

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

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

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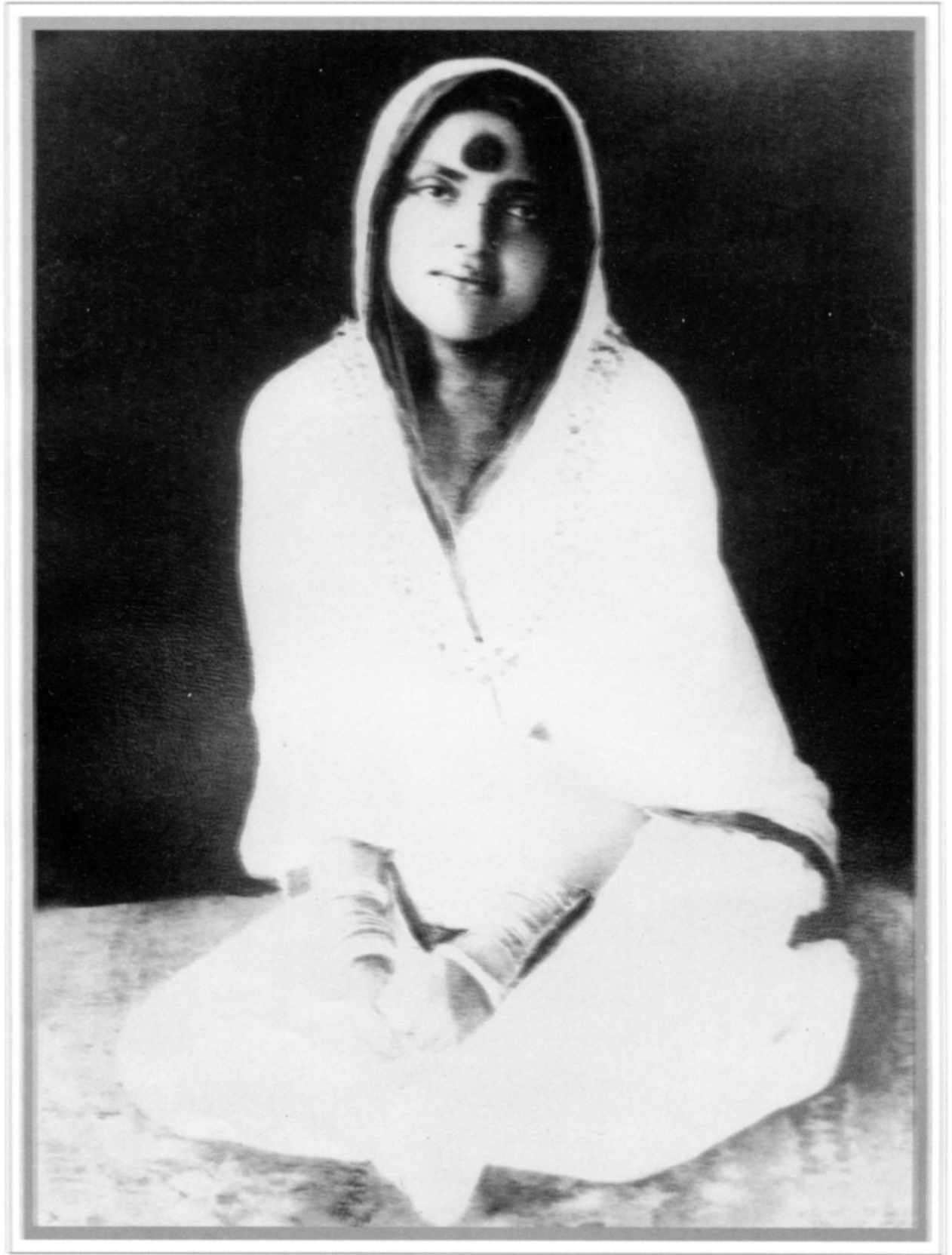
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MATRI VANI

On the occasion of the death of a devotee's wife, Mataji said:

"Write to him : It will certainly not do for him to be utterly broken-hearted. At this time who is to take care of his sons and daughters? In all things he will now have to be both mother and father to his children. Like a hero, courageous, steady and serene he must attend to every duty as it comes up and have only fortitude, patience and more fortitude. What has befallen him lies in the nature of this world. The Self can never perish. In all beings dwells He as the breath of life, as the Self. The body only is subject to change; body means that which slips away, which does not remain for ever. That his mind will be unable to realize this at the moment is of course true, for it is characteristic of the mind to wail and lament, to reel in agony. Nevertheless he will have to take himself in hand and master the situation. What other remedy is there?

* * * * *

On learning of the death of a *bhakta's* mother, Mataji said:

Write to my friend: "The fortunate, the blessed one * has ascended to the abode of peace leaving behind her husband, her sons and daughters. To weep and mourn the loss of her body is not right, although it is natural that tears should flow. You will have to resort to fortitude. Just as parents are always eager to make the happiness and peace of their children their own, it is equally the duty of children to adopt a similar attitude with regard to their parents. Those who have not attained to the final Goal but are still struggling on the way and live in this world identifying themselves with the body, cause themselves much pain by becoming agitated and crying out in anguish; it is indeed deep suffering. Those who have passed away have no means of expressing it, yet this anguish troubles them. Nobody wishes to cause distress to his loved-ones. Recall to mind : Your mother is as your self, the one who bore you-her peace should be your peace. What has happened is God's dispensation and all men are His very own. Where and how, on what path and in what state He keeps anyone depends

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- *. A play upon words : 'body in Bengali is '*sharir*' and the verb '*shoray*' to go away, to move away.
 - *. Mataji calls all children and unmarried people Her friends.
 - *. According to Hindu tradition it is most auspicious for a woman to die while her husband and all her children are alive.

on the will of the Almighty.

Do not let anyone notice that you are depressed. Serve everyone in a beautiful and graceful manner. Feel that God has entrusted you with the service of the family. Do not allow your father to become gloomy. To see the shadow of grief on the faces of his children will intensify his unhappiness greatly; mindful of this, be careful to remain composed in your father's presence.

* * * * *

On hearing the news of someone's illness, Mataji had the following communicated to the sufferer:

Depend on Him absolutely. In whatever circumstances you may find yourself sustain the remembrance of Him only. Let this be your prayer: "Lord, Thou hast been pleased to come to me in the form of sickness. Grant me the strength to bear it, gird me with patience, and give me the understanding that it is Thou who art dwelling with me in this guise!"

* * * * *

If you do not allow your thoughts to stray from His Lotus-feet there is hope of your being saved from all manner of temptations. Man's duty is to awaken to true humanity and to cast aside his animal propensities; to choose what is excellent and to relinquish the merely pleasurable. Let your mind be like a beautiful flower that may be offered to the Lord in worship. In very truth man's sole duty is the search after Self-realization. With but the One Supreme Friend, you my friend, must try to avoid the ties of worldly friendship.

* * * * *

Those who prompted by a deep yearning for the vision of the Supreme Being tread this long and difficult path can do so only by His Grace. To take refuge in patience is the only acceptable attitude of mind. One must never lose hope. Wherever you may be placed and under whatever circumstances, let your thinking be centred in Him and in Him alone.

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PAGES FROM
"Ma Anandamayee Prasang"

(Translated from Bengali)

– Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta

Ancient history of Ramna ashram

After having something Ma began to stroll in the ashram compound. We also began to move around with Ma. Discussion was raised about the topic of *sadhus* from which countries used to do *sadhana* in the ancient days in this ashram. Ma said- "Bengali *sadhus* were of course here, apart from that 'Hindustani' and 'Madrasi' *sadhus* were also here. From the names of the *sadhus*, whose *samadhis* (burial grounds) are said to be here, it is understood to which places they belonged. It is learnt that there exists *samadhi* of Golap Giri in this ashram, of Harchandra Giri in the Kalibari and of Chain Giri in the Governor's house. When this body used to remain at Shahbagh then it used to come after the evening hours to *Kalibari* to see the *arati*. While coming to see the *arati* I used to remain huddled there for hours together. At that time I used to see those *sadhus*. Some one was standing on the ground, some one was sitting in the void in *asana* posture, all this used to be clearly seen by me. I used to see particularly four *sadhus*. Apart from that, there was a special type of mangoe tree in this ashram, whose fruits used to come in off periods and looked also different. When I travelled to Madras I saw there that type of mango. Therefore, it seems that some *sadhus* from Madras brought mango from there and the tree was made out of that. Railways were not during those days. The question may be put how could the *sadhus* travel for such long distances. It is believed that *sadhu* used to more about on the air-way.

I- Whenever I met Baba Vishuddhananda he used to ask about the watery areas and jungles of Ramna. Perhaps he was taken from here to Vindhyachal on the air route.

Ma- Yes, there was dense forest here at that time.

After this discussion started about *Siddha* Ma, who had come today. Sri Surendra Nath Banerjee told Ma that during her trance she brings *prasad* - "During the period of her trance immediately on prayer various types of *prasad* come to her - *Khichri*,

sweets etc. I had asked for prasad in the form of fruits; but she could not give them for two days, on the third day she gave me one apple even without my asking."

Swami Paramanandaji said - "She said that she does not remember anything connected with her trance-period; that is perhaps not correct, because she remembered about the fruit."

Ma- How much quantity of *prasad* does she bring.

Jatin- Two or three handful. I showed with my hand that about 300/400 grams she brings.

Ma (pointing to me) - Have you seen her bringing ?

I - Yes

Ma - How does she bring ?

I - She gives by taking out from beneath her cloths.

Kedar Babu - Is it possible to bring prasad in this manner ?

Ma - Why can't be ? One who can come during trance period from another place in subtle body can't he or she bring fruits along with him or her ? But to get those things revealed in material form needs power.

Surcn Babu - During the period of trance she prescribes medicines also if condition of illness is explained. If questions are asked about the condition of certain persons at certain places she tells that also. Ofcourse all words do not become correct.

Swami Paramananda- If she gives replies through the influence of some power then why will not those be correct ?

I also asked Ma in the same way.

Ma- I can't speak all this meaning any one. Because all things have not been seen by this body. And this body has not gone through such trances, that this body will be able to speak all these.

I - Ma, such things may be discussed even without pointing to anybody. Many may have questions relating to such sort of revelations of miraculous powers which are happening through one simple woman. Ofcourse, if you have never experienced such trance conditions then how will you know.

Ma- This body sometimes speaks many things, hearing which you say that those are mentioned in the *sastras* (scriptures). But this body has not read the *sastras*, so how can this body tell such things ?

I - You have also said that there is no such state of *sadhana* which has not been revealed in your body. Then why will you not be able to tell about trance condition?

Ma (laughingly) Yes, but while speaking about such things discussion about particular persons naturally comes. But when words are coming out then let me tell as such-It is correct that if anyone gives any reply under the influence of any power, then

that cannot but be true. If the internal knots are once opened then if any order or reply comes out through those knots that is bound to be true. But this can also happen that all the knots have not fully opened, only a part has opened, in such condition the messages which are received may not always be correct. Because the individual *samskaras* of the person concerned may get mixed up with those messages, although the person may not be aware that such things are being held.

"Remember one thing more. The seeds of feelings of praise and prestige are existing within everyone in a latent manner. Those cannot be forsaken easily, although at times their existence may not be known. So, if the receptacle is not completely pure, those feelings get revealed by being mixed up with self-power. Just think, you wish for the welfare of some one and do not want to see anything bad for him. In this state if any power, after being revealed within you, makes you say that nothing bad will happen to him, at that time when those words are going to be uttered the word 'not' will not come out. Your own *samskāra* will stop that. As a result the power which is revealed that gets falsified because of your own *samskāra*."

"You again see, the power may also be of various types. If bogus powers are generated then what is there to be wondered if words of the person in trance are falsified?"

"Another thing to say. There are specific proofs of the unfoldment of a pure power. If a pure power is unfolded within some one then you will see that his attachment towards own *samskaras* is being lessened. Judgement should be made after considering all these things."

Ma returned to the *Panchvati* (cluster of five kinds of trees) after saying those words. It was found that Ma's bed was spread upon her asana and mosquito net was also hung. Ma lay down after coming there. Tomorrow there will be dawn to dusk kirtan. The preliminary song with other rituals (*adhivas*) commenced. Abhay and others continued to do kirtan. We were listening sitting there. About half an hour continued in this manner. The moon-light which was peeping through the trees at the *Panchvati* was our only light. Kerosene oil was almost rare in Dhaka; that is why this want of light. At this time suddenly we found that from somewhere light from a torch was upon us. We found that Ma was looking at some thing with the help of the torch from inside the mosquito net. That was also for a short while. Again there was the same darkness. After sometime Ma got up and went out of the *Panchvati*. We waited for sometime. Seeing that Ma was not returning and it was about 2.0'clock at night we returned.

18th March, 1943, Thursday

In the morning I went to the ashram along with Sri Manoranjan Roy, Sri Charu Chandra Roy and Sri Jatin Mazumdar. No sooner we arrived there than Smt. Hiranbala Devi, wife of Sri Prafulla Ghosh, told me - "Ma has said that she will go to Shahbag today. But these days Pioneer Corps people stay there. Please go and enquire if Ma can go in and made a round of Shahbag." Hearing this we four left for Shahbag. A few doctors known to us work there in Shahbag Hospital. So Charu babu left for the hospital along with us with the expectation if something could be done with their help. The doctor whom we wanted to meet was not found. But Charu Babu related the object of our coming to Shahbag to another doctor known to him. The doctor knew Ma. He said that Ma could come to Shahbag if permission was obtained from Mr. Hudson, the Chief of this place. He took us to the office, but the officer was not available. He was said to be in the Parade ground. Hearing this we left for that place. Seeing us proceeding in that manner one officer of the Pioneer Corps. came to us to understand what was the matter. When we told him about our object he himself went to Mr. Hudson and told him about our request. Mr. Hudson hearing about our request atonce gave consent and advised that we should complete the tour of Shahbag within 10-0 clock. We offered our gratefulness to him and immediately returned to the ashram and gave the information to Ma. Ma atonce asked all to get ready. Many male and female devotees went with her. Perhaps Ma went to Shahbag for showing that garden to Swami Paramanandaji, Shri Sital Prasadji and others who have come with her for the first time from different province. Khukhuni didi began to show them the places where Ma used to stay in that garden, where the Kali Puja was performed etc. We returned to the ashram after remaining there for about an hour.

Ma came and sat at the *Panchvati*. Today was the dawn to dusk kirtan. Kirtan was arranged within the *Panchvati*. But we could not find many people. Only one or two were keeping the Name. But no sooner than Ma came and sat at the *Panchvati*, Abhay and many others joined the kirtan along Khol, Kartal etc. (musical instruments) and in no time the kirtan became very impressive. In between Ma herself also was doing the kirtan. Ma was singing -

*"Sri Krishna Govinda Hare Murare
Hey nātha Narayana Vasudeva."*

Ladies were singing by sitting near Ma and devotees were cir-cumbulating Ma's *asan* in the *Panchvati* and were singing. I listened to kirtan till 12 noon and then came back home.

Went again to the ashram after lunch. Then only ladies were singing kirtan.

Ma after taking her meals came to the place of the kirtan and joined the ladies singing kirtan round and round. After some time Ma went inside the Annapurna temple for taking rest.

Siddha Ma, who had come to Ma's ashram yesterday evening, came again to the ashram today at 3 P.M. ... Along with her were Prof. Birendra Chandra Banerjee, Sri Nibaran Chandra Biswas and a few other devotees. She was made to sit on the verandah of the Shiva temple and Ma was informed After some time Ma came and sat there and asked Siddha Ma- "Ma, You have come, should I sit in your lap?.....saying this Ma embraced her. But *Siddha Ma* remained silent.

The place in the Shiva temple verandah was very limited. With large number of devotees gathering there everyone was feeling a bit uncomfortable. Seeing this I asked Ma - "Ma, should be make arrangement for you to sit in the "*Nam Ghar*?" Ma said - "People have taken their meals there and is yet unclean. If you can get the place well-cleaned, then do that." The "*Nam Ghar*" was cleaned accordingly and durries were spread. Then both the Mas were made to sit there on asanas. Ma again got up, sitting behind *Siddha Ma* embraced her with both the hands and spoke to us - "Whoever want to do *pranam* may do here (pointing to *Siddha Ma*)." Siddha Ma's devotees asked all to sit at a distance from her so that no one touches her by chance during her trance. Hearing all this Ma asked - "Should I also move away?" *Siddha Ma* nodded in the negative. Ma again said - "Should I be able to touch during the period of trance?" *Siddha Ma* permitted to do the same.

Some of her devotees asked Biren babu to sing because whenever there is song she goes into trance. Birenbabu remarked "Singing will not be needed. Kirtan is being sung at the *Panchvati*. Ma will go into trance soon after listening to that. Yesterday she had gone into such trance at the Siddheshwari temple, no song was needed." When such conversation was going on it was seen that *Siddha Ma* was sitting still, tears were trickling down both her eyes; the head was getting bent towards the neck and after a while she fell down on the back losing her senses. The head hit the back wall and fell down. There was also a sound of hitting. It was felt as if she had got some injury on the head. But *Siddha Ma* quietly lay down on the floor. Ma went and caught hold of her. It was felt as if Ma was pressing either her hands or feet. Later on Ma came and sat on her *asan* and began to watch *Siddha Ma*. By looking at Ma's face it could not be least understood as to what the matter was.

Slowly *Siddha Ma* got up and while sitting began to look here and there with revolving eyes. At times she began to laugh loudly. All these things appeared rather unnatural. There was now no cover on her head- the knotted plaits were visible within

her scrambled hair. Spreading her two legs she (pointing to Ma) said - "Now you come upon my lap." She did not however say anything when Ma wanted to sit on her lap at the Shiva temple verandah. It was thought that now during the trance period when there was no shyness and hesitation she perhaps was desiring to have Ma in her lap. Ma almost threw herself into her lap laughingly and embraced her with both hands. After sometime Ma got up and began to pull something which was lying hidden within *Siddha* Ma's cloth and *Siddha* Ma was slowly uttering - "Wait, Wait." Ma started saying laughingly - "I am a daughter. I shall snatch all my mother's things." Saying this, snatching a bit of *Siddha* Ma's cloth Ma told her - "Should I speak out, should I speak out?" *Siddha* Ma too *nodded* her head.

Ma - What have you brought?

Siddha Ma - Some fruit.

Ma - Ma, you love me so much that you have brought for me fruit from such a distance. Ma, I am not to be blamed? I have said because you have permitted me.

We were simply amazed to hear all this. It is seen that *Siddha* Ma fetches *prasad* during the period of her trance if any one asks for that; but where from the fruit could come even without praying for the same? Biren babu exclaimed - "Has the *Prasad* come then?" I replied - "Perhaps so." But the way Ma talked that created a lot of doubt in the minds of all present there.

Ma (pointing to *Siddha* Ma's devotees) told laughingly - "You donot take care of my mother. You have made her wear such a loose garment that even her belly becomes visible. I will say, these are all your mistakes."

Hearing Ma's words we also started laughing. I was thinking that perhaps using the loose garment is not without any purpose. It was also noticed that *Siddha* Ma's devotees were also feeling perhaps a bit uncomfortable.

Biren babu requested us to ask certain questions to *Siddha* Ma. Ma asked Abhay to put some questions. Abhay began asking.

Abhay - What are the signs of a realized person?

Siddha Ma - They donot come back again.

Abhay - Where do they remain?

Siddha Ma - In this world.

Abhay - Who goes to *Brahmaloka*?

Siddha Ma - Mohants.

Abhay - Is there any other *Joka* (region) above *Brahmaloka*?

Siddha Ma - No.

I told Abhay to ask her, who is Anandamayee Ma? Abhay replied that has been asked first of all and she has answered - "Anandamayee Ma is a part of mine - a bit of

my blood."

Questions began. Abhay asked - "Does Knowledge come after *Karma* is over or *Karma* is over after there is *Jnana* (knowledge)?"

Siddha Ma - *Karma* is over after there is *Jnana*.

Abhay - Which comes first - *Jnana* or *bhakti* (devotion)?

Siddha Ma- *Jnana* comes first after that *bhakti* and *mukti* (salvation) after *bhakti*.

Questions were being made again. But I did not like all that. So I came out of the *Namghar* and sat in the open meadow outside. After sometime it was seen that *Siddha Ma* also was taken out and made to sit in the midst of open air on the ground outside. A bit later *Ma* also come out. Seeing *Siddha Ma* sitting outside *Ma* also came and sat near her. No particular talk was held. I also returned home in the evening with my wife and daughters.

(To continue)

*

"If one can in one's thoughts, feelings and actions, venerate Her as the object of one's adoration, having enshrined Her lotus feet in the heart, then need will not arise for any other support in the path of salvation."

—“Bhaijee”

ON MA ANANDAMAYEE

[Continued from before]

—M. M. Gopinath Kaviraj

Some people are inclined to regard Mother as an *Avatāra* or incarnation of a god or goddess. This view, whatever its merits may be, is supposed to be free from the difficulties noted in the earlier view. But what is an *Avatāra*? It is the descent of energy to the earth level from the pure causal plane with the object of bringing order into a troubled world, establishing righteousness and restoring moral balance to humanity. The Energy which comes down to an *Avatāra* is distinguished from what descends to a man on the ground that its connection with the source remains unbroken whereas in the case of a man it is discontinued. Notwithstanding this, its relation with the source is like that of a part with the whole, and even when the descending energy is continuous with the source, it is only a projection and nothing more. The original source lies outside the field of the descended energy. The very expression *Avatāra* means descent and presupposes a higher source from which the descent is made. All the *Avatāras* as such have their respective centres, their proto-types so to say, in the *Para Vyoman* (Highest Heaven) or *Mahā Vaikunṭha* and these are different modes of the Central Energy of the World Administrator.

We are not concerned here with the particular god or goddess of which She is claimed to be an *Avatāra*. The difficulty is everywhere the same. Even if the god or goddess be taken to be divine in essence the difficulty remains. Knowing Mother through personal contact in the light of what She says about Herself indirectly from time to time I cannot bring myself to believe that this view would solve the difficulty. If *Avatāra* is understood in the sense in which a Buddhist would consider a *Nirmāṇa Kāya* in relation to *Dharmakāya* it would be a different matter. But even then some difficulty would persist.

If the *Nirmāṇa Kāya* is considered to be a projection of *Dharmakāya*, the difficulty of *Avatāra*hood would remain as before. If the absolute unity of all the *Kāyas* of the Buddha is recognised a fact, the difficulty may perhaps be removed to some extent. We should then be left with the suppositions of the *Ādi Buddha* as it were and not with any of the historical Buddhas appearing in time. In the case of a historical Buddha we have a long history of strenuous *sādhana* extending over a series of succes-

sive lives with a view to eradicate the fundamental obscurations and cultivate the basic virtues and seeds of knowledge. As a result of this, the historical Buddha was endowed with fourfold knowledge, viz. *Ādarśa Jñāna*, *Samantā Jñāna*, *Pratyavekṣā Jñāna* and *Kīṭyanuṣṭhāna Jñān*. In Mother all these types of *Jñānas* are believed to exist from the very beginning. Of these the first kind means a general vision of all things of all times without any let or hindrance. It is like a mirror reflecting on its bosom the entire creation. The second kind refers to realization of the essential equality or sameness in all beings. The third variety of *Jñāna* enables one to have a sense of absolute certainty in regard to everything in existence. The fourth *Jñāna* has a bearing on the world and its good and is devoted to the service of humanity. It is a knowledge of manifesting an infinite number of *Nirmāna Kāyas* in response to the different needs of different persons.

Some people are disposed to look upon Mother as a *Vilāsa*, a self-projection in time and space of the Timeless Divine. I do not know how far this view is tenable. If the conception *Nārāyaṇa* (of *Vaikuṇṭha*) as a *Vilāsa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (of *Goloka*) be the true conception of *Vilāsa*, which involves loss of power and knowledge in relation to the original, we shall find it difficult to explain her own statement regarding Herself like the following :-

अेई शरीर के जेखान हईते जे धाराय
कथा जिज्ञासा करिबे, सेखाने से भावेई ।
सेई जन्य अेई शरीरर कि कथा आर
कथा नय । कोनो धारा थाकिले धरा आछे ।
धरा थाकिले अधरा । जेखाने धरा
अधरार प्रश्न नाई, सेई । जेखान
हईते जा बाजाईया लओ, सुनो ।
अेई शरीरटार काछे अेमत्त ओ मतेर प्रश्न नाई ।

“Yet here the aforesaid holds good, for this body responds strictly to the line of thought and to the spirit in which a question is asked. Consequently, what is the opinion of this body and what is not? If there is a line of approach, there must be a goal to which it leads and beyond that is the unattainable. But where the distinction between the attainable and the unattainable does not arise is THAT Itself. What you hear depends on how you play the instrument. For this body the problem of difference of opinion in no wise exists.”

(“Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma,” p-119.)

This statement cannot apply to a *Vilāsa* for obvious reasons. Is She then the

Divine in its *Svayam Rupa*, in its plenary and perfect Form? Is She then a visible expression of the Absolute Itself? Is She the outer manifestation, within a self-imposed veil, of the Inner *Ātmā* of the world, of all of us, revealed to us clothed in a human form simply to draw us towards Herself away from the turmoils and tumults of fettered existence? Who can say?

These were some of the difficulties I anticipated in writing about Mother. I have placed them before my readers. Let them judge for themselves and draw their own conclusions.

It is believed by some that Mother has come down on a definite mission viz. to awaken divine consciousness in man and bring love and peace into the present world. But some deny this on the ground that Her actions are purposeless in the sense that they are actuated by Divine Will directly and not by a personal will of Her own as an ordinary individual. In any case it seems clear that a descent or manifestation so remarkably great as this cannot fail to have a great consummation in its own course. She never claims to be a Teacher though she sometimes seems to some to function as such indirectly, for the Teacher is one who has the limitation of teachership attached to him on account of his pure *vāsanā*. But the Mother is free from every kind of *vāsanā* as such from the very beginning. She claims to be Herself alone—nothing more and nothing less. In a sense She is perhaps the very Truth which the Teacher promulgates.

We are often told that Mother has no mind and no body. The meaning of the statement does not seem to be clear, at least to some of us. To me it means that the statement is intended to convey the sense that as an ordinary body or physical organism together with its term of existence as a vehicle of worldly experience is due to one's prior *karmas* maturing for fruition and having their roots in ignorance, Mother on account of Her immunity from these causal factors cannot be said to bear the burden of such a body and of such a mind. It means that even a pure body and a pure mind cannot be really attributed to a person who is eternally free from ignorance and *karma*.*

*. It is evidently for this reason that the human body of Sākya Muni was pronounced illusory in the ancient Buddhist work, *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*. The view of this work on the life and achievement of Gautama Buddha has been ably summed up by Poussin and is reproduced below: "Although completely divine, Sākya Muni is not God, he is Buddha 'from the beginning' he is the father of the worlds, the father of the future Buddhas and Saints, the universal Providence in order to save human beings and to lead them to *Nirvāna*. He appears in a human form which is illusory; he is born, teaches and enters *Nirvāna*—at least as far as ordinary men can see; but in reality, while illusory Sākya Munis are appearing in this world, the true Sākya Muni reigns on a divine 'mountain of vultures' surrounded by future Buddhas and imparting to them the true teaching, the true law." Even the true Sākya Muni, according to the teaching of *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*, though eternal and divine, is not God.

In all cognate schools of Indian thought we are familiar with a similar conception of the relation between *karma* and body. In Jainism, for instance, we are told that *Jīvan mukti* follows on the wake of the cessation of what is called *ghātī* or obscuring *karma*, viz, *karma* which deludes, obstructs and obscures knowledge and intuition. But *aghātī karma*, which gives rise to experience of pleasure and pain, determines one's term of life and status and builds one's body, continues.* Even a Tirthankara is not immune from this. When even these are destroyed there is an absolute cessation of *karmas* and the body ceases to exist. It is a bodiless state of *Ātmā*. *Kevala Jñāna* emerges at the end of *ghātī karma* which implies the end of impure mind (and of impure body) while perfection arises at the end of *aghātī karma* which means the cessation of pure body and pure mind as well.

Similarly in Buddhism we find that an *Arhat* or *Jīvanmukta* is liberated from *kleśas* and is consequently free from a defiled mind. But this is not an essential character of *Arhat*, for even a person in *Nirodha Samādhi* as one in the meditation on nothingness or a *vītarāgamī* or an *ānāgāmī* has his lower mind inhibited (though not cleansed, as it re-appears on reawakening). The lower mind is held in abeyance in the supernormal way also for a definite period. Even an *Arhat* has to experience the fruits of his earlier *karmas*. Maudgalāyana, for instance, was a great yogi, the greatest perhaps among Buddha's disciples, and yet he was tortured and his body cut to pieces by robbers and even the bones were powdered. Buddha explained that this was a retribution of a heinous *karma* viz, patricide committed by him in an earlier life.

How then are we to account for what appears like Mother's body and mind? May they not be due to an act of the Supreme Will playing in its freedom or to the same Will in response to the cumulative *karmas* of humanity crying out for ages for a Divine Appearance? It comes to this, then Mother's body is no body and Her mind is no mind in the ordinary connotation of the terms. They are only apparent and exist for the ignorant who are under *māyā* and unable to see behind the veil. This is a docetic view to be sure, but there seems to be no escape from it. Did we not hear of it in connection with the Buddha's body and also the body of Jesus Christ? Did not Śrī Kṛṣṇa too say that he did not really take any birth and had no *karma* of his own like ordinary men and that his birth and *karma* were both divine in nature?

Mother Herself said once as to whether the persistence in consciousness of a body is consistent with the dawn of knowledge:

*.These correspond to *jāti*, *āyu*, and *bhoga* of Patanjali.

“ज्ञाने आर संशय संसार थाके ना, देहओ थाके ना, संसार थाके ना येखाने देहओ थाके ना सेखाने..... के बले देह थाके? नाम रूपेरइ कौन प्रश्न नाइ । तार दृष्टि आझे बा नाइ तारओ प्रश्न नाइ । ‘देओ देओ’ आर कार काछे तार? ‘देओ देओ’ एइ अभावटाइ त देह । ये हेतु संसार नाइ, देह नाइ, सेइ हेतु सेइ कर्मओ नाइ, अर्थात् देह, संसार, कर्मर प्रश्न नाइ – एकेबारे धोयामोछा, नाइओ नाइ । कथा बलाओ या, ना बलाओ ता । चुप करे येखाने, चुप ना करेओ सेखाने – या’ ता’ ।

“For a Self-realized Being neither the world with its pairs of opposites exists, nor does the body. If there is no world there can obviously be no body either!

Who says the body exists? There is no question at all of name and form. To wonder whether a realized Being sees anything outside of himself is also beside the point. Who is there to whom he can say: “Give, give”? Yet this state of wanting is precisely the reason for one’s belief in the reality of the body. Therefore, since there is no world and no body there can be no action either; this stands to reason. To make it quite clear: after Self-realization there is no body, no world and no action— not even the faintest possibility of these— nor is there such an idea as “there is not”. To use words is exactly the same as not to speak; to keep silent or not is identical— all is THAT alone.”*

This is in regard to persons who have awakened to eternal life from the torpor of worldly existence. It is equally applicable certainly with a greater force to those who have never been in that existence.

[To continue]

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*. ‘Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma’, p. 118.

SHRI ANANDAMAYI — THE MOTHER*

—Acharya Gopal Chandra Chattopadhyaya

The holy name of Mata Anandamayi is well known throughout the length and breadth of India. Among her devotees and admirers may be counted men, women and children, ranging from saints, sages and the most learned down to the un-lettered and uncultured innumerable ordinaries — people apparently free from any religious and spiritual recognition. Whoever happens to come within her widely pervading sweetness of nature, feels attracted towards her, not knowing at all the why and how of it.

From times immemorial, the soil of India has had the good fortune of being blessed with the birth of many a great soul — personages of incomprehensible wealth of spirituality. The present day India and its spiritual firmament have been graced with the advent of a Being in the person of Mata Anandamayi, who is thoroughly unique in her manifestation of humanity in all its different shapes and aspects. Heretofore, super human manifestation of Divinity has been, in India as anywhere else, in manly garb generally; but in Mata Anandamayi, the advent has been feminine in form with an effulgence of Motherliness all about her, making the question of sex altogether a matter of no moment. All big religious personalities of all ages and climes, have got, as a matter of course, certain particular forms of religious worship and observances. They invariably are persons of deep devotional propensities. But the life and mode of Ma Anandamayi is a different phenomenon altogether. She seeks none and needs nothing — either of Heaven or of earth. She is full within herself in every sense of the term. Her wisdom is fathomless, and the ways of her living, very simple and wonderfully attractive; her very presence is astonishingly illuminating.

In the very prime of her life, all forms of Hindu religious worship — Vedic, Yogic and Tantrik practices — as also many other mystic religious performances, appeared in her person, even as spontaneously as the sprouting of branches, leaves, flowers and fruits from the trunk of a tree, without any asking or any form of hankering on her part. These mysterious religious experiences are not to be seen in her now-a-days, except on rare occasions and by a very selected few of her personal following, proving conclusively the existence of their roots in her even to-day. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that aspirants of truth always get all the necessary information and guidance from Mataji about any religious and spiritual practices they require. But now-a-days she seems to be full of everything and rigidly clinging to nothing, like the all-embracing wide-open boundless sky.

* Collection from writings published on the occasion of Mother's birthday celebration in 1953.

A question has been asked, as is usual in this part of the country, almost from the very beginning of her known existence, as to what she really is — a super human Existence, a Deity of Deities, or the Creator of all creation, the God of all religion Himself Incarnate. All sorts of answers, according to one's light and faith, have been vouchsafed on this topic from time to time, reaching very little homogeneity of thought. In spite of everything said or heard, people generally live on their own convictions. Some have taken her to be a personage of unfathomable wisdom; some have seen in her positive manifestations of this or that Deity and there are many who are inclined to think that Mata Anandamayi must be an incarnation of the Divine Mother Herself.

The promise of God's descent on Earth to make Heaven of it, to dispel all evils and to have only what is good, is a tacit or direct consolation offered to men by almost all the established religions of the world.

Moreover, the One, who is to come, is not really as far away from us or as foreign to us as we have grown accustomed to think. As a matter of realized truth, He who is to come at some unknown indefinite point of time, has, to the Knower, already come and is already a permanent resident in all living hearts even before the counting of time in creation began. So, people in general intuitively feel tempted to assert, whenever any such occasion arises, that so and so is an *Avatāra*. But such assertions of ignorant faith can be of no practical value at times of storm and stress. They are as easily believed as they are forgotten. Many people of this land theoretically know what a man or a woman should be like, after his or her personal communication with God Himself manifest in time and space and directly visible to the naked eye. Thus, when such believers, living almost constantly in close touch with the One, Whom they declared to be none other than God incarnate, find themselves far away from Divinity and feel themselves deeply anchored near about the place where they were, they are naturally disillusioned and see their fond conviction completely shattered.

The Divine can be seen and known by the Divines only. Even to-day, there are persons in India who can see and know the Divine descent and speak about it with authority. Many such persons have made unqualified statements in public, and there are others who have positively felt that Mata Anandamayi is the Divine Mother herself — none other than She Herself. But such declarations of immense spiritual value have not yet proved as effective as they should have been, because of peculiar reason for India.

There are many Indian sages and saints, who from a very long time past have acquired a special habit of looking down upon women as a class. So they think thrice before they make any declaration publicly in unequivocal terms about the uncommon greatness of a personage, who is after all a woman in appearance. They seem to be afraid that such a course may, knowingly or unknowingly, lead to a lowering of the high moral standard which they have so long held aloft, and may also end in loss

of personal prestige — so very important to a preacher in particular — with their respective socio-religious fold, as also with the public in general.

The most desirable would be like this : If the sages and saints would help the ignorant people with a quota of their glorious enlightened knowledge and would kindly condescend to share with the common people their natural love and untutored affection for the mother, this unusual phenomenon of the Mother's Advent might prove of inconceivable benefit to the world as a whole.

But let alone guesses. Mother says — What is only hoped for may or may not be true, but what actually happens is the truth.

The Mother is here. She has come and, as of universal necessity, her existence will, in due course of time, unfold to us the nature of her mercy and grace she has come to shower on us all. Nobody will be deprived of his or her dues to the extent it can possibly be assimilated.

It is apparent that the zone of her affectionate fold is widening every day. Let us wait and see what actually follows in future.

But in the meantime, let us try to determine, with as much certainty as is given to an ordinary man, the one common bond of attachment that binds all sorts of people, men and women, with Mata Anandamayi.

It is the fact of her unbounded fathomless ocean of motherliness. She is motherliness personified — a mother in every form of her being. A seer is necessary to see and know the Divinity correctly. A vast amount of knowledge is required to gauge the depth of different kinds of learning. A selfless devotion is needed to have intuitive vision of a Deity or the Divine. But the self-existent intuitively known motherliness on earth is a virtue which can be understood, may be in different degrees, by all sorts of living beings — from the seer to anyone who is somebody. Everybody is acquainted with motherliness, in some shade or other, by the very fact of his or her birth.

As the worship of the transcendent God may be performed with ease and certainty by taking hold of any of His spiritual manifestation vividly present in man, such as mind, life or any other attractive sentiment, as the case may be, so also communion with the personified Divine may be most easily effected with the help of the most eloquent expression of his or her personality. In Mother Anandamayi, the fact of her unending flow of magnetic motherliness, to some extent, shared by beings, animate and inanimate, may certainly be the basis and ground of any relationship with her.

To many an uninitiated person the words 'mother' and 'motherliness' carry very little significance. To some, mother's affection does not carry them beyond the threshold of their own little home and its surroundings. But in truth, Mother means everything—the origin, the growth and the assimilation of all in one. The creation is nothing more or less than Mother's affection in its romantic and variegated forms. Thus if

one only clings fondly to the Mother's divine affection, which is open to all and common to share, a solid beginning of Yoga, consciously for some and even unconsciously for many, will be made, leading all, in course of time, to the fulfilment of their aspirations as certainly as day follows night. Devotees of the Divine Mother and motherliness will, in due time, unmistakably know that the Divine Mother and motherliness are not two different entities as they may now appear to be.

The very fact that the One becomes, to anybody and everybody, more motherly than one's own mother herself, more easily acquainted than all previous acquaintances, is a greater miracle than any miracle shown or known anywhere.

The over-flowing natural love of Mata Anandamayi for everyone and everything is a feature, the exact nature of which may be tasted and tested by any human being. If only he so desires it.

It has been seen as a matter of fact that even rigid and astute sadhus and sages, who approach the Mother and live in her company for some time, become as much fascinated by her overwhelming divine motherliness as another ordinary mortal being. From babes of months to veterans of ages, the charm of her magnetic personality has its play.

Those who by long practice have grown too sex-conscious will find to their utter amazement that before the solid rock of Mata Anandamayi's motherliness personified, sex-notion of any order has simply no place.

The more one tries to portray the magnificent motherly picture of the Mother, the more one clearly feels that one is attempting an impossibility. I feel absolutely certain that my hope of seizing something positive of the Mother and of conveying it to others, if possible, has altogether failed. Then why make an attempt at all? It has two hidden aspirations behind it.

In my heart of hearts, I feel tempted to request and pray to all men and women of all countries and of all different religions, to try to come and see our Mother with their own eyes — a life's chance certainly for everybody. The venture will prove a distinct revelation to anybody who takes the sporting chance. There are, and may be, ambiguities in all the different elucidations of the Mother, attempted by different persons from various angles of vision; but the benign graceful presence of the Mother is self-illuminating. It fills of its own accord all voids of any nature, wherever it penetrates, and convinces all concerned in a way which is super-humanly convincing.

For me, my vain attempt has its personal value. It is a task which pleases me equally in its failure as in its so-called success. I feel more and more elated, as I find all my attempts to present even a coloured view of the greatness of the Mother futile. I feel glorified even if a glimpse of the Mother's greatness, even momentarily, touches me, My thousand pranams to the Mother Divine — MATA ANANDAMAYI.

*

REMINISCENCES*

—Atmananda (Blanca Schlamm)

It was in Almora, where I spent my summer holidays in May-June 1943, that I had my first darshan of Mataji. I had heard about Her from various people and all of them had spoken highly of Her, but for some reason or other I had not been to see Her until then. I was in fact searching for spiritual guidance; however the thought that She could be the one I was longing to find, did not enter my mind. I was therefore not in a hurry to meet Her.

One morning I went to Kalimat near Almora for a walk. The Danish Sadhu who lives there, said to me: "The holy Mother is at Patal Devi; why don't you go and see Her on your way back? Her surroundings are noisy, but She is real." I did not quite know what he meant by 'real', but I did go to Patal Devi.

At that time the Ashram had not yet been built, or perhaps only a small portion of it, in any case it looked very different then from what it is now. Mataji was sitting on a string cot in the open, with a few people squatting round Her on the grass. She seemed all joy and beauty, with Her long black hair falling loosely over Her shoulders and back, and Her radiant face smiling. She addressed a few words to me and I noticed that She did not treat me as a stranger, but as if I were well known to Her. "She does certainly look very lovely," I thought, "but that alone will not help me." I could not see any way of getting to know more about Her. I knew no Bengali and only some colloquial Hindi, not nearly enough for a serious conversation. There were no books in English about Sri Anandamayi Ma, except a small one "Sad Vani" and even that was not available. Moreover Mataji travelled about a good deal and did not remain anywhere for long. All my life I had been taught to look at things critically, not to accept anything on authority, to watch and weigh, to think and find out for myself. Besides I had heard much about false Gurus and fake Mahatmas and how difficult it was to distinguish between genuine holiness and first hand knowledge or a mere semblance of these.

There was another factor which was against me : I was wearing a European dress, a solar topi, shoes and socks and carried a hand-bag in one hand and a mountaineering-stick in the other. My appearance seemed to clash painfully with Mataji's

* Extracts from the famous book by the author, "**Death must die.**"

surroundings and I was sensitive to the curious glances of the people who were grouped around Her. Nevertheless I remember distinctly being struck by the inward beauty and purity that shone in the faces of two or three of those people. After about fifteen minutes I got up to go. Mataji remarked about my leaving so quickly, but I said it was getting late as I had to walk about 3 miles to the cantonment.

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Only several months later I had Mataji's *darshan* again, at Varanasi, where I was a teacher at Rajghat School. On a Sunday I went to see some friends at Assi Ghat and intended to visit also Sri Hariharbaba, who had a tremendous reputation as a great Mahatma and lived in a houseboat on the Ganges near Assighat. The famous Veena player, Mr. Basu happened to be at the house of my friends. He said they would all go to see Sri Anandamayi Ma, who was somewhere quite near at the moment, would I care to accompany them, I readily agreed.

Mataji was sitting amongst a huge crowd of people under a pandal on the bank of the Ganges. As I came to know later, this was the site of the Sri Anandamayi Ashram. The land had already been acquired, but the construction of the buildings had not begun as yet. There was Kirtan going on and some of the singers and players were moving round a central altar, dancing as they sang. I was then not used to this kind of spectacular worship and felt rather out of place. Mataji was sitting far away from the entrance and the whole of the available space being packed, it seemed well nigh impossible to approach Her. We stood at a distance for a few minutes, when suddenly the mother of one of my pupils, who was a devotee of Mataji, emerged out of the throng, took me firmly by the hand and without any further ado led me straight to Mataji, where she somehow managed to make space for me to sit down right next to Her. I felt the looks of several hundreds of men and women piercing through me like arrows and would have given anything, if by some magic I could have vanished from their sight. But there I was right near Mataji and She smiled at me encouragingly and even remembered my short visit to Her at Almora the summer before. In spite of the dense crowd and the loud singing and dancing which disturbed me, I distinctly felt that there was something very special about Mataji, which I could neither gauge nor define, but which had a fascination and was undeniable and worth pursuing.

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In winter 1944 an English *sadhaka*, L. Thompson, who had lived in South India for a number of years, came to stay at Rajghat School. Being the only other European, I was requested to receive him and see that he was comfortable. It did not take me long to find out that he was a quite unusually earnest seeker after Truth, in fact

ruthlessly single-minded. He had come to Ceylon at the age of 23 and one year later proceeded to South India in quest of spiritual guidance which he had sought in vain in England and France. He had stayed in Sri Ramana Maharshi's Ashram for seven years with intervals and had received initiation from a well-known Guru, a *Jnani* of the South. He had made it a point to meet and study closely everyone who was believed to be highly advanced spiritually. He had been to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram twice for some length of time, had met Swami Ramdas and Mother Krishnabai, J. Krishnamurti, Sri Jogeswami of Ceylon and a number of others who are difficult to approach and known only to a very few. He had obviously developed an intuition as to what was real knowledge and attainment rather than book-learning or imperfect knowledge. To my question why he had come to North-India when he had found so much in the South, he gave as one of his reasons that he had seen a photo of a holy mother who travelled in the North for whom he immediately had felt a strong attraction. He consulted his Guru, who had said: "Yes, go and meet her." He showed me the picture. "Oh", I exclaimed, "this is Sri Anandamayi Ma, I have had Her darshan." He confirmed: "Yes, this was the name by which she was known." "I believe She is in Varanasi at present", I said, "one of the teachers of this school goes to see Her often." The next morning Thompson set out to meet Sri Ma and was not seen again at Rajghat that day. It must be made clear that Thompson had a very sharp and critical intellect and was extremely difficult to please. Only the very best, the highest interested him and he coldly used to dismiss everything else.

To my amazement I found him all but in raptures when I asked him about his impression of Sri Anandamayi Ma. "As soon as I saw Her," he said "I knew that my intuition had been correct except that I found far more than I had expected. I simply could not tear myself away. When She retired for Her meal and rest I spent the time somewhere near about and went back to see Her again in the evening and remained till late at night. I have never seen anyone like Her. There is not the slightest trace of an ego to be detected in Her. Her eyes look right through you into the far unknown distance; Her voice is absolutely impersonal and so is Her walk." "How can you possibly judge, in a single day?" I questioned, "You have not even talked to Her." (Thompson did not know either Bengali or Hindi.) "I am quite certain," he declared with emphasis, "I have spent many years studying the great men of India and have developed some insight in this respect. There is no need to talk. I watched Her very carefully: I have never before come face to face with such perfection; there is no flaw in Her, none whatever."

It naturally made a deep impression on me to hear some one talk in this strain whom I had found utterly unemotional, detached and one-pointed. I could hardly

help wanting to know Mataji for myself and at closer quarters. But opportunity did not offer so quickly.

That summer I arrived at Almora only in June. Mataji was just on the point of leaving for Dehradun with Her whole party. I found Her engaged in an animated conversation in Hindi with some visitors, but alas, I only understood fragments of it which I could hardly piece together. After a short while Mataji left. I deemed myself lucky to have caught at least a glimpse of Her that day.

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Mataji can sometimes be heard to say: "There is a time for everything. No one can come to me until the time is ripe". Almost two years after I had had my first *darshan* of Mataji my lucky stars allowed me at long last to make closer contact with Her.

In the second half of March 1945, Thompson received a letter from a Buddhist Bhikkhu, an old Ceylonese friend of his who had come to Sarnath, asking him to see him there. By road Sarnath was then about 10 miles from Rajghat, but by footpaths across the fields only 4.5 miles. Thompson walked to Sarnath that evening, announcing that he intended returning the next morning. He did not take anything with him. But he stayed away the whole of the next two days. When he did not come back even in the afternoon of the third day, the Principal of the school and myself decided that he must have fallen ill. He had not even taken a change of clothes with him. There had been a case of cholera in the servant's quarter opposite to where he stayed at Rajghat. There was then no phone at Sarnath. The only thing was to go there and see what had happened. Equipped with some medicines from the school dispensary I went there by cycle rickshaw.

I found Thompson sitting very happily in the room of one of the Bhikkhus. To my astonished inquiries, he replied: "Sri Anandamayi Ma is here. My friend and I went for Her *darshan* the evening I arrived. I had no intention of talking to Her. But She Herself started by asking me about myself. There is an excellent translator here, such as I have rarely come across. He has known Mataji closely for 18 years and I can feel that he really understands what She says and is able to render it into good English." (It was Sri J. C. Mukerji, Sri Gurupriya Devi's cousin brother) "At first I was hesitant, but once the ice was broken I had more and more question to ask. It is amazing how subtle Her replies are. Though She is almost illiterate all our learning is put to shame by Her great wisdom. Every morning Mataji, J. C. Mukerji and myself have been discussing in private for two or three hours. She Herself offered me this unique opportunity. How could I possibly leave before I had put before Her every point that was puzzling my mind. However now there is not much left to be talked over and I shall probably return to Rajghat to-morrow."

I spent that evening in Mataji's presence on the roof of the Birla Dharmasala. At Sarnath no crowd thronged round Mataji—only a few of Her companions. It was an informal and quiet gathering, no loud singing or dancing. This time I did not feel out of place; everything seemed friendly and congenial. Sarnath had been my favourite place of pilgrimage and rest ever since I had come to Rajghat nearly ten years before. On many Sundays I used to walk there early morning and spend the day reading Buddhist scriptures, sitting either in the library or in the open near the stupa, enjoying the peace, solitude and the natural beauty of the setting, wondering how it was that even after millenia the presence of the Lord Buddha could still be felt so strongly. Ever since my adolescence I had felt drawn towards the Lord Buddha, in fact I had read his talks first in German translation when I was 15 or 16 years old. But little did I dream that Sarnath, where the Lord Buddha had delivered His first sermon after he attained Illumination, would be the setting for a most decisive and important turning point in my life..

Sri Mukerji asked me whether I wished to make use of his services as an interpreter, but I just wanted to sit quietly near Mataji and imbibe the atmosphere. I returned to Sarnath the next evening on foot, stayed for the night and walked back at early dawn to be in time for school. This I repeated almost daily. The 24th of March was a Saturday and I came prepared to remain for the week-end. I asked a question during the evening gathering and late at night had a long private talk with Mataji. What She said was so simple and so completely convincing; there was no room for doubt. "How strange that I had not been able to find this out for myself." I thought. In fact it was not, another talking to me, but my Self conversing with myself. This cannot be explained, it must be felt. It was an experience beyond words, but all the more real for that. What Mataji said was evidently only the outer expression of something that took place simultaneously on a much deeper level or perhaps on all levels. The next morning I had another talk with Mataji to clarify some details and then Sri Mukerji actually left for Allahabad.

During my conversation with Mataji She asked me whether I had to support anyone of my family. Several weeks later I received a letter to announce the death of my aged father, the only near relative I still possessed: he had died a refugee in America just three days after Mataji talked to me on the roof of the Birla Dharmasala at Sarnath. The time to make close contact with Mataji had come for me the moment all my worldly ties had been dissolved.

(To be continued)

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MOTHER ANANDAMAYEE*

—Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma

Mother Anandamayee is a standing miracle. It is difficult to understand how she can sit for at least 20 hours a day for 365 days of the year without feeling any fatigue, how she can be in the midst of crowds of thousands of people eager to have her *darsana* throughout the day and for the major portion of the night without feeling disturbed or disgusted in the least, how she can manage with her crowded programme to find time to grant private interviews to earnest seekers of truth and help each of them with her invaluable instructions, how she can retain the sweetness of her temper when giving replies to all sorts of questions which are very often irrelevant and profitless, how she although almost illiterate can give very satisfactory answers to the most difficult philosophical problems, and how she can keep a close watch over the affairs of the many Ashrams situated in different parts of India and direct them all without allowing herself to be touched by them.

Mother Anandamayee is a great and strong personality. The simplest indication of her wish is a command to her devotees and it cannot be disobeyed. When all her intimate companions and devotees are perhaps expecting that she would take all of them with her when she is starting for a new place she tells them all on a sudden that she wishes to go all alone leaving behind even Gurupriya Devi, and nobody has the courage to entreat her to change her decision. She has never been found not to fulfil the word that she has given or to move an inch from her resolution. She attracts thousands of persons to her side every day who do not know what they would gain by going to her or rather do not care to think about that at all but they feel that they must go.

Mother has the simplicity of a child and sometimes she talks like an unsophisticated village girl. Her sweet voice, the manner in which she speaks, and her gestures leave no doubt about her sincerity. When she says. This body does not tell a lie. Believe that no action goes in vain. Recite the name of God as often as you can. God is watching you and listening to your utterances. As God is Infinite, he wants unending and continuous remembrance, ceaseless meditation without any gap, from his worshippers and devotees. See that there may not be any gap, any break, in your worship. Have a fixed time for thinking, for meditating. It may be only for 15 minutes or for ten minutes, but see that there is no break, no discontinuity and you do it every

*. Courtesy: "Ananda Varta", Vol I No. 3.

day," She says it in such a manner, with such directness and force, that it is difficult even for the atheist or the agnostic and the sceptic not to accept her at her words.

The peculiar charm of the Mother lies in her transcendent smile. One who has once observed the smile can never forget it in one's life. The smile expresses that the things of the world which men are ordinarily attracted to, have no permanent worth and are all evanescent and fleeting, and it also shows that only the Absolute, the Eternal Reality, is of lasting value. The smile indicates that men should ignore the world and be drawn towards the Infinite.

*

OUR MA

-Anjali Asthana

A lady with love for all in Her eyes,
Smile for every one,
The one who takes away our worries and woes,
She who gives us peace and wisdom,
Taking away darkness and sorrows from us,
Holds our hands and leads us on the right path
Giving strength and courage to face the world,
Fulfilling our wishes and wants
Ma- whose divine light fills our lives and world,
Who is always there, we need Her,
Remembering Her grace on all of us.

Jai Ma.

MA IN SOUTH INDIA

(October, 1952-January, 1953)

[From the Diary of Guru Priya Devi]

For a considerable time a proposal had been under consideration at the instance of some Mahātmās, particularly Sri Hari Baba and Sri Avadhutji, that they should visit the sacred places and temples of South India in the company of Ma. During the Dusshera celebrations at Allahabad in the last week of September, 1952, it became generally known that Ma would accordingly leave for the South shortly after.

Benares, Calcutta and Puri, 30th September to 20th October, 1952.

Immediately after the Dusshera celebrations at Allahabad which were carried out with great eclat and which evoked general admiration for the excellent manner in which the whole affair had been managed, Ma left for Benares on 30th September. Next day She proceeded to Calcutta where She stayed till the 6th October, paying a flying visit to Nabadwip for a day on the 4th. From Calcutta Ma went to Puri (7th Oct.) where She remained till 20th October, during which She visited Bhuvaneshwar and Cuttack in the company of the Mahātmās.

Waltair, 21st to 23rd October

From Puri, Ma set out on 20th October for Waltair. Our party included besides Mother, Sri Hari Baba and his four followers, Sri Krishnanand Avadhutji, Swami Paramananda, Brahmacharis Kamala Kanta, Kusum Kumar and Bibhu, Kumari Juthika ('Buni'), Misraji (cook) and myself.

We reached Waltair in the morning of 21st. A professor of the Cuttack University who belonged to Madras and some other local gentlemen had made excellent arrangements for Mother's stay at the Dharamshala. Shortly after reaching Waltair, Ma suddenly went out in a rickshaw without informing others, with only one gentleman who had joined us for a shortwhile in course of his official duty or business. After visiting several places, She finally went to Shanti Ashram where originally arrangements had been made for her stay. Ma had cautioned the gentleman who accompanied Her not to disclose Her identity; but it was not long before the inmates of the Ashram discovered the fact and their joy knew no bounds. After a short stay there Ma walked along the road in the neighbourhood where fishermen lived, singing 'Jai Ganesh and also 'Hey Bhagawan'. The people there flocked round Her and followed

Her, repeating the names. She then returned to the Dharamshala, having been out for nearly 2½ hours.

In the afternoon, a number of the fishermen came to the Dharamshala where Ma was staying and 'prasad' (sweets etc.) were distributed among them. Later in the day many persons including some professors and students of the Cuttack University gathered at the Dharamshala to see Ma. After some Kirtan, etc, She went out for a stroll along the beach.

Next morning i. e. on 22nd October Ma went to the temple of Narasingha on the top of a hill. It is said that this was the site of the capital of Hiranyakashipu and Prahlad was hurled down from the top of this hill at the command of his father. We learnt that once a year only on Akshay Tritiya day in Baishakh, the deity is exposed to view in this temple. We, however, were allowed to go in and have our 'darshan'. What struck us was the neatness of the place and absence of clamouring greed on the part of the priests or Pāndās, which is such an ugly feature in most famous places of pilgrimage. There were some 1120 steps, we were told, to reach the temple on the hill top but we did not feel any strain or fatigue either on our way up or down. We returned from the temple at 9.30 A. M. We left Waltair next day at 11 A. M.

Bezwada, 23rd October

We reached Bezwada at 8.30 P. M. A number of people including some members of the family of late Kantibhai Munshaw were at the station to receive Ma. After passing the night there we set out next day in the afternoon for Guntur, which we reached in about an hour.

Ramakshetra (Guntur) 24th to 27th October

Ma was taken to a place known as Ramakshetra, which appeared to be an attractive spot. The usual 'Sātsang' (Kirtan and discourse by Sādhus) took place from 7 to 9 P. M. Although the people there could not understand our language, they were keen on serving Ma devotedly and repeatedly expressed their joy and gratitude for this visit. We visited several temples there. At one place we were shown a tank with many huts and structures round about for Sādhus to stay in. When a member of our party expressed surprise that there were no signs here of the drought we had heard so much about, we were told that for some time past the tank and the adjoining well had been dried up owing to drought.

When the people heard about the probable visit of Ma they began to pray saying "What shall we do, O Mother,? Have pity on us". Then shortly after it rained abundantly for three days and we found that the tank and the wells were all full.

On 25th October we proceeded to Amaravati on the bank of the Krishna, 20 miles off. Here also we visited several fine temples. Next morning we went to Mangalgi,

about 18 miles away. There Ma was taken to the temple of Narasinghaji, situated at a height and may be reached by 400 steps. It is said that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had been to this place and his foot prints were still preserved. The deity is offered gur-water. We were told in Satya Yuga it was Amrita or nectar that used to be offered, in Treta honey, in Dwapar milk and now in Kali it is gur-water. The silver image of Sri Narasinghaji was dimly visible in the dark interior. This is one peculiarity we noticed generally in the temples of south India. The image of the deity is usually kept in semi-darkness and only dimly perceived when arati is performed with burning camphor etc. The gur-water, when offered to the deity, was poured down the mouth of the image from a conch by the priest. When the 'prasad' of gur-water was offered to Ma, She opened her mouth and asked the priest to pour it down, which was done amidst general laughter. In the afternoon we visited the temple of Rama and the Math of Sri Shankaracharya. We returned to Ramakshetra where many people had assembled to have *darshan* of Ma. The same evening we left for Madras.

Madras, 27th October to 3rd November

We reached Madras at 7.30 A. M. Mrs. Talcyar Khan and a few other prominent persons had formed a committee to make necessary arrangements for Ma's visit to the city. She is a pious Parsee lady from Gujrat who had been with Sri Ramana Maharshi for a considerable length of time. We had met her before in the company of H. H. Rani Saheba of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh). Sri Kanti Bhai Munshaw of Ahmedabad had also sent some persons to look after the convenience of the party (in fact he did so throughout Ma's present tour in South India).

Arrangements for Ma's stay had been made in the residence of Sri Tarapore at Mount Road, where She was received with elaborate ceremony including music, recital of the Vedas by ten Brahmins, etc. etc. All arrangements had been made with great care and everything went off very smoothly. Several Bengalee families residing there offered their assistance particularly regarding cooking and the meals. Ma stayed in Madras for eight days and made excursions to different places to see the temples etc.

We visited many temples far and near during our stay in Madras. The committee had sent word about our visit to the temples and so everywhere we went we were received with great courtesy and ceremony by the priests and the temple authorities, and offered every facility and attention in our *darshan*. In this way we visited the temples of Kapaleshwar and also Venkateshwar. At Conjeevaram (50 miles) we saw the Shivakanchi temple (with its finely carved huge gates) and also the Vishnukanchi. We also went to Mahavalipuram (55 miles), and saw near the sea side the fine images of Vishnu and Siva etc. Next we proceeded to Pakshithirtha (45 miles) where two

rishis are said to be engaged in *sadhana* in the form of birds. Daily at 11-30 A. M. sweet rice is offered there and as the priest stands with folded hands, two birds swoop down and after making a meal of the rice and a drink fly away.

During our stay we also visited the local Ramakrishna Mission centre, the Theosophical Society at Adyar (with its spacious compound, fine library and statues of Olcott, Madame Blavatski, Annie Besant) and the Gaudiya Math.

At their pressing request, Ma was also taken for a short time to the residence of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Ex-Dewan of Travancore who, we were told, had flown to Madras to see Mother. We also went to the place of Sri Rama Rao, a disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, where once a month the saint's picture is worshipped and the Vedas recited as in a temple.

All these days and throughout our tour the daily *satsang* was observed whenever possible, at the usual time i. e. 7 to 9 p. m. (including 15 minutes silence or 'Mauna'). The gathering at last firmly but respectfully protested that whether in *satsang* and Kirtan or during Ma's excursions to temples, they had very little opportunity to hear Ma speak for which everybody was very keen and eager. It was pointed out that Ma did not speak formally before gatherings by way of lectures and discourses. However, it was arranged that Ma would sit for sometime after *satsang* in the gathering.

One day someone put the question "How shall we realise God?"

Ma — Weep for Him and you will find Him.

Q. — I cannot weep at all, tears simply won't come. What shall I do?

Ma (laughing) — Seek the company of those who weep. Keep the company of pure and Godminded persons.

Q. — In order to realise God, how much should one put forth one's own efforts and how much should one rely on God?

Ma — Even in relying upon God, you will be able to do it only when He wills it and makes you do it. What is '*purushakar*' or individual will-power and effort? What He wills and causes to be done is '*purushakar*'.

Q. — Why should there be such tremendous attachment for impermanent and perishable things and not for what is real and eternal?

Ma — All this is but His *leela* (playful activity). It is only He playing with Himself. Is it not said in Chandā (*Sapta-shati*) that She also exists in the form of Delusion? But what happens when one is attached to worldly things is that one is dragged down; but if drawn towards Him, there is joy and emancipation. If one gets entangled in worldly things, one gets the return ticket—to come and go.

At this there was laughter in which Mother also joined.

Ma continued— Everything is Infinite, there is no finality, no end. That is why

one is counselled, do not leave off taking His name. Do it on the quiet, it need not be seen by anybody. Being blessed with this rare human birth, do not waste it. As you breathe so should you keep repeating His name. The body is constantly undergoing changes. Once you were young, now you are grown up. Turn this process to your benefit and welfare. Otherwise it is a case of suicide.

The people present expressed their great delight at Ma's words and repeatedly requested Her that She should speak to them. Ma replied "Your little daughter can neither lecture nor preach. As you beat the drum so do you hear. This is the fond request of this little daughter of yours that you should constantly try to keep the company of His name and bow to Him with folded hands."

In the afternoon Ma was taken to an assembly of Gujratis numbering about 7 to 8 hundred people. They sang songs composed for the occasion.

We left Madras on the 3rd November.

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“मत्समः पातकी नास्ति
पापघ्नी त्वत्समा न ही
एवं ज्ञात्वा महादेवि
यथा योग्यं तथा कुरु॥”

*"There is no sinner like me
No destroyer of sins like you,
Knowing this O Goddess
Do what you feel proper."*

MOTHER ANANDAMAYEE SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF THE AGAMAS

—Dr. Debabrata Sen Sharma

It is universally acknowledged in India that all spiritual teachers are in reality spiritual masters who are chosen by the Supreme Being (*Paramesvara*) to serve as the instruments for the transmission of His divine grace to individual beings in bondage. The Agamas speak about two kinds of sadhakas (spiritual adepts) — one, the *Mumuksu sadhakas* who aspire for securing their personal liberation, two, the *Mumhuksu sadhakas* desiring to help those suffering human beings by showering the Divine Grace on them and side by side, providing them with proper guidance. All great souls, well known spiritual masters, beginning with Gautama Buddha, down to Tailanga Swami, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Lokenath Brahmachari, Sri Aurobindo, Mother Anandamayee are classic examples of such kind of spiritual masters whose heart melted with compassion on seeing the suffering humanity.

Before attempting evaluation of Mother Anandamayee, her place among the galaxy of the spiritual masters of this century in the light of the Agamas and her contribution to our rich spiritual heritage, it would perhaps be proper to know what our scriptures, especially the Agamas say on the different kinds of spiritual masters in connection with the discussion on the spiritual teachers, who are also *sadhakas* par excellence. Here we are referring only to the Agamas because they have special place in the field of spirituality due to their being the repositories of spiritual knowledge arising from the spiritual experiences of the *sadhakas*.

The Agamic tradition classifies spiritual teachers under three broad heads viz., the celestial teachers (*Daivaguru*), the super-human teachers (*Siddhagurus*) and the human teachers (*Purusagurus*). The celestial teachers are the highest class of teachers who, having attained the highest degree of perfection by dissociating themselves from impure matter, live on higher plane of creation, always absorbed in contemplation. They have bodies made of pure consciousness. The presiding deities of different regions (*bhuvanas*) such as Rudra, Visnu, Brahma, Mantra, Mantra-Maheswara, constitute this class of spiritual teachers. Though the celestial teachers are said to have their separate existence, independent of the Supreme Lord, they do not have their independent will. They always remain coalesced with the Divine Being as it were, and always operate Divine will of the Supreme Lord.

There are superhuman teachers (*Siddhagurus*) who possess pure physical bodies, and as such, they occupy elevated position in the hierarchy of beings in the world.

They are perfect beings, the realized souls but they are accessible to human beings on account of their existence in embodied condition. They have direct connection with the Supreme Lord, and they always function in unison with Him. Quoting from some Tantric work, Adhinavagupta in his *Tantraloka* (Ahnika XIII) praises the *Siddhagurus* as the example of perfect spiritual teachers as they occupy unique position in the hierarchy of spiritual teachers on account of their existence in the mid-position between the higher spiritual levels and the impure levels of gross matter in creation.

The human teachers (*manus gurus*) are the lowest kind of teachers who possess physical bodies dominated by the impure matter. They too are realized beings who outwardly resemble fettered human beings on account of their having realized their true nature, and also having close connection with the Supreme Being whom they are said to represent.

In the light of this Agamic classification of spiritual masters vis-a-vis *sadhakas* described above, if we carefully examine the spiritual life of Mother Anandamayee and critically evaluate her spiritual attainments gleaned from her numerous utterances on spiritual matters, it would perhaps be not wrong to put her in the category of *Siddha gurus* or the most perfect spiritual *sadhakas*.

Abhinavagupta, the well known exponent of the highly esoteric spiritual philosophy of Advaita Saivism in Kashmir in his *Tantraloka* (Ahnika XIII) further classifies the *siddha* and the *manusa gurus* taken together under four heads, from the point of view of nature of their spiritual realization. They are called the *akalpita gurus*, the *akalpita Kalpaka gurus*, the *kalpita gurus* and the *Kalpikalpaka gurus*.

The *akalpita gurus* or *Sadhakas* are the highest class of *gurus* or *Sadhakas* who are endowed with pure physical bodies right from their appearance on the earth. Being equipped with gross physical bodies they are born out following biological process, but their physical bodies are characterized by extraordinary traits or qualities which are absent in ordinary beings. The highest spiritual wisdom arises in them spontaneously without their making any effort whatsoever for acquiring it. They do not require any initiation (*diksha*) not do they need to perform any spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) because the highest spiritual wisdom, technically called *pratibha* (intuitive wisdom) is inborn in them which unfolds gradually in course of time and illumines their intellect. Such *gurus* are also called the *Samsiddhika gurus* or *Sadhakas*. The most perfect *Sadhaka*, when they are required to act as *gurus*, they awaken the supreme spiritual knowledge in the disciples coming in contact with them without performing externally any initiatory rite to them.

The *akalpita kalpaka gurus* or the *Sadhakas* constitute the second kind of *gurus* or *Sadhakas*. They also obtain the supreme spiritual knowledge within their pure intellect automatically. Though the spiritual knowledge awakens within them without their having performed any rite externally, it does not arise spontaneously following Knowledge gained from the lips of *gurus*, or study of scriptures, and contempla

tion of their true import. They have to experience the correspondence between what is obtained by them from the guru in the form of verbal instructions or by their self study of the scriptures or through contemplation on the true meaning of guru's words or scriptural statements. But since their *ādhāra* or physical body which includes their intellect is fully purged of all defilements (*malas*) the awakening of the highest spiritual wisdom immediately follow contemplation by them. Obviously such gurus or *Sadhakas* are slightly inferior to those described above in as much as they are required to contemplate on that they receive externally from a guru or study of scriptures etc. Such *sadhakas* when acting as gurus to others, are required to perform initiatory rite externally (Tantraloka XII verse 142-43).

The *Kalpita gurus* or *Sadhakas* constitute the third class of gurus or *sadhakas*. The spiritual knowledge does not arise in them automatically as their intellect, their *ādhāra* is enveloped by thick veils of defilements. They are therefore required to take help from other gurus, seek their guidance and follow their instructions for performing certain spiritual practices, primarily for the removal of defilements covering them. After they succeed in purging all defilements from their *ādhāra*, they obtain the illuminating spiritual wisdom.

The *Kalpita kalpaka gurus* form the most inferior class of gurus or *sadhakas* who have to depend on other spiritual teachers or gurus for instructions and guidance for performing spiritual discipline. They are required to perform some kind of spiritual discipline in order to cleanse their *ādhāra* so that the spiritual knowledge could arise within them on being coronated by the gurus (Tantraloka Ah. XIII verse 144-45 pp 94-95).

If we attempt assessment of the place of Mother Anandamayee among the different kinds of *sadhakas* in the light of above description by Abhinavagupta, we can safely put her in the category of *akalpita kalpaka sadhakas* who are not required to perform any spiritual discipline to obtain the highest spiritual wisdom. It is revealed within gradually as their *ādhāra* is purged of impurities in course of time. Such *sadhakas* are not required to approach any external guru for help and guidance. Mother Anandamayee's early life in Dhaka truly exemplifies *akalpita kalpaka sadhaka*. Her physical body was pure from the very beginning and this helped in the awakening of the highest spiritual knowledge within them automatically.

Some ardent devotees of Mother Anandamayee look upon her as an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. They argue that Mother Anandamayee descended on the earth to fulfill divine mission, for rescuing people from misery and suffering. Mother Anandamayee represents highest class of *sadhakas* or gurus who are very rare and they appear on the earth with a purpose to carry out God's will. Tailanga Swami, Shyama Charan Lahiri, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Lokenath Brahmachari, Sri Aurobindo and others all belonged to this rare class of *sadhaka* gurus in the past. It has been said in the Gurugita all spiritual aspirants should look upon their gurus, as

veritable godheads whose instructions should be followed by the disciples in letter and spirit.

*Gurureva Jagatsarvam brahma-visnu-sivatmakam/
Guroh parataram nasti tasmāt sampūjyayed gurum//
Jnanam vijñanasahitam labhyate gurubhaktitah/
Guroh parataram nasti dhyayo 'sau gurumargibhia//*

“Indeed the Guru is the whole universe, consisting of Brahman, Vishnu and Siva. There is nothing higher than the guru. Therefore, worship the guru.”

“By devotion of the Guru, one obtains knowledge as well as wisdom. There is nothing higher than the guru. Followers of the guru should meditate on him.”

(V. 80-81-Gurugita)

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This is my prayer to thee, my Lord

*— Strike, strike at the root of
penury in my heart.*

*Give me strength lightly to bear
my joys and sorrows.*

*Give me strength to make my love
fruitful in service.*

*Give me strength never to disown the
poor or bend my knees before insolent might.*

*Give me strength to raise my mind
high above daily trifles.*

*And give me strength to surrender
my strength to Thy will with love.*

— Rabindranath Tagore

A DIVINE CALL

—Pd. Krishnanand Pant

Having come from an orthodox Brahmin family of Kumaon, I was brought up in the old traditions enjoined by the *shastras*. My father in the beginning of the present century migrated to Hardwar where he was instrumental in founding the institution named, "*RISHIKUL Brahmacharya Ashram*." Being well versed in the *shastras* and an eminent advocate of *Sanatana Dharma*, he insisted on my being initiated into that cult.

After I had completed the course prescribed for higher studies in Oriental learning and passed the Matriculation examination, my father was persuaded to make arrangements for my studies in one of the Indian Universities. Accordingly I was sent to the Banaras Hindu University for further studies according to the western system of education.

I was thus educated in two different systems and imbibed influences of two different cultures. Under the glamour of the West, I began to drift away from the East and imbibed whatever was poured in from the West. The tussle was of course long and bitter, but the West with its glittering materialism got the better of the spirituality of the East. I became a confirmed materialist after a time and advocated the glory of the West with its materialism, agnosticism and other isms, in season and out of season to the exclusion of the East and its spiritual beauty.

My mind, nurtured as it was in the desert of scholastic pursuits, was lost in the deep sea of Western argument. I had become a complete stranger to the East.

During the summer vacation of 1931, I paid a visit to Mussoorie. I chanced to hear that Shri Anandamayi Ma was there, but since I was not interested in spiritual things, I only casually went and saw Her. My mind did not react. I was callously indifferent to what She represented.

Again in the years 1933 and 1938 I happened to be in Hardwar. Shri Anandamayi Ma was there and I made it a point to see her, but with no result. I was on the other hand vehement in my expressions in regard to Her, consistent with the influence that Western thought had exercised on my mind.

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The tension caused by the influence of the West was at its height when suddenly in response to an invitation of the Raja Sahib of Solan (Simla) I went to Solan in October 1946. I was invited on his behalf to attend the Durga Puja celebrations of his State, which were expected to be graced by Sri Ma's presence.

I reached Solan in time for the celebrations. A *satsanga* was being held in honour of Sri Ma and I was taken there by a friend of mine. The *sat-sanga* was about to break

up when we arrived. At the conclusion of it, however, my friend suddenly suggested that I should speak on any subject. As I was not prepared for this eventuality, I expressed hesitation. I was, however, requested to deliver a speech by Sri Ma Herself. I found myself lacking in courage to decline and therefore obeyed.

My mind was void and I did not know how to start. But as soon as I began to speak, I unconsciously waxed eloquent on the subtleties of certain ideas and also illuminated their hidden meanings. I learnt later from my friend that I had kept the audience spell-bound. But I do not know anything about this. Some mysterious force was at the back of it.

Again, on Saptami (the 2nd day of of the Puja) I was asked to recite the Devi Bhagavata. The time was very short and the reading had to be accomplished in three days' time. I therefore hesitated to undertake the task in the first instance. Since Sri Ma seemed interested in it, I nevertheless agreed to it with some hesitancy. My difficulty lay in the fact that I was not used to sit for more than two hours at a stretch, and the work entailed long sittings and the strain of reciting. But to my own amazement I was able to carry out the allotted duty with the same grace and facility as I had delivered the speech on the previous day. Yet I was not aware of it. The entire function came to a successful conclusion without my knowing how this had happened.

After the Puja celebrations were over I, along with others, took my departure. The miracle of Sri Ma's subtle touch had already reacted on my mind. I was simply transported to a super-natural world, entirely forgetful of my earthly surroundings. I felt that there was a fountain of eternal Bliss in Sri Anandamayi Ma which constantly overflows through Her and restores one to a calm serenity and cheerfulness, for the time being at least.

The change in me was radical and revealing. From cold cynicism I was carried away to the warmth of being. Vistas of infinity appeared to open out before me and I was transported to regions which are normally beyond one's comprehension. The ecstasy, though short-lived, was none-the-less suggestive and indicative of a Reality behind the fleeting scenes of our immediate surroundings.

But as soon as I came back to my normal self, I was subjected to an emotional outburst. It was so intense that there was an unceasing stream of tears accompanied by painful *hiccups*. This continued in the train also on my way back home the next day. I even went to the extent of hiding my face lest it might excite curiosity in some of the fellow-passengers and cause embarrassment to myself.

On arriving at home, I was still subject to those fits. A stream of tears would run down my cheeks without my being able to control it. I was in a fix.

Shri Ma had in the meantime arrived at Delhi. I therefore seriously began to think of paying a visit to Her there and have a talk with Her again. I had already hinted to Her at the appearance of tears etc. while I was still at Solan.

I proceeded to Delhi and on arriving at Sri Ma's residence was greeted with a

blissful smile. I had a talk with Sri Ma and the emotional up-heaval came to a standstill thereafter.

A note-worthy incident came to my notice in the course of that visit. While *satsanga* was going on at Dr. J. K. Sen's residence in New Delhi, a lady came. She had brought a dhoti which she placed over Shri Ma's shoulders. I thought that the dhoti was more suitable for man rather than for a woman and a desire to possess it flashed across my mind. Those were the days of great scarcity and dhotis were not easily procurable. This dearth might have excited that wish in my mind. But it only floated into my mind and passed off again immediately.

Later in the day, when I was about to leave, one of Sri Ma's attendants came to me and asked me to see Her before leaving the place. I did so and to my utter surprise beheld that the same dhoti on which I had cast my longing gaze a little while back, was lying before her to be presented to me as Ma's *prasad*.

Let me end up by relating one more episode. In the later part of the year 1948 a friend of mine from Delhi paid a visit to me. He had brought his own car. On his return journey he suggested that I should accompany him in his car, which was brand new, just to enjoy a drive and spend the night with him at Delhi. As I had leisure enough I readily jumped at the idea.

The car was gliding smoothly and we were engrossed in conversation to the exclusion of everything else. We were roused from the reverie, as it were by violent jerks and bumps and before we could take stock of the situation, we had been thrown out of the car unconscious of what had happened.

Later when I was recuperating from my injuries, I came to know that a Colonel who was driving his car behind us had got down at the place of the accident and seeing the condition of our car (it was a lump of steel smashed to pieces) expected that the occupants of the car would have been minced into small pieces. He started investigations and found to his utter but delightful surprise that both of us had miraculously escaped death. Only the driver had sustained grave injuries on one leg.

After I had fully recovered from the shock and the injuries, an intense desire to have a *Darshan* of Ma surged up in my heart and I hastened to pay my homage to Her at Dehradun. This desire was further intensified by a strange incident which had occurred at my home. Sri Ma's photo which was hanging on the wall of my bed-room fell down horizontally with a crash and the glass was smashed to pieces, but the photo remained standing against the wall. This, as I found upon enquiry, had happened at the time of the accident in which I had been involved.

Sri Ma greeted me with her usual smile at Dehradun and indicated that she was aware of the accident and that I had been occupying her mind at the time of its occurrence.

Sri Ma's being and Her powers are far beyond our understanding. May She grant us to know Her and through Her, our own selves.

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IN MEMORIAM*

— Prof. Govindagopal Mukhopadhyaya

[May 23,1918— March 26,2009]

Mahamahopadhyay Prof. Govindagopal Mukhopadhyaya, shed his mortal body in Kolkata on 26th March, 2009. He was 91 years old. A great devotee, a noble and wonderful human being, a scholar *par excellence*, without any trace of ego, He was born in the year 1918. He spent his childhood in the company of his Guru Sri Balananda Brahmachari Maharaj at Deoghar. Sri Balanandaji took personal care of the young Govindagopal, who was the son of Sri Prangopal Mukhopadhyay, one of the foremost disciples of Sri Balananda Brahmachari. It was at Deoghar that Govindagopal had the first darshan of Ma Anandamayee, and thus began a long association with Sri Ma which lasted till Sri Ma's *samadhi* at 1982. Ma fed and bathed young Govindagopal and nurtured him like her own son. After his initial informal education at Deoghar, Govindagopal passed his Matriculation Examination in private and later on completed his M. A. in Sanskrit from Calcutta University and stood first class first. Thereafter, he went to Benaras, as per his father's advise, and studied Indian Philosophy, Vedanta Darshan under Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and Mahamahopadhyay Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj. He received his doctorate from Calcutta University. After a few years of teaching in Benaras Hindu University, Krishnagar College and the Sanskrit College at Calcutta, he joined as the head, Department of Sanskrit, Burdwan University. He was also associated as Visiting Professor with a number of Universities. After his retirement, Govindagopal was closely associated with the Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata as a research - scholar.

Govindagopal will be remembered, not only for his exemplary academic achievements, but for his wonderful and illuminating way of giving discourses on the *Shastras*, which he delivered in many institutions all over India. Endowed with a divine sonorous voice, no religious gathering was complete without his stirring rendition of *stotras* and *bhajans*.

Govindagopal had a special and close relationship with Sri Ma's institutions and attended a lot of programmes when Sri Ma was in Her body. Even after Sri Ma's leaving Her body, he had visited Kankhal and Varanasi a number of times and had

* The write-up very kindly sent by Mr. Supratik Banerjee of Kolkata, a very devoted student and admirer of the great scholar.

given discourses on the scriptures. His extraordinary book "Mahajan Samvad" contains his unique experiences with Sri Ma. He had dedicated his book "Bhagabater Katha" to Sri Ma and Sri Krishnaprem. He was a *sadhaka* first and last. Living a spartan life till the very end, he shunned publicity and never sought public acclaim or admiration, which is something very rare nowadays. He has written quite a few books in English, each of which is a masterpiece, and which will be cherished and treasured by spiritual seekers for generations to come.

Govindagopal was not just a scholar or an academician. He was a unique *sadhaka*. He had the privilege of receiving the blessings of great spiritual personages such as Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati, Srimat Anirvan, Sri Krishnaprem, Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, to name a few.

Govindagopal always used to say that our *shastras* are our greatest spiritual legacy which we should cherish and nourish. In this alone lies the salvation of our nation. Let us all meditate on the *shastras* and celebrate the legacy left behind by our *rishis*.

This would be our greatest tribute to the great savant, Govindagopal Mukhopadhyaya.

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"It is incumbent on man to consider everything that happens to be for the best: 'For the best' denoting what is most helpful towards the realization of the Divine, the realization of the fullness of Bliss."

—Ma Anandamayee