uselessly: whenever one has nothing special to do, one should silently practice *Japa* in rhythm with one's breathing — in fact this exercise ought to go on continuously until doing *Japa* has become as natural as breathing.

* * * * *

It is of great value to read sacred texts and books of wisdom. Speak the truth. Bear in mind that God's Name is He Himself in one form - let it be your inseparable companion. Try your utmost never to remain without Him. The more intense and continuous your efforts to dwell in His presence the greater is the likelihood of your growing joyful and serene. When your mind becomes quite vacant, at least try to fill it with the awareness of God or His contemplation.

* * * * *

Let the thought of God remain with you and do service with the conviction that while serving whomsoever it may be, you are serving the ONE who alone exists.

* * * * *

When there is constant effort to grow into awareness of THAT which IS, there is hope that in time this awareness may become permanent.

* * * * *

Always keep yourself in a state, which is favourable to the contemplation of the Divine. Thus, the right sustenance for the mind will be provided.

* * * * *

One should attempt to dwell in the thought of the Supreme without a break. Then only full enlightenment may come.

* * * * *

Put your trust in God and let your mind be engaged in *Japa* and meditation.

* * * * *

At every moment sustain the flow of His Name and the consciousness of His Presence. Never be without Him.

* * * * *

Accepting all conditions of life — whatever they be — as His gift, abide in fortitude and do service.

* * * * *

Endeavour to keep your thought centred at all times on the Divine Name or Form that appeals to you most. Let your mind be turned exclusively towards God — then, and then only, may you hope for peace.

* * * * *

How can a man who is harbouring thoughts of suicide expect to become a sannyasi ? The idea of suicide does not even enter the mind of those who consider themselves candidates for sannyasa. A spirit of extreme self-denial and renunciation is the attitude that affords the greatest aid towards this exalted state. Vow to be truthful in speech and refrain from letter-writing. Do not talk to women nor allow your gaze to rest on them.

* * * * *

To live in the joy that springs from the mind's constant occupation with things divine is man's duty. Thinking of anything other than God is what creates sorrow. Be it *mantra japa*, be it meditation, worship, the perusal of sacred texts, the simple awareness of God or alike, be it kirtan or religious music — all these are different modes of the Divine Presence. One should always remain engaged in one of them, make it a point never to be without Him. Bear this in mind ! This is what this little child requests from Her friends and also Her fathers and mothers.



PAGES FROM
"Ma Anandamayee Prasang"

by

Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta

[Translated from Bengali]

17th May, 1941, Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun

I started the discussion with Ma.

I : Ma what is meant by *mantra chaitanya* ?

Ma : Well, suppose I call you, saying "Baba", you immediately respond ; because the name and he whose name it is, are not separated. Thus, if one calls someone by his name, the holder of the name will reply. So also, if by repeating the mantra the deity of the mantra or one's *Ista Deva** is clearly perceived, then the mantra is said to be alive (*Chetan*). This is what is called *mantra chaitanya*.

I : What is this clear perception of the deity of the mantra of *Ista Deva* ? Does the *sadhaka* look upon his *Ista* as distinct from himself, or does he see himself within his *Ista* ?

Ma : Although to start with the *sadhaka* sees himself as separate from his *Ista Deva*, yet when the essential meaning (*tatwa*) of the mantra or of the *Ista Deva* becomes revealed to him, then the *sadhaka* realizes himself to be within this *tatwa*. This is why it is said, is it not, that one has to become one with the deity, one is worshipping. By worshipping his *Ista*, the *sadhaka* thus worships himself, in other words, the *Ista* and the *sadhaka* become one.

I : I have heard it said that when a *sadguru* gives initiation, he makes the mantra alive (*chetan*). But our experience is, although we repeat the mantra in *japa*, no revelation of the *Ista* takes place. Are we then to understand that our mantra has not been rendered powerful to arouse our consciousness ?

Ma : No, why should this be so ? There are various kinds of *diksha*. There is a type of initiation by which the disciple is radically transformed instantly. As soon as this type of *diksha* is received, the physical body of the disciple merges completely in the five elements and he attains full Self-realization. This is called Supreme *Diksha*.

*. Principal deity of a *Sādhaka*

"Initiation by a *Mahapurusha* or *sadguru* may be called a special type of *diksha*. Here the Guru bestows the mantra upon the disciple after infusing his own power into it. As a result of such an initiation the disciple gradually gets free from his *samskaras* and realizes his True Self in due course. To become thus liberated from one's accumulated *samskaras* takes time. Some people are of the opinion that a disciple can attain liberation within at the most three births. Even if the disciple is not conscious of the power of the mantra, yet it does its work within him. That is why it is said that when a *sadhaka* has taken refuge in a *sadguru*, whether he exerts himself or not, his progress cannot be stopped. All the same, if after receiving the *mantra* he faithfully performs his spiritual exercises, he will be able to advance speedily."

"There is yet another kind of *diksha*, which is a sort of normal initiation, such as *diksha* from the family guru. Now the family guru may not possess the inner power with which to bestow the *mantra*, nevertheless every *mantra* has its own inherent power. Because every *mantra* is in itself fruitful. At some time or other, one may become illumined by the constant repetition of the *mantra*. Because the power inherent in the *mantra* can lead him onwards. But this process is very slow indeed."

"Apart from this, there is also scope for repeated initiations, one after another. For instance, a Guru may give *mantra* to his disciple, by the recitation of which progress up to a certain stage is made; then, to induce further advancement, the Guru may give him another *mantra*. In this way, before being ready for the ultimate *diksha*, several preliminary initiations may be given. Such initiations by successive stages may also spontaneously arise within the disciple in course of time, that is to say, the very first *diksha* given by the Guru can by itself provide all that is necessary to lead the disciple onwards from one stage to another."

"Alternately, the Guru can himself appear and by initiating the disciple again and again, take him along the path of progress by stages. The fact that the Guru himself may no longer be in the body cannot be an obstacle to successive initiations step by step, because a Guru can never die. At the appropriate time and as necessity arises, he can always manifest himself to the disciple."

18th May, 1941

In the afternoon, sitting near Ma, I again raised the topic of *diskha* which was discussed yesterday.

I said : "Ma, yesterday you divided initiation into three categories, namely Supreme or Ultimate initiation, medium initiation and general initiation.

Ma : Yes, this division was more or less according to final results obtained through initiation. *Diksha* may of course be of many types.

I : What is meant by *sabija diksha* (initiation with seed mantra) and *nirbija diksha* (initiation without seed manta) ?

Ma : This may also be called initiation without form (*nirākāra diksha*) and initiation with form (*sākāra*). Or one may also look upon the former as initiation without a seed mantra by which the disciple gets rid of his conditioning and is established in the Supreme state. Here all the inherent *samskaras* of the disciple are washed away and obliterated and he is established in his true Self.

The Ultimate aim of initiation by obtaining the seed mantra is also the same; but here the disciple is guided through stages by worshipping a form or deity to the final stage.

I : If all *samskaras* are extinguished entirely through initiation without *sabija diksha*, how can then the relationship of Guru and disciple be established ?

Ma : In what is called the Supreme State or Self-realization, nothing at all is destroyed. I have already explained to you that in this exalted state it cannot be said what remains and what does not remain.

I : Ma, so far as this state of realization of the Infinite is concerned, we cannot form any clear idea of anything in particular. So it is better to deal with one aspect at a time. I understand that everything is possible in the state of Self-realization. But leaving this aside, please do tell us something about how successive generations of Gurus are established. Is there no *samskaras* at the root of this creation of a traditional order ?

Ma : I have said that in some people a lingering desire for acquiring reputation or praise remains dormant and later this trend may manifest in various ways. It may also happen that whatever is caused by *samadhi* is present in a person, yet none of it is exhibited outwardly. All the inward action of *samadhi* is quietly taking place, yet it cannot be perceived outside; that is to say, the body is not in any way incapacitated and lying motionless due to *samadhi* as is ordinarily the case.

"On the other hand, such bodily signs are indeed exhibited. The reason for this is that his desire for acquiring some status and praise, which is present in a subtle way, results in outward manifestation of *samadhi* or exhibition of supernormal powers (*vibhuti*). Although one may not be least aware of such feelings within, yet they do exist and are manifested in such a way so that people may pay homage and respect. But if someone has not the least ambition of this kind, then although he may acquire any number of supernormal powers, yet there will be no outward sign of it at all."

"Similarly, from a desire for name and fame an *acharya* or a particular sect of *acharyas* may come up. Alternately, someone may be an *acharya* or guru spontaneously by his inner qualification."

I : It appears that if someone becomes an *acharya* by his inner qualification, probably no separate sect or community is thereby created ?

Ma : No, why not ? By this type of *acharya* also a sect may be created. Look, if everything could be achieved by one mantra and by one particular *bhava*, why should there be so many different mantras ? The reason is that at different times, due to the individual needs of persons, *acharyas* have come into being to elucidate different paths that lead to liberation. This is why there are now so many sects and religious communities.

I : Does the status of an *acharya* correspond to a particular level of existence ?

Ma : Yes, some may attain to a certain status and become qualified to act as *acharya*. But this does not mean that they remain *acharyas* for all times. They may progress from this level to a still higher one. Then someone else may also become qualified to take their place.

I : Can it not therefore be construed that *diksha* without seed-mantra means an initiation through which the seed of such a *diksha* is not passed on through a succession of disciples ? And a *sabija diksha* is initiation, the seed of which is passed on through a succession of disciples ?

Ma : Yes, this also may be possible.

During our conversation a few ladies and gentlemen arrived, so our talk came to a halt. It looked as if one of the new arrivals was very unhealthy. His relatives as well as he himself started talking to Ma about his illness. He was afflicted with a pain in his chest, which troubled him a lot. He had consulted any number of doctors and taken diverse medicines but there was no improvement.

After recounting all this to Ma, he ended by saying : "Ma, now I am appointing you alone as my physician."

Smilingly, Ma repeated the words : "I am appointing you alone as my physician." Then after remaining silent for a while, She said : "Look, this body cannot prescribe any other medicine save one : The panacea for all ailments is the Name of God. You must repeat His Name, take refuge in Him alone, and all your diseases will be cured. The illnesses and afflictions that people suffer are the result of their own previous actions. Your past actions were such that due to them your illness cannot be cured and you do not derive any benefit from medicines. Often it can be observed that some people continue to commit evil deeds, yet do not suffer any setback. Even if one does not immediately undergo any suffering as a result of

such misdeeds, yet the consequences remain suspended. The balance sheet of evil deeds is stored away in minute details and the results have to be experienced in due course."

"All this suffering from disease or grief you must look upon as God's grace. He has created us and sent us to live in the world; and having arrived here we have completely forgotten Him. So, from time to time He inflicts pain on us to draw us back to Him. In His presence there is supreme peace and supreme joy. He is constantly attracting people towards Him, so as to bestow on them this peace and joy. Those who are guilty of evil deeds He attracts towards Himself by inflicting pain again and again. And those whose previous actions were just, He attracts them towards Himself with love and compassion without causing them any pain. Thus all the sorrows and sufferings you behold in the world are an expression of His Divine Mercy, because it causes people to develop aversion to worldly enjoyments and turn their minds towards Him."

"Again consider, you are now worried about your bodily ailments and are most eager to find out ways and means to cure them. But supposing this particular illness is cured - what then ? If one ailment disappears, some other disease might afflict you after some time or perhaps some other sorrow might come upon you. Such is the very nature of the world. This is why I constantly insist that you should continuously call out to God and endeavour to realise Him. Once you have attained Him, no sorrow or suffering can possibly approach you. You will then abide in eternal peace and joy."

Ma now asked him : Have you taken *diksha* (initiation) ?

Gentleman : No.

Ma : Have you ever recited God's name ? Have you ever read religious books, such as the Ramayana or the Mahabharata ?

Gentleman : No, I have heard of them, but not read them.

Ma : Well, what sort of work appeals to you ?

Gentlemen : I like most of all to look after my worldly possessions, but often even this does not seem attractive to me. Due to my illness I cannot do justice even to this work.

Ma : Baba, I am going to give you a few directions and asking you to endeavour to follow them. I am not asking you to follow these instructions in order to raise any false hope. You should try to follow them only because it is the *Kheyal* of this daughter of yours. Twice daily, before meals, you must repeat the Lord's Name. Not for very long, just one hour or half an hour a day will suffice. You may take whichever Name you like best, but it must be the same Name each day before

meals. At other times you may choose any other God's Name. And every single day you must read some portion of a sacred book, whether it be Ramayana, Bhagavata or Mahabharata. If any day you find that you cannot spare the time due to some pressure of work, then just to observe the rule, you may read at least one line or even a few words. Do not allow the rule to be broken ! If due to illness you feel quite unable to read, then (glancing at his wife) you, Ma, must read aloud and let your husband listen. Do not stop reading even if he falls asleep. You should read for as long as it is the usual rule. You are his wife, his companion, joined to him before the Lord (*dharma patni*), so you must help him to fulfil his religious duties. If you do not help him in this, what is the use of being his wife ?"

"You must keep your mind on God. How can this be done ? You must hang pictures of God in various forms on the walls of the room in which you stay, and glancing at them from time to time, you should think : "These are all the likenesses of God." Further, keep photos of great beings in your room and when you gaze at them and read the life stories of those great men you may feel : "Oh, how many hardships have these mahatmas undergone in order to realize God !" Then the desire will awaken in you also to do likewise. Besides that, it is also good to keep pictures of saints and sages in your house because this will exercise its influence on you. Considerable inspiration can be derived from their sight and touch."

"Furthermore, when you go out, whatever you behold, you should regard as an image of God. Suppose you see a beautiful flower, try to imagine : "Oh, here is my Lord, blossoming forth in the guise of this lovely flower. "If you do not perceive all this in such a way look at it with greed or desire, there is danger of your mind being soiled and hence a process of cleansing and purification will be necessary."

"At first all this repetition of the Lord's Name and reading of spiritual books may not be to your liking, but inspite of this you must try to do with great regularity."

Ma said all this in such a sweet compassionate manner that all who were present were simply charmed while listening to Her. The gentleman who had come to get some medicine for his various ailments also appeared to be highly satisfied when he departed.



THE DIVINE MOTHER

[Continued from before]

—Dr. Prem Lata Srivastav

Dhaka—Siddheshwari

While returning from Ramna Kali Mandir with Ma and Bholanath, Baul Basak used to go somewhere else frequently. On Bholanath's asking Basak said he frequented the Siddheshwari temple. Ma indicated to keep quiet as Bholanath glanced at Her for Her reaction.

One night, Baul Basak took them to Siddheshwari. To reach that place at that time one had to tread through rough, uneven roads, to reach the ancient temple. A huge Peepal tree lay uprooted in front of the temple, exactly the same landscape as Ma had once envisioned at Bajitpur. On Her visit, Ma touched the tree and after darshan of Siddheshwari Kali, returned back with Bholanath.

That day onwards, Ma frequently visited Siddheshwari. Sometimes bhog was also offered to the deity.

Ma said, "One afternoon this body was packing things for a short journey somewhere, though I knew not the destination. While I was putting together the articles of daily use, Bholanath dropped in and asked me : "What are you doing?" I said, "Let's go to Siddheshwari." Bholanath didn't object. So we went to the temple that afternoon. There, I had a *kheyal* that I would stay there for 7-8 days. When I expressed my desire to Bholanath, he said, he would not be able to stay because of his duty in Shahbag gardens. I said, "That's not a problem. Siddheshwari Ma is with this body."

Bholanath acceded to Ma's request. Ma's father used to stay with Her during daytime, while Bholanath used to stay with Her over night. Happiness knew no bounds as they sojourned at the Siddheshwari temple.

Before dawn, Ma used to bathe and enter the temple. And then, she would be there the whole day and night, without drinking a drop of water or eating a morsel of food. Baul Babu, who taught in a local school during day time, would bring fruits after nightfall for puja. Baul braved the muddy pathway, following rains, singing in praise of Goddess Kali all the way to bring those offerings for puja. These were offered to the deity which were later distributed as *prasad* at midnight to the devotees present at the temple. Initially, Ma Herself used to make the offerings.