

**MA ANANDAMAYEE**  
**AMRIT VARTA**

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

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## MATRI VANI

God alone is Truth, Happiness, Bliss. Do not set your hopes on anything except Supreme Beatitude, The Bliss of the self. Nothing else exist. What seems to exist outside of it is merely illusion. Try to find yourself ! All this clamoring is but natural to man. He cries out again and again in the endeavour to get of this sense of emptiness.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is the pure undefiled flower that finds a place at the feet of the Lord and nowhere else. Take great care to spend your life in spotless purity, worthy to be dedicated in worship to the Lord. Speak about Him, meditate on His glory, try to see Him in everyone. Him who is the self the breath of your life, the heart of your heart.... you feel lonely but very truth you are not alone. Does the Supreme Friend ever forsake His friends.

\* \* \* \* \*

Your mother may not display her affection outwardly, yet she is and always remains your real mother. Even through you may want to push the mother aside, she will never leave you. Are you not Her offspring? A mother does what is good and beneficial for the child. She gives to her child exactly what is needed, not more and not less. Her forgiveness knows no limits, this is why she called "Mother".

\* \* \* \* \*

The more one advances towards the Divine that less prominent the action that cause anguish and distress.... remember this! worldly undertakings do give temporary happiness with agonizing sorrow sneaking behind like a shadow. Because a pilgrim on the path to self realization.

\* \* \* \* \*

Truth itself protects truth. A hundred activities, a hundred obstacles, not paying heed to be completely truthful, no notice need to be taken of who has said what by those who are vowed to truth. A person who speaks the truth, performs good deeds and lives-in an atmosphere of the truth — God Himself become his protector.

\* \* \* \* \*

INQUIRER : It is all in God's hands.

MATAJI : Exactly ! Always bear this in mind : Every thing is in God's hands, and you are His tool to be grasp the significance of "all is His", and you will immedi-

atly feel free from all burdens. What will be the result of your surrender to Him? None will seem alien, all will be your very own, yourself.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Thou art mother, Thou art Father, Thou art Friend and Thou are Master Truly, Thou art all in all. Every name is Thy Name, Every quality Thy Quality, Every form Thy Form indeed.

\*

## MAA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG

—Prof. A.K. Datta-Gupta

[Continued from before]

Dhaka, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1945

Today is the day of grand festival. After reaching ashram I found that Commissioner of Dhaka Mr. Lariken Sahib along with his wife came to see Shri Shri Maa Lariken Sahib asked in English to Ma why did not she stay in Dhaka. Ma replied "I am in Dhaka".

Mr. Lariken said, why we do not see you? Shri Shri Ma told with smile that you people did not have the spectacle to see me.

On Ma's this reply all who were present their also smiled.

Mr. Lariken too smilingly told Ma that be present here physically not spiritually so that we could see you and remain obliged. Shri Shri Ma told that I am in Dhaka physically and it is for this that reason some people see me in Dhaka even when where I am away. Besides, now when I am in Dhaka only those who want to see me are seeing me physically.

Mrs. Lariken told, the girls of Bengal do not know to render services. In other countries girls, participating in the activities of Red Cross are pursuing the cult of service but the girls of Bengal do not act so. If you advise them to join Red cross then many of them would do so.

Shri Shri Ma replied, It is not true the girls of Bengal do not know how to serve. They render services in the best manner to their Father, Mother, Brother and Sister and this is how serving them they discharge their duties honestly. But they are not used to serving others outside the family. Because to them even seeing the outsiders is not good. Because they are not available for outside works. But boys are already involved into such kind of activities. Mr. Lariken replied, they are doing it to earn money. Shri Shri Ma said, it is true but to serve others for service-sake should be the ideal.

After such type of deliberation for some time, Mr. & Mrs. Lariken left with a request to Ma to come to Dhaka. Shri Shri Ma replied with smile that I am a baby so when you call me then only I could come. As Ma used the English word baby so she

said casually to all of us that now you are convinced that I could speak English also. We all smiled.

### **Is it moral to pray to Guru for any worldly gain ?**

Shrijukta Pramath Basu was waiting to ask one question to Ma. He put his question, after departure of commissioner sahib, that could we make prayer before guru for the fulfillment of any kind of worldly gain.

Shri Shri Ma replied why can't? If any prayer is to be made it must be done before Guru only because no one else except Guru is the proper person. But if Guru does not like your such prayer, he will not give heed to this and you may feel disturbed. But if Guru wishes he may make efforts to convince you as to why he has not acceded your prayer.

Pramath Babu seemed to be satisfied hearing Ma's answer to his query. Meanwhile the arrangements are being made for the grand celebration.

Manmohan Babu Bhupati Babu, Nivayan Babu all of them were looking after the works related to function and Sachin Babu was doing Kirtan, which was quite appealing. At about 1-2 O clock at noon Shri Shri Ma was observing from Annapurna temple the persons who were providing food, who were cooking and who were making the people cheerful. People were offering their prayers by tacking the name of Shri Shri Anandamayee Ma and Baba Bholanath very frequently. Shri Shri Ma saw all this for some time then went inside Annapurna Mandir for taking rest.

Prasad distribution continued from 3 PM to 8 PM. In the mean time I went back to my home after taking prasad:

### **Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Shri Maa**

At about 9 o'clock in the night Manoranjan Babu alongwith Jatin reached Ashram. He saw that *prasad* distribution was over and all workers sat to get *prasad* while Shri Shri Ma was engaged in talking to some persons in private about some important matter.

At about 11 o'clock in the night Ma sat on the ground, we also sat near her. Bhupender Babu asked Ma we came to know that you met Mahatma Gandhi. We wish to know about your this meeting with him. Shri Shri Ma said that I did not want to tell it by myself. You please listen it from Hariram and Abhay who were present there.

Bhupen Babu said we desire to hear it from you Ma. Ma said let them start if in

the mean time I feel to tell then I would join them. Ma then asked Abhay to tell and he started;

Mahatma Gandhi heard much about Ma from Kamla Nehru. Hence he sent Jamunalal Bajaj to meet Ma. Bajaj Bahu went there to stay for three days in Ma's Ashram, but he desired to stay more in the company of Ma. As a result he sent telegrams one after another for extension of his leave and remained in Raipur ashram for more days. That is how his period of stay increased from 3 days to 15 days. Yet he wished to stay more. He went to Ma to advise him as to whether he should send telegram to Mahatmaji for further extension of leave, then Ma said Mahatma Ji may grant further extension but as he sent a telegram for going back, you should then act accordingly.

Abhay told this much and then Ma started speaking that Raba (Bajaj Mahashay) desired to talk with me in private for about half an hour. During that period he sat in silence and some time he put his head in the lap of my body. This was his way of talking with me in loneliness.

With a desire to have my company he sought permission to purchase a piece of land in Raipur to construct a house. Ma replied you could purchase land but do not wish anything else. After getting permission he purchased land. Ma also advised him there is no certainty of continuity of breath in this life, hence it is high time that you should detach yourself from worldly affairs and he abided by fully. After reaching Ahmedabad he left his mansion and built an ashram in which arrangement was made for providing residential facilities to unmarried girls and for serving the cows. Thereafter Shri Shri Ma asked Abhay to continue.

Abhay told that it was an intense desire of Bajaj ji that Mahatma Gandhi should have company of Shri Shri Ma. It was for this reason that after reaching Ahmedabad he sent telegrams to Ma one after another, for coming there and started making an arrangement so big that had never been made for any leader in any part of India. But Ma did not feel to go there. As a result Ma could not meet Mahatma Ji during the life time of Bajaj ji.

Few days after when Ma was travelling she came to know through his son that Bajaj ji had passed away. He, who was bereaved, also requested repeatedly to Ma that once she must come to Ahmedabad, so that my bereaved would get peace of mind. Shri Shri Ma consoled him, saying that do not be sad for your father as he is here itself. He is near me in the same dress as he wore when he was alive, with topi on his head.



At that point to time Ma was travelling on the same road that was leading to Ahmedabad and then she thought to go to Ahmedabad. So she reached the ashram of Jamanalal Bajaj ji alongwith us. On the arrival of Ma, people at that place had a feeling of jubilation. During that period Mahatma Gandhi was also present in Sevagram. He was busy with some important political issue with other leaders. Hence it was not possible for him to meet Ma at her place of stay. So he sent messages again and again to Ma for coming to Sevagram. However Ma did not feel appropriate to go there. Meanwhile a gentlemen told her that if she could not go to Sevagram then old Mahatmaji had to come here which could be troublesome to him. Hearing this Ma immediately decided to leave for Sevagram.

At the evening Ma reached Gandhiji's Ashram when he was present in his cottage together with other leaders of the nation. As soon as Shri Shri Ma's vehicle reached Sevagram Gandhiji's smilingly invited her to come inside. Ma rushed towards Gandhiji who embraced her by saying that I heard from Kamala that you are her guru. Ma replied I had no disciples.

Now, Ma again spoke that Gandhiji ji told me do you know who sent Bajaj to you, it was I. Mahatmaji said he told me I felt a divine peace within three days in the company of Ma, which I could not feel in fifteen years of your company. Gandhiji (Baba) insisted her to stay for that night, but she did not agree to this. Then he looking at all other leaders said if you would not accept my request — what all of them who abide by my advice would think about me. I told him that my father (Mahatma ji) do not mind this. Then he told that you are a very stubborn daughter. I told her that I am your daughter hence I should imitate the traits of my father.

Thereafter again Abhay continued that how both of them kept on their dialogue. He further said that both of them were very soft-spoken and so their conversation was so soothing and appealing that it can't be expressed in words.

Ma again spoke that I told Gandhiji one day I would enter in your cottage silently. Then Gandhiji replied this is how thieves and dacoits enter. I told him I would steal everything and if time permits I would also take you with me.

At the request of Gandhiji Ma stayed that night in Sevagram.

\*

## MATAJI GIVES DARSHAN

—Melita Maschmann

[Translated from German]

Towards the end of the summer of 1962, I visited India for few weeks. My knowledge of Indian religion and philosophy was almost nil, which was due to the fact that I had been unable to prepare myself for the trip. In the very first days, 'chance' (if there is such a thing) led me to a famous saint. Subsequently, I believe that a centre of - *karmayoga* has to be seen in his Ashram, and it would surely be pre-sumptuous if I dared to give an opinion. But at that time I was disappointed: Probably I noticed only the surface.

However, after this experience I decided to keep away from the living saints of India and to let the-past speak to me through its temples. But 'chance' brought me straight to Ma Anandamayi at Kankhal. While waiting for her in the small courtyard of the Ashram, I was angry with myself, what a waste of time : could I expect anything but new - disappointment ? If someone had told me that I would a few hours later kneel before a human being, I should have laughed. My religious upbringing forbids such a gesture, except in specially solemn moments of divine worship.

About 15 people had been waiting together with me. At dusk we were taken to a roof-garden. When later Mataji appeared, I had no choice to decide whether it would be against my convictions to, kneel before a human being. 'It' simply threw me on my knees. What I experienced in the next few seconds cannot be conveyed to a person who has never known anything similar. I can only relate outer signs and speak in metaphors. Just imagine that a tree- a beautiful, strong, old beech for instance- approaches you with calm steps. What would you feel? "Have I gone crazy?" you would ask yourself. "or perhaps I am dreaming?" Finally you would have to concede that you had entered a new dimension of reality of which you had hitherto been ignorant. This exactly was my position.

So far as we know, it is part of the nature of a tree to be rooted into the ground, is it not? According to western thinking, a human being is characterized by his 'I'. In his existence as 'persona' christians recognize the mystery of his immortality. Here I was suddenly confronted with a human being of whom I felt that she had no 'I' anymore,

Expressed in non-medical language, it may be said of certain mentally deranged patients that their 'I' is disjoined or diffused and that they have thereby lost the special quality which is the distinctive mark of a human being. I have come across such patients. The profound senselessness of their existence called forth a similar horror as I felt at the sight of a forest in the mountains after a heavy storm: the old pine-trees stood with their crowns piercing the earth and their roots striking up towards the sky.

However, here now is Mataji—a human being that has no more 'I' and just because of this, is not less but more than all other men I have ever met.

Later I read much about this and learnt that egolessness is one of the characteristics of a *jivan mukti*. But at that time I did not know anything about it except what I saw with my own eyes. That I did not deceive myself is testified by a letter written to friends, which marks an inarticulate attempt to express what I had experienced. I wrote: "..... She seems to be a human being without an 'I', belonging to the category of *Mata Ganga* or *Pita Himalaya*. Looking at Her, one feels that she must have transcended good and evil." (These considerations crowded upon me, while I felt that I did not understand their significance.) Something similar I also said a few days later to one of the ashramites who replied: "Do not imagine it is your merit that you have been able to recognize her so instantaneously. It depends entirely on Mataji how much she allows anyone to see of Her." I gladly agreed to this statement. Everything great in our life is a gift, or as the Christians say—Grace.

While writing all this I realize that I am talking much, because I haven't the courage to say something about Mataji Herself, and even less to describe Her. In my travel diary there are a few groping sentences: "Mataji has the superpersonal personality that speaks to us when we stand at the seashore or at the foot of a mighty mountain. But what is it that speaks to us in those moments? Surely not the sea, whom men have named as one names a child. The child is then its name. Mataji also must have been given a name when She was born. But what is the significance of Her existence grasped under that name? Anyone who would address Her by that name may be compared to a man who wants to attach a label to the Indian Ocean....."

"For about ten minutes Mataji slowly walked up and down along the far side of the roof-garden. Sometimes She stopped and gazed at the sky. She did not seem to notice us. The evening clouds were reflected in her eyes. What I perceived there is quite beyond the ken of rational thinking. The clouds, the woods, the mountain range of the Himalayas dived into that gaze as if it were their own home. When the moon is mirrored in a puddle of rain-water, it becomes tiny and pale. But Mataji's eyes reflected the sky as only the ocean can: sisterly, out of the same order of creation.

"While watching Mataji, my whole body was trembling. What confounded and perplexed me so greatly was that this 'phenomenon Anandamayi Ma' did not fit into any place of my scheme of the world. Just as the tree that starts walking cannot be fitted in anywhere and therefore threatens to blow up the habitual order.

"Later Mataji sat down on a couch kept ready for Her, and conversed with the people. The strange, bewildering element of Her being receded into the background, but never for a moment entirely disappeared. One could endeavour to forget it. Then, a woman clad in a white sari-I should have estimated her about 50-whose hair fell loosely over her shoulders and back, sat there between the cushions. Gracefully and at the same time with vigour, She was engaged in a lively conversation. Occasionally She broke out into laughter, then again seemed absorbed in some deep contemplation; off and on affectionate mockery could be detected in the corners of Her eyes. While she discussed some theological problem with a distinguished old Indian dressed in European style, She reminded me of my teacher of mathematics who was a great philosopher and every likely searched for a mathematical formula by which to define God. At one moment a tattered old peasant woman who was almost blind and gave off an indescribable smell, came and squatted on the floor close to Mataji. Mataji bent down low to her. For several minutes their heads almost seemed to touch and one could hear a soft murmuring. Mataji listened with Her whole being. A kindness was expressed in this, which represented something human to perfection....."

That evening I made up my mind to drop all other plans and to proceed to Dehradun where Mataji was expected within the next few days. In the meanwhile I attempted in vain to gain clarity about what I had seen and felt. Finally I decided to postpone this for later and first of all to take in with all my senses. In Kishenpur Mataji would appear twice daily, usually for about two hours, and was then mostly - subjected to the onrush of Her devotees and admirers. Except for a very few hours of sleep, She had privates' for the rest of the days and nights.

Several times She Herself saw to it that I could sit very near to Her in spite of the crowd. I felt like an enthusiastic lover of music : while opening himself, heart and soul, to the enchantment of the music, he at the same time observes the way the instruments are played. Mataji's presence filled me with an irresistible mysterious fascination, such as I had never before experienced. And yet I was simultaneously clearly aware of the specific human element in Her.

*(Will continue in next volume)*

## THOUGHT POWER

"Mother As Revealed to me" — Bhaiji

Every single thought of Mother is the outcome of Supreme Beatitude; on closer scrutiny you will find every fibre of her Being vibrant with Divine Bliss.

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

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

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

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

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

*Kirtan* started at 10 AM while Mother was putting vermilion on the foreheads of the assembled ladies. Suddenly, the vermilion case dropped from her hand. Her body

sank down flat to the ground and began to roll on it; then She slowly rose and stood on the two big toes of Her feet. Both hands were raised straight up. Her head slightly tilted to one side and a little backwards, and Her radiant eyes stared with a steady gaze towards the far end of the sky.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In concord with Her breath, Her body was thrown into rhythmic surges like waves and with Her limbs stretched out it rolled on the ground in time to the music. Just as the fallen leaves of a tree roll on lightly, blown by the wind, so light and delicate were Her movements. No human being, in spite of his best efforts could have imitated

them. Everybody present felt that Mother was dancing under the impact of heavenly forces which moved Her whole being in wave-like thrills. Many tried to stop Her without any success. At last Her movement ceased and she remained motionless like a lump of clay. She appeared to be steeped in all permeating, all pervading Bliss. Her countenance was a glow with a heavenly light, Her whole body overflowing with Divine Ananda.

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

\*

## SAMYAM SAPTAH AT AHMEDABAD

(Taken from "I am Ever with you")

Matri Leela Vol. 2.

—Atmanand Ji

Mataji went to Bombay at the special request of H.H. Rajmata saheba of Gwalior who had arranged for a *Bhagavata Saptah* for the benefit of the soul of her deceased husband, the late Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, who died about a year ago. Mataji reached Bombay on November 17th and for three days, she attended the Saptah for several hours daily. Mataji stayed for three nights in a Shiva temple inside the compound of the Gwalior Palace, just on the sea side in Worli, Bombay. The Rajmata Saheba's spirit of service and attention to even the minutest details is rather unique. On the 21<sup>st</sup> evening She left for Ahmedabad where the 14<sup>th</sup> Samyam Mahavrata was held from November 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>.

As a rule this yearly function is observed in a place of pilgrimage. This time, however, Ahmedabad was chosen to fulfil the special wish of Late Shri Kantilal Munshaw, an ardent and very active devotee of many year's standing, who unfortunately passed away suddenly about four years ago. Shortly before he died, he had begged of Mataji the privilege to arrange for a Samyam Saptah in his own residence in Ahmedabad. Ever since then his family was anxiously waiting for an opportunity to fulfil his wish.

All arrangements were excellent and carefully thought out to the minutest detail: A dainty and artistically decorated little house built of asbestos and matting for Mataji's personal use and a large and elegant pandal equipped with fans, light and loudspeakers were erected in the compound of the residence of the Mushaw family. Many devotees, who have made it a point to take part in the Samyam Vrata every year without fail, had come from considerable distances and the bhaktas of Bombay and Gujarat naturally attended in numbers. Among the vratis were also two Western guests who had come to India for the sole purpose of spending some time with Mataji, namely, Shri Durga Mata of the Self Realization Fellowship, who arrived straight from Los Angeles and Melita Maschmann, the well-known German novelist whose article: 'Mataji gives Darshan' appeared in the last August issue of 'Ananda Varta.'

### **Mataji showed us how to face calamities**

The hardships and inconveniences of camp life that the vratis had to contend with



on former occasions in places like Naimisharanya, Sukhtal, Rishikesh and so forth, were this time conspicuous by their absence. The vratīs were accommodated in private houses in the neighbourhood and those who stayed at a distance of half a mile or more were regularly taken backwards and forwards by cars. As if to make up for this lack of austerity a quite untimely and very severe thunder storm broke out on the third day of the function, just a few minutes after the collective morning meditation had started. Torrential rain began to batter the canvas roof of the pandal and, where it gathered, it burst through the canvas with the vehemence of waterfalls. The fury of the storm seemed to threaten most of all the platforms on which Mataji and the Mahatmas had their seats. A large piece of waterproof had to be held above Mataji's head by two tall men to protect Her from water leaking through the roof and, when after a little while the roof was in danger of falling right down over head, a larger after was brought to support the canvas. Big vessels arrived from the kitchen to catch the rain that had began to form little pools in several places of the pandal, but the vessels filled up in no time and had to be emptied again and again with the help of buckets. All this activity was carried on in complete silence. Mataji herself sat like a statue until the meditation hour was over. Many vratīs followed her exale and remained in their places without budging, continuing their japa and dhyana, notwithstanding their drenched clothes, others were forced to move from their seats and to stand up, but perfect calm and quiet was maintained by everyone. Sixteen ceiling fans and many tube lights had been fixed in the roof of the tent and one can easily imagine what might have happened if even a part of the roof had collapsed and crashed down on the vratīs. When the short kirtan that always follows the meditation had been sung, the announcer requested the congregation to vacate the pandal without delay, as Mataji would not leave the tent until the last person was in safety. As soon as the last vratīs left the pandal and Mataji also came out, the huge pandal collapsed in the twinkling of an eye. It was indeed a miracle that no one was hurt. We could not help remembering the legend in which Shri Krishna is supposed to have held mount Govardhana over the cowherds to protect them from torrential rains. Here also it seemed obvious that only Divine Grace was responsible for saving the situation.

The vratīs were then asked to collect on the verandah and in the spacious drawing-room of the house, while Mataji, who never enters the house of a grihastha, sat under the porch. The programme proceeded as scheduled, there was no interruption at all. In the evening we were informed that a new pandal was under construction and would be ready by 4 a.m. the next morning. Lo and behold, the pandal was actually ready for use with lights and loudspeakers, and Mataji arrived punctually at that early hour and stayed throughout the kirtan, blessing the newly built structure with her presence.

Thus, what might ordinarily have resulted in panic and caused even a serious calamity, became on the other hand a source of inspiration. The whole incident seemed to have been turned into an object lesson of how difficulties and emergencies should be met. A sadhaka must regard every difficulty or trouble as an opportunity to develop initiative, courage and powers, as an incentive to make him proceed on his chosen path with even greater determination and vigour.

When, with the erection of a new pandal within 16 hours, a serious obstacle had been overcome, the spirit of the function seemed to rise perceptibly. Mataji attended the satsang from longer hours; some eminent Mahatmas arrived and enlightened the audience by their brilliant and highly interesting discourse. Chhabi Banerji, the radio artist from Calcutta was among the vratis and there was more music this time than on former occasion. Mataji herself sang almost daily for a short while to the delight of everyone present.

No sooner had the Samyam Saptah been successfully accomplished, than Mataji began to follow invitations to the houses of devotees. The daily satsang was now held in various places of Ahmadabad. Mataji also visited a few schools. One early morning, she gave an hour and a half to Sarada Vidya Mandir, a school in which all the pupils join into a religious gathering every morning even on sundays. A few songs, exercises and fifteen minute of silent meditation to very soft instrumental music formed their routine starting every single day.

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## THE MOST GRACIOUS PRESENCE SRI MA ANANDAMAYEE

Sri Ma Anandamayi continued to travel. In retrospect the, travels appear as a harmonious flow of action, a seamless weaving of many variables. After leaving Dhaka in 1932. Sri Ma had travelled with Bholanath, Bhaiji, Didi, Akhandananda (Didi's father) and a few other very close associates. They were mostly Bengalis. After the passing away of Bholanath a major change which came to the fore by imperceptible degrees was the gradual disintegration of the close-knit family type set-up. Sri Ma wandering among strangers acquired a retinue of Kashmiris, Punjabis, and hill-folk from surrounding mountain regions. The word "stranger", however, is not right. Nobody was ever a stranger to Sri Ma. All newcomers became as if family from day one. The newcomers did not ask questions, about her early life. They accepted her as they found her-a miracle in herself (as stated by Mahalakshmi), a radiant taintless being, whose loving glance of welcome and acceptance called forth an allegiance at once undemanding and fulfilling.

Sri Ma accompanied by only Ruma Devi and Abhaya went up to Simla in July 1939 to attend the annual event of the nama-yajna. Since Sri Ma was without her retinue of long-time companions she seemed more accessible to local people who now had the privilege of looking to her simple requirements. They could mix more freely with her and found it to be a charming experience. This happened in all the places she visited such as Moradabad, Bareilly, Lucknow, Faizabad and Burdwan.

In the beginning of August 1939 Sri Ma came to Kolkata. She went first to the house of Jatish Gaha (Bunidi's father). She stood outside the closed gates and with the help of Abhaya sang a few lines of Kirtan, in the manner of street singers. The family recognizing Sri Ma's voice tumbled out of the house in great joy and excitement. Accompanied by this group Sri Ma went on to other houses to announce her arrival in the city in this endearing way. The welcome news spread to all concerned like wild fire. Within a short time, Birla Mandir, where Sri Ma had put up, was teeming with a happy crowd of men, women and children.

After a few days in Kolkata. Sri Ma travelled to Dhaka. Outwardly many things had changed round her. The absence of Bholanath was felt keenly by such devotees as had known him for as long as they had known Sri Ma. But they also realized that

Sri Ma's luminous personality was her very own and that she was entirely sufficient unto herself.

Surrounded by a large contingent from Kolkata and Dhaka, Sri Ma proceeded to Kheora, the village where she was born nearly 43 years ago. Even in these remote villages, people had heard about "Sri Anandamayi Ma" who used to be their little Nirmala, a well-beloved slip of a girl, so endearingly charming toward one and all.

People from nearby villages came to Kheora to greet and welcome the village girl who had become so famous. Sri Ma accompanied by her retinue paid visits to all the families who had known her in her childhood. She recalled many incidents of those early days. The village folk were delighted to be remembered so well. Summing up the general impression Sri Ma's childhood friend and namesake Nirmala Devi exclaimed in wonder, "Why, you haven't changed at all."

In fact Sri Ma was now middle-aged! Her social status had changed from that of a married woman to widowhood; far and wide she had been recognized as a Teacher who spoke from a position of authority; yet the spontaneous remark highlighted the essential timelessness of this most gracious presence.

LakshmiKanta Bhattacharya had donated to the devotees a piece of land in Kheora. A small building had been constructed on it. On 29th August, 1939, it was inaugurated as an Ashram. All devotees were pleased to have a temple in Kheora to be cherished as an important site for future pilgrimages. From Kheora Sri Ma travelled to Sultanpur and other nearby villages. Accompanied by an ever swelling crowd of companions she travelled leisurely in small boats, threading their way through the shallow waterways around rice-fields, halting occasionally when the sun became too hot under the overhanging branches of big trees. In this fashion she arrived at Vidyakut on September 10. Sri Ma had spent much of her childhood at Vidyakut, especially after her marriage and before she went to stay at Revati Mohan's, her eldest brother-in-law. All the elders of the village greeted her affectionately and lovingly, addressing her in the familiar second person (tui) and then became a little self-conscious wondering if the devotees from Kolkata and Dhaka would take it amiss.

In a couple of days, a change came over the people of Vidyakut. They were in a quandary. They could not keep up the tone of familiarity although Sri Ma did nothing to dissuade them. Speaking diffidently, they sought her guidance in spiritual matters. Even the elders asked her to say something to them. Sri Ma was quick to respond to the changed mood of the people. She spoke to them about the samyam vrata of one day, her usual response to large groups of people eager to make a beginning in sadhana.

### **The samyam vrata of one day :**

Sri Ma said, "If possible make resolve to dedicate one day in one week (or one month) to the spiritual quest. The day should be devoted to japa, path (reading of scriptures) dhyana and kirtan (if one is so inclined). On the day, eat sparingly, speak only when necessary. Watch your own actions and words to avoid the least wrongdoing or incorrect statement. Emotions should be under control, one should look upon children as child-manifestations of the Divine. (bal-Gopala), one's husband or wife, not only as an object of love but reverence as well. Try to render service to all members of the family including servants, in a spirit of humility (seva-bhava). Even if their should be occasions for anger or other provocations, one should respond with calmness and not be jolted out of a tranquil frame of mind. There will be failures in the beginning but one should persevere till the goal of perfect samyam (control) in thought, speech and action is achieved. Even if one member of the family practices this vrata the entire family will feel the calming effect of that one day."

After a pause, Sri Ma added amidst laughter, "May be some naughty children would seek to take advantage of you, but it will pass. If you feel confident you may increase it to twice a week or even more. The aim is for it to become a way of life, rather than a special occasion. On this day, give maximum time to the study of sacred literature, practise a little meditation and also nama-japa. You can draw up a schedule which suits you best. This Samyama vrata will help you to turn inward, to be in tune with the rhythm of your own life-breath which links you to the cosmic breath (visvaptana). In this way you may hope to realize your own Self because who knows at what auspicious moment you may not get caught up in that universal rhythm of Perfect Harmony."

After this delightful interlude with the villagers of rural Bengal Sri Ma left this part of the country altogether and came to the foothills of the Himalayas. She visited Solan for a while and from there she travelled to Suket, another hill state about a hundred and fifty miles from Pathankot. The Raja of Suket had been very pressing in his requests for Sri Ma to visit his state. He was one of those rulers who had the welfare of his people closest to his heart. It was his belief that the presence of Sri Anandamayi Ma in his state would sanctify it and be of immense benefit for its people.

Sri Ma's companions were impressed by the lavish arrangements for ceremonial receptions as soon as they crossed over into the state of Suket. The Raja, who was himself driving Sri Ma's car, would stop at key points to enable his subjects to gather round and pay their respects to the guest of honour.

Sri Ma's room inside the palace grounds had been prepared with as much care, concern and splendour as if it were the temple of the presiding deity of the state. After a few days of joyous activities which characterized Sri Ma's presence anywhere, it was time to leave. On the day of departure the Raja placed before Sri Ma a heap of costly farewell gifts. Sri Ma looking upon the rich and glittering collection said to Thim gently. "These things that you have presented to me are now mine, so I should be free to bestow them on anybody I choose? I shall entrust them to worthy people who will take good care of them on my behalf". Saying so Sri Ma started distributing the gifts to the distinguished company assembled in her room to bid her farewell. She did not discriminate between the members of the Raja's family, important officers of the court and the group of palace servants who also had assembled to pay their respects to her. The heap of costly ornaments, gold and silver coins, silks, brocades, etc. vanished in moments. The Raja of Suket, an extraordinary devotee that he was remained totally obedient to Sri Ma's expressed kheyala about his princely gifts as about everything else.

Sri Ma at times described herself as an *uda pakhi*, that is a bird on the wing, a bird which perches on a random branch for a while and then flies off to alight on another. After leaving Suket Sri Ma passed through Baijnath and Amritsar. She made a short stay at Bareilly on her way to Almora. The well-educated, sophisticated and affluent ladies of Bareilly had their own special way of celebrating Sri Ma's presence in their midst. At Almora, the scene was different. The simple highland women clustered found her singing and dancing to the tune of "ambe gauri maiya". A group of eight of these women were known as Sri Ma's *asta-Sakhis* (the eight friends). From the villages of Bengal, to the palaces of ruling princes, to the interior of Himalayan hill-towns, the perches of the "bird on the wing" were indeed many and varied.

Sri Ma came away from the high mountains to the hilltop ashram of Vindhyaçal on November 4, 1930. The war had been declared. Although India was not directly involved, it felt the impact in many ways. The political struggle for independence gathered strength. The Indian leaders said, in effect, that a free India would join the allies but the British Government had no moral right to deploy Indian troops to different theatres of war without the consent of an Indian Government. All this was brushed aside by the War Cabinet. It was not yet time for the "liquidation of the Empire."

From Vindhyaçal Sri Ma went to Kolkata in response to many requests from anxious devotees for her presence. She made a prolonged stay in the city over the

Christmas holidays of 1939. The political turmoil augmented by news of the war receded to insignificance when Sri Ma was near. Her serene mien had calming effect on all agitation.

The devotees of Kolkata soon had cause for real worry and concern. Sri Ma herself began to show signs of ill-health, so much so, that many sought her permission to call in doctors. Sri Ma, ever amenable to the suggestions of her companions, acquiesced, saying 'Now I shall have the darshan of many doctor pitajis and kaviraj pitajis.'

A few eminent doctors of the town as well as well-known Kavirajas (practitioners of indian medicine) came for consultations and treatment. After a few days of examinations of their extraordinary "patient" they acknowledged that they were baffled by the sudden appearance and disappearance of symptoms. How should they prescribe medicines when there was nothing to prescribe for : They appealed to Sri Ma to cure herself by, her own, kheyala. Sri Ma now had acquired a new group of devotees namely the medical practitioners of Eastern and Western medicines. One day she spoke to them. "The fact of the matter is that this body does not always follow the usual rules of good health. Sometimes, due to a lack of kheyala the body tends toward quietude. At such times if it is obliged to take in food, then the food may act as an impediment. So you may see symptoms of liver or stomach disorder. But since they are not diseases as such, they disappear when my kheyala is engaged toward a normal health condition. This is why you are unable to diagnose a disease or prescribe a treatment."

The doctors had come to the same conclusion already so they had no difficulty in understanding what she was saying. Sri Ma added rather mischievously. "You may have given rise to a new problem. People have seen so many doctors and kavirajas visiting me, they will think that Ma is suffering from some terrible disease, but her companions are trying to keep it secret from the public."

Sri Ma however, in response to the appeal by her new devotees, made a swift recovery by herself. The cloud of despondency was dispelled and all was joy again. It may be recalled here that a year earlier she had been ill in Hardwar at Dr. Pant's house and had recovered by yogic kriyas after her host had prayed to her to do so.

While Sri Ma was ill, Didi had written to all devotees to pray for her recovery. In response to this letter, Birendra C. Mukerjee (Didi's eldest brother) had written back giving a very scholarly and penetrating exegesis on Sri Ma's "illness", He had reminded Didi very gently not to forget that Sri Ma's body was not an ordinary one.

The composition of elements of this particular advent was beyond the grasp of human intelligence. It was for Sri Ma's attendants to abide by the kheyala, be it for what may look illness. Sri Ma was not limited by her surroundings. Who could tell if she were not responding to events taking place elsewhere and taking upon herself the suffering of people we know nothing about. "To us her illness may seem odd or erratic but we may be sure it had a good reason and was effectively beneficial for humanity." Obviously Birendra Chandra had related Sri Ma's physical disorder with disastrous events taking place elsewhere in the world.

Didi was a bit consoled by this letter but for her not to be disturbed by Sri Ma's palpable discomfort was scarcely possible. Throughout the ensuing many years Sri Ma was often seen as if to right herself by yogic kriyas. While her body was assuming yogic postures she would pronounce mantras or strings of words in Sanskrit. These manifestations were isolated events and did not interfere with her usual way of life. As always the yogic kriyas seemed to happen to her, a spontaneous rhythm activated a series of movements beautiful to behold. Her face would be luminous with an inner light and yet she would be quite her normal self. These were not bhavavasthas i.e. not like the states which her companions had seen in Dhaka in the early days of her public appearance. As always the supra-normal and the normal were so intermingled in her that all that was extraordinary seemed commonplace. Sri Ma returned to Vindhyachala in January, 1940.

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## **MATRI KRIPA AT PURI (ABOUT 1950-51)**

(As related by Smt. S.N. Sopory to her younger son Ajay Sopory.)

Our father Shri. S.N. Sopory and mother Padma were affectionately known among Matajis' devotees as Soporybhai and Padmabehn.

On one of their several long weekend trips to be with Mataji in the Puri Ashram, late on Saturday night Soporybhai and Padmabehn offered pranams to Ma and, as usual, informed Ma of their intention to depart early next morning from Puri to Calcutta, by train on which they had reservations.

On this occasion Mataji sweetly remarked to them that it was very pleasant in Puri and in Her presence, so why were they leaving? Soporybhai explained he was going to attend his office in Calcutta on Monday. Mataji still very benignly enquired "You are the chief of your office?" Soporybhai remarked he was indeed the Calcutta Branch Manager of his company and felt he could take some liberty with casual leave from his office. So, he and Padmabehn, in deference to Mataji's expressed opinion, stayed on another day at Puri in Mataji's divine presence. It was delayed to get their reservation canceled so the rail tickets were allowed to lapse.

They had a surprise the next morning when they got the news that the train they had to travel met to a major accident. It dawned on them that it was Mataji's Kripa on Her devotees.

Mataji's devotees should recollect Bhaiji's "Twelve Special Directions to Devotees of Ma" (translated into English by Soporybhai and approved by Pt. Gopinath Kavirajji, published in 1979 in its IIIrd edition, English - Hindi, in a booklet named 'Dwadash Pradeep'). Direction Number six is "As a result of some good acts performed in the past, one sometimes gets some positive guidance from Ma. Then one should follow the instructions unhesitatingly and without questioning. Under no circumstances should one try to match one's own wishes with those of Ma". Part of direction number eleven is "Whatever utterance falls from Her Sacred lips never goes in Vain".

Hence Devotees should understand that every word of Ma has subtle meaning for our guidance.

In this reference I am reminded of another personal incident related to Shri. H.D.

Vasudeva was devotee of Mataji and were friends of my parents.

At one of Mataji's visits to Pune Ashram Shri Vasudeva went on a Saturday night to offer his Pranams and inform Mataji of his programme to leave early Sunday morning by his car from Pune to Bombay.

Mataji asked him in perplexity why he was leaving when it was so pleasant in Pune and She Herself was staying on in Pune Ashram? Shri Vasudeva explained he had a Board Meeting at Bombay on Sunday. Mataji then sweetly enquired from him, "You do own the Company?" Shri H.D. Vasudeva, Chairman and Managing Director of Pressure Cookers and Appliances Ltd., admitted to Ma that "he did own the company", but stated that it was necessary to be present at this meeting. Mataji spoke no more on the matter.

Early next morning Shri Vasudeva left by Pune his car with his driver. On the winding steep downhill ghat road, suddenly a cyclist appeared in front of the car and met an accident in which the cyclist died. Since it was a serious case the police were informed and the driver and car were held in custody. Shri Vasudeva, after other arrangements he was waiting for another car to take him to Bombay and reflected in a belated realization on the underlying meaning of Mataji's words to him. He was neither able to attend the board meeting nor be in the divine presence of Ma at Pune.

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## GREAT MINDS WITH A SINGLE THOUGHT--I

(Extract From : Sacred Places of Kashmir,  
By - A Devotee Section on - Kshir Bhawani)

We are told that when Swāmi Vivekānanda visited the sacred shrine of Kshir Bhawāni during his stay in Kashmir, his heart became full of sorrow at the sight of the broken temples and images all around the place. He thought within himself; "Had I been living at that time, I would have never allowed the ruffians to destroy the temples and desecrate the shrines. I would have protected them at the cost of my life." When he was thinking thus he heard a heavenly voice saying; "Son, if the followers of another faith enter my shrine and desecrate it, what does it matter? What is that to you? Am I protecting you or are you protecting me?" Vivekānanda pondered within himself. "If only I could build a nice temple here!" Again he heard the same heavenly voice : 'Son, I wish I can create innumerable temples and towers. At this very moment a seven-storeyed golden temple may be constructed, so you need not worry.' After this incident Vivekānanda's outlook on life underwent a thorough change and from that day he felt as if he were a child in the lap of the divine Mother.\*

न ततो न माता न बन्धुर्न नत्था  
न पुत्रो न पुत्री न भृत्यो न भर्ता ।  
न ज्ञाया न विद्या न वृत्तिर्ममेव  
गतिस्त्वं गतिस्त्वं त्वमेका भवानि ॥\*\*

[O Bhawani! Thou art my refuge, thou art my refuge thou alone art my refuge, and not my father, not my mother, not my friend, neither grandson, nor son, nor daughter, nor servant, nor husband, nor wife, neither learning, nor profession.]

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\*. See Punyatirtha Bhārat by Swāmi Divyātmānanda.

\*\* Bhawānyashtakam by Shankarāchārya; verse - 1.

## GREAT MINDS WITH A SINGLE THOUGHT—II

(Extract From Article "Mother Anandamayee")

By Padma Vibhushan Mahamahopadhyaya Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj, M.A., D.LIT.  
Principal, Government Sanskrit College, Varanasi.

Learned Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj writes "It was on a fine autumn morning in 1928 that I first came to know the name of Mother Anandamayee".

Gopinathji describes his first darshan of Mataji as "with all others I felt a sort of Magnetic Charm in Mothers' Personality".

He explores the various opinions concerning the precise status of Mother. "Some held that she was a Goddess in human form - Kali according to some, Durga to others, Saraswati or Radha according to others still. Others entertained the view that she was an Incarnation of the Divine come down to the earth to relieve its sufferings, some identified her with Shri Krishna himself".

Gopinathji was allowed to be present in a private talk by Swami Dayanand, of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, who came to see Mother and put questions to Her.

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

Mother — "You want to know what I am well, I am what you consider me to be - not more or less"

Gopinathji expressed his feelings at his darshan of Mother. "A few days of Mother's stay in Benaras sufficed to convince me of Her personality and the unusual sanctity of Her Life".

At the request of friends Gopinathji briefly discusses the most prominent features of her life and character. He writes "It is well known Ma claims to be neither a Guru nor a Sisya". He goes on to observe "She was not like Pratyek Buddha, not as Vedic literature Rishis, nor of Yoga systems. Nor a Swayam Sidha Sant." Nor does he accept Mother's personality as a case of Avatara.

He quotes mother as saying "That all Her activities are really spontaneous and not prompted by will or purpose, nor influenced and coloured by desires. Willpower is not the spring of Her actions. She has said time without number that Her body is not like that of an ordinary person generated through Prarabdha Karma."

"Her movements are guided neither by the predisposition of the past nor by any considerations of the future. They are confined to the present and they rest there as in the heart of Eternity. Her system is like a stringed instrument giving out notes, not of

its own initiative but in response to shocks or vibrations received from outside."

Gopinathji further states "Will-power being really absent, the absence of Karma as a moral force become intelligible. There being no previous Karma the origin of Her body is to be explained by the play of the Supreme Power, either in itself or as reacting to the collective aspirations of Humanity. As to why the Supreme Power should have expressed itself in a particular body is a question to which an ordinary man is not in a position to reply".

"The true ideal of Samadhi which Mother has held out before Her admirers is intended to show that She does not attach undue importance to the Static Brahman realization as to the Dynamic one.

There is a tendency in some quarters to consider Mother as belonging to the category of a Devta. It is the intensity of a Bhakti in a worshipper which visualises its object in a concrete form.

It is therefore a very difficult task to try to described Mother as She really is, She has appeared differently to different persons and even if these differences are contradictory we can quietly accept them, knowing full well that in a higher synthesis even contradictories may meet together. She is too near to us to be seen Her in proper perspective.

What is really needed is to feel that she is Mother and we are Her children and that as mere children we cannot be expected to know Her as She is but only as She shows Herself to us in response to our cravings. It really becomes us to behave as infants crying out in the night and invoking Mother with an inarticulate language for Her actual descent and benediction."

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## Notice

Sri Panu Brahmachariji Maharaj was one of the main pillars of Sri Sri Anandmayee Sangh and specially blessed by Sri Sri Ma expired on 28th October, 2011 at Varanasi to join Sri Sri Ma in her heavenly abode. The January 2012 issue of the Amrit Varta will be dedicated to the sacred memory of Sri Panu Da.

On 1st January 2013 on 88<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Sri Panu Da a commemoration volume on Sri Panu Da will also be published.

In this context, all the saints and persons related to Late Panu Da may kindly send their memoirs, experiences and views about him in Hindi, English, Bangali or Gujarati according to their convenience. If some photographs of Sri Panu Da are lying with them they may kindly send it at the following address.

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