

MAANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma

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NOTICE

In order to ensure receipt of Amrit Varta, it was decided in the Governing Body meeting that the annual subscription of the journal be enhanced from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 300/- w.e.f. January, 2019. Your cooperation is earnestly solicited.

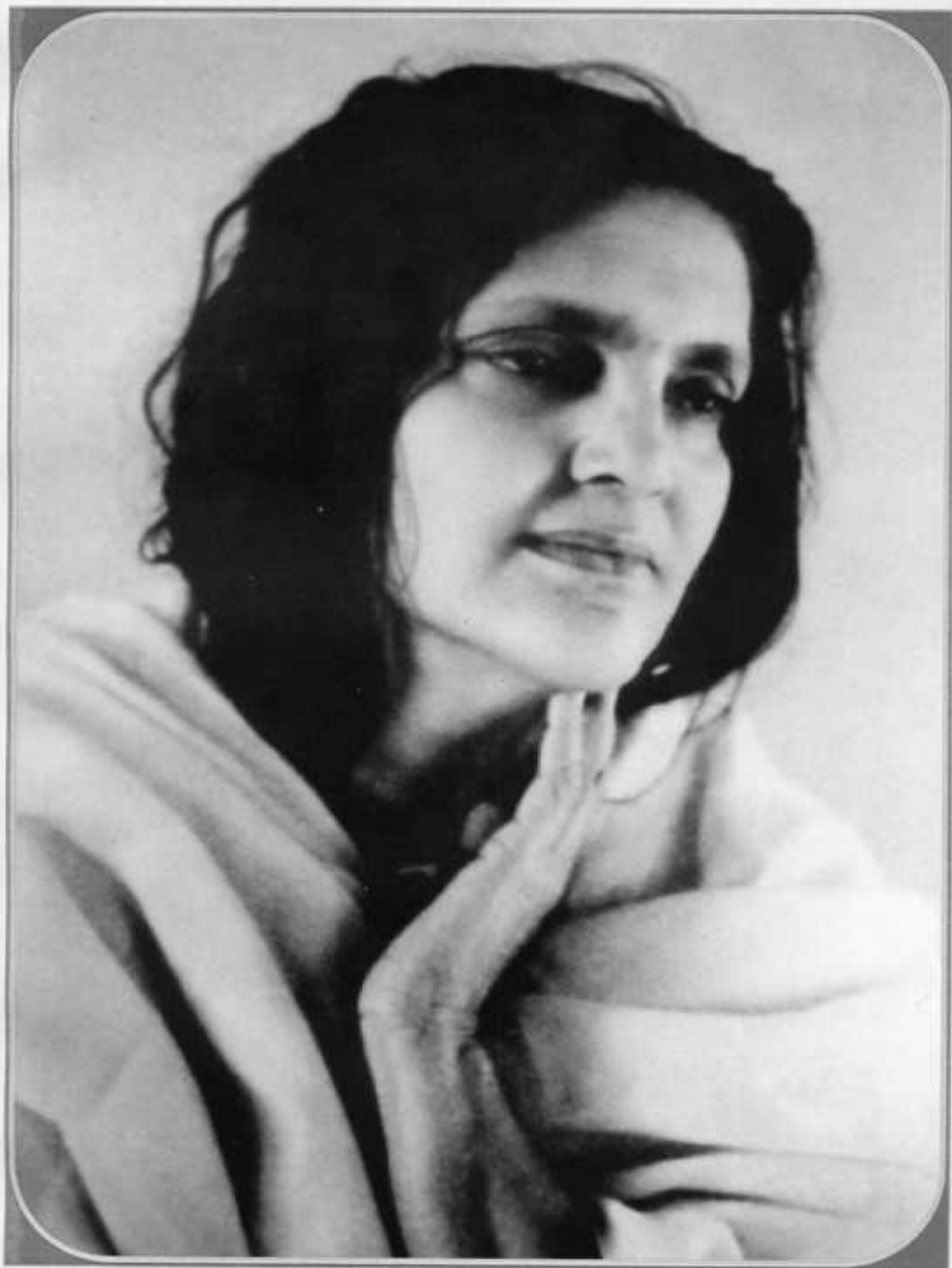
COVER PAGE : Matri Mandir, Kishenpur Ashram, Dehradun

REQUEST

Efforts are being made to make the journal more attractive and interesting and to widely preach the sayings, biography etc. of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee. All are requested to send their suggestion that may be complied, if considered worthy, so that we can make it more lucid and appealing for the readers belonging to every age group of modern time.

Thanking you and Jai Ma.

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Matri– Vani

1. Let the thought of God remain with you and do service with the conviction that while serving whomsoever it may be, you are serving the One who alone exists.
2. Silent *japa* should be continued at all times. One must not waste breath uselessly; whenever one has nothing special to do one should silently practice *japa* in rhythm with one's breathing. In fact this exercise ought to go on continually until *japa* becomes as natural as breathing.
3. It is man's duty to ever meditate upon the One Reality.
4. It is possible to practice God's Name under the most adverse circumstances. He causes everything to happen and hence is ever near.
5. At all times let patience be your stronghold. Say to yourself, "Lord, everything Thou doest is for the highest good." Pray for the power of endurance. Nothing happens that is not an expression of God's grace. Verily all is His Grace.
6. During spells of misfortune it is necessary to rely on Him with even greater fervor. There is no knowing through what mishap He may wipe out peril. Sometimes He actually removes danger by adversity. This is why He is called the Dispeller of danger, the Saviour.
7. Be truthful in speech and rigorous in self-discipline at all times and devote yourself to the study of books of wisdom and to *satsang*. Cultivate the company of those who are helpful in your quest, avoid those that distract you; in other words, associate with the good and shun the merely pleasurable. If you live in this spirit the help you need will come to you naturally, unasked.
8. If man endeavours to live his life in the world according to *Dharma* (the dictates of religion and righteousness) he will gradually overcome sorrow and will progress towards peace. Without Him Supreme Peace cannot be attained.

9. The true aim of man's life is to realize God. Obviously the question of renunciation arises, but only with regard to that which can be renounced. That which is Eternal that which is the Truth, has to be embraced.
10. If you stay distant from God, evil-tendencies (or evil-mindedness); evil-perception; misery; coming and going; birth and death. If one dies with desires (*vāsanā*) in mind, then to fulfill that one is born again. Whom-so-ever keep their wishes behind, again becomes an organism (i.e. has to come back, is born again) and this cycle continues; birth-death, birth-death.
11. As long as there is a tendency of a doer – you will get misery. One who has created you, if you dedicate yourself on to Him, within you God Himself is the instrument and the player. As said in the Gīta – the instrument plays as the player plays it, O Lord, whatever You get done (the acceptance of this is Man's duty). There should be no doer. What you have to do? Remember Him, respect Him, and contemplate on the Truth.
12. In which ever line you progress, contemplate Him. What will happen; one will become free from conflict, darkness and sorrow. The divine feeling should be – young children as *Bāl Gopāl*, wife as form of *shakti* (power), and the wife will think her husband as the Supreme husband, family and relatives as divine forms. Where there is the feeling of divinity there itself He will appear.
- Why does one go to pilgrimage and temples? To increase the knowledge of divinity, is it not? In which state, in whose company it will increase in intelligence and in divinity?
13. What God does? King to a beggar – beggar to a King. What is not there within God! – One who can create a King. That is why it is said, 'Call the Lord. On attaining Him all is attained, there is no deficiency.
14. According to the knowledge of divinity, within everyone, God alone is (*jone jonārdan*). If 'everyone' is not ok, God exists 'everywhere'. Within everybody God Himself exists. Where God is, what is not there?

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasanga

Prof. Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

(continued)

Discussion on India's Future

On visiting the Ashram in the evening found Ma sitting in the verandah on the edge of river Ganga. Two *sannyāsīs* had arrived from Ramakrishna Mission. One of them, was comparatively young and seemed to be formerly known to Ma. Ma enquired as to from where they have arrived at Kashi and how long they would be staying here. Swamiji replied that he has arrived from Belur Math and would be staying here for few days. The swamiji's voice was melodious and could speak quite systematically. From his gestures it seemed that he was habituated in delivering lectures in public. He said, "Ma, there is no peace in our country, only turmoil everywhere. Will this turmoil end shortly, nor, because of its growing intensity day by day, everyone will get terminated by large scale destruction?"

Ma: Baba, this body does not say what will happen or not in the future, but if something is ever spoken, so it be.

Swamiji: Once upon a time, India did not have close relations with other countries. Now communication is easily available between various countries and because of it, exchange of thoughts has become easy too. India is called as a place of religion; but presently the effect of this faith on a vast society of India is very low. Interest on spirituality is not visible among the Indians; on the other hand foreigners are now exploring a little bit of Indian religion and spirituality. And the Indians are copying foreign custom and behaviour.

Ma: It should be called as the effect of company. On staying together one copies the good and bad qualities of each other depending on their *samskāras*.

Swamiji: Rise and fall is observed in all caste and race. Once, India was at the helm of the world in all matters. Now that glory does not exist. Have been hearing for so long, from holy men that, India would retain its past glory. But presently, observing the situation all around, have only become disappointed. The Indians are spreading the importance of forsaking religion. The public who are in contact with the foreigners are finding them to be quite powerful without sacrifice and religion. Hence now they are doubtful on Indian literature and religion. That is why they are now considering money as the only coveted item. That is why there is such an increase in black-marketing. Over and above lakhs of east-bengal men and women are in such a miserable condition! If this happens to few people then it can be said that it has occurred because of their (*karma-phal*) fruits of action. But where thousands and lakhs of people are affected, how can one say that, all these are, due to their *karma-phal*. How to console them? Can we tell them that whatever they have lost, they will get back again? Of course we are consoling them by telling something. But on receiving a message of hope from you all, those who are exalted; we can convey our speech with much more force. We can explain that Ma Anandamayee also is saying in this manner.

Ma: This too is a future related question. Baba, what do you say to give consolation?

Swamiji: That I will not tell you. (Everybody laughs).

Ma: So that, I may tell your speeches to others, you are not informing me? (Everybody laughs). See, this is the world, hence here everything changes. What existed, that is no more now! What is present now will also not exist. The world is only, going and coming. Again because of this going and coming there is existence. Hence nothing is everlasting here. You called India as a place of religion? Actually it is still like that. Hence those who want religion here, they are getting it. If the foreigners receive this religion then what is the cause for sadness? As they are your brothers. Why, brother? They are you yourself. You talked of misery, all these are His play. There is no second other than Him. In your *Gītā* too it is written that, He exists in everybody's heart and is managing everybody. He is playing in various ways in various forms with Himself. His play is now of this type, later it may be of some other type, because He does not play in a single manner. His method of play is also infinite.

And if you believe in *Shastrās* (scriptures) then you will have to believe in *karma-phal*. The misery is because of people's action (*karma*), where is the doubt in that? That which is true for one person is also true for a group of people. On observing that, lacs and lacs of people are suffering in the same manner, it cannot be denied that these are because of *karma-phal*. In war also numerous people die at the same instant, there people gather knowingly. Don't you speak of accident or something? In a vehicle or a boat so many people die collectively. God's boat is not small. Hence, what is there to be surprised if thousands of people die at the same instant?

Again there is a need for sorrow and pain. Do not people say, without pain there is no learning. You all beat your children, the aim being not to give pain, but to rectify them. In the same manner, God too through pain and sorrow brings the people to the path of righteousness. If seen in this manner pain and misery also will be felt as His grace.

Swamiji: What you have said that is from the direction of justification; but every country's people want to develop their country, as Hitler wanted to develop Germany. All other foreign people also want to develop their own country. In the same manner we too wish to see our India developed. Will India not get back its old glory again?

Ma: Don't you call God as benevolent. Whatever He does is for the good only. It is not proper to take support of invalidity. Didn't you say that the holy men have given hope that India will develop again. One should only think, what the holy men have proclaimed, that will come true. Hence it is proper to hope that, the way you want India to progress and expand, in that manner it will occur. Maybe God will make changes in that manner and hence He has appeared as thoughts in everybody's mind.

Swamiji: You have replied to my question like an especially intelligent woman, nothing more than that. (Everybody laughs).

Ma: Baba, you can talk very neat and tidily, this body does not have any education hence it talks rubbish.

It was past evening. Observing that everybody was feeling cold Ma got up. I thought that, maybe discussion was over for today. I came down to the hall. Saw Ma

standing there. Ma saw me and asked, "Have the Baba's (Swamis) left or not?" I went up and found that the swamis were still present. I told them, "Ma is calling you." They then came down with me to the hall and sat down. The Swami who had earlier conversed with Ma again said, "There is everlasting desire for *ānanda-lok* (world of bliss). People have been desiring bliss from time immemorial. But has anyone ever received it? The scriptures also confirm that an organism is born from pleasure; its existence is in joy only. But where is this joy? How so ever great a person maybe, within him, all the time there is only lamentation. Everyone desires for joy, but are not receiving it."

Ma: If the people had not received joy at all then, could they have remained alive? Whatever one is demanding, he is receiving in that form. However, question of eternal bliss is different. If in that specific manner, somebody can crave for that bliss then he can acquire it too. What do you want to say that, people demand for it, but do not receive it?

Swamiji: Yes, people demand but do not receive it. Assume that there are travellers on two banks of the same river. The travellers on this side of the bank are crying saying where is the bliss, where is the bliss, and the travellers on the opposite bank are saying everything is bliss, everything is supreme bliss. But the question is that, those who are saying that they have received bliss, what is the proof that they have truly received bliss?

Ma: The proof of this bliss is bliss itself. Who will accept this proof? It cannot be understood by the mind. One who becomes manifested with bliss he alone can understand it. He does not require any proof. After passing M.A. the knowledge one attains, that can be understood by only one who has passed it.

Swamiji: One who has understood a little of it by the power of meditation and realization, he should say.

Ma: It will only be a description of the path. The actual feeling cannot be expressed.

Now, the Swamiji's took leave. Ma gave them two oranges each. They returned back one each to Ma. They were told to accept *prasād* (food offered to God) in the

ashram on the forthcoming *Paush-Sankrānti* (festival). The Swamiji said, "Inviting for *Paush-Sankrānti* means that we will get to eat *peethe* (a sweetdish made of rice flour)." Ma replied, "What the ashramites have arranged that I cannot say."

List of Festivals

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Shree Shree Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata | November 5-12, 2019 |
| 2. Shree Shree Jagadhatri Puja | November 5, 2019 |
| 3. Ras Poomima | November 12, 2019 |
| 4. Gita Jayanti | December 5-8, 2019 |
| 5. Makar Sankranti | January 15, 2020 |
| 6. Shree Shree Saraswati Puja | January 29, 2020 |
| 7. Maghi Poomima | February 9, 2020 |
| 8. Maha Shivaratri | February 21, 2020 |
| 9. Holika Dahan | March 8, 2020 |

Inauguration of Dehradun Ashram

Gurpriya Didi

In the year 1936, before the inauguration of the Ashram, devotees from several places consecrated for a wonderful function with joy and enthusiasm. As decided, a *yagna* was started in the new Ashram on 19th *Baishāk*. Shri Bholanathji started the *yagna* with four other *Brāhmins*. Doctor Upendra mahasaya and Turiyanand Swamiji arrived from Mirzapur on 18th *Baishāk* itself. Kamalakanth *Brahmachāri* also arrived the same day from Dhaka. He had become mentally impatient so he left Dhaka and came near Ma. Whatever Ma's instructions are that he will obey here. Me and Upendra doctor were responsible for doing *japa* during the *yagna*. Gradually devotees started arriving from various places. Prof. Trigunath Baidopadhyay from Srirampur, Prof. Virendra Chandra Mukhopadhyay from Agra, Shri Nepal Chandra Chakravarty, Nirmal babu's wife and son and Manik from Kashi, Swami Shradhanand from Mirzapur, Brahma Ghosh, Virendra Maharaj and others from Calcutta, all gradually arrived at Ma's holy feet. Ma used to visit the *yagna* site at sometime at dawn and then used to return back to the Ashram temple. Ma used to have her meals in the Jakhan temple.

Several devotees used to come in the afternoon and have *Mātri-darshan*. Devotees like Sharda (lady doctor), Narasingh, Hariram, Hans Gopal etc. used to come daily. Hariram and Hans had labored a lot for the construction of this Ashram. This Ashram was built because of their encouragement only. They were always in the fore front for managing the function during the ceremony too. Among the devotees of Dehradun, Hariram was the first to visit Raipur and get introduced to Ma. Many people got the chance to come at the lotus feet of Ma only after getting information from him. Anybody coming near Ma used to receive too much bliss, as if they were mad with Ma's name. An old Kashmiri lady along with her daughter and son-in-law arrived from Delhi.

Today is 25th of *Baishāk*. Hans and other devotees were busy in decorating the Ashram with flowers, leaves and paper. *Mangal kalash* and banana plantations have been placed too. The centre hall has been reserved for *kirtan*. A huge photo of Ma is placed in that hall. It was decided that at the conclusion of night (i.e. at Ma's birth time), Manmath babu will start *pūjā* on that photo of Ma. Everybody is extremely busy in the various tasks of the function. An Ashram has been built for Ma with too much effort, today it will be worth praising. Because Ma will set Her foot in the Ashram. The efforts of all the people who constructed it will also be gratified.

The devotees started arriving from Dehradun just after the completion of two *prahar*'s of the night. This place is around 4 miles from Dehradun. At Ma's birth time (i.e., end of night) Bholanathji and Ma along with the devotees entered the new Ashram. Immediately sounds of the conch shell, bells and *ulu* started. There were many Bengali ladies too. Hence there was no shortage of the sound of *ulu*. Ma and Bholanath were seated in the centre room (in the ground floor) kept for *kirtans*. Everyone started performing *ārti* with garlands and *kapur*.

Shri Manmath bahu started the *pūjā*. Ma's *pūjā* was done with *shodshopchaar*. With new clothes, garlands and *sindur*, the hue of Ma's enchanted form had brightened the area and an extremely beautiful divine form had emerged. What else can I say about that enchanted form! As if it was spreading all over. One who has not seen it has lost a very important chance in his life. Time passed and the *pūjā* was over. Many devotees left and many new devotees came in. All were excited to get Ma's blessings. After some time *kirtan* started. Occasionally Ma was laughingly talking with everyone. And sometimes sat motionless in a state of trance. Everyone were just gazing at Ma. This *kirtan* hall was in the centre of the ashram. There were four rooms at four corners of the hall. Ma's sleeping arrangement was made in one of the rooms in the north. The other room in the northern side was kept locked. Ma's instructions were that nobody will talk while entering or being present in that room. Later on *vyas gaddi* was installed here. Everyone entering the room had to keep *maun* (silence). It is kept locked all the time.

After the *kirtan* went on for some time, Ma went to Her room and lying on her bed, conversed with the devotees. The devotees were also given *prasād*. After enjoying the whole day the devotees went back to their homes. Few people stayed

back like, the family of Gopalji, family of Kashi Narayanji (he is a contractor and he had taken the responsibility of constructing the Ashram), etc. Hariram's wife is no more alive, only two young kids are there. Hence Hariram stayed back in Ashram.

On 27th *Baishāk*, the *puṇnāhuti* (completion) of the *yagna* took place. Shri Bholanathji and the other *Brāhmins* sprayed *shanti-jal* (pious water of the *yagna*) on the devotees assembled there. It was a day for Ma to partake food also. In the afternoon in one of the corner rooms on the southern side of the hall Ma and Bholanath had *bhog* (food) and then all devotees had *prasād*.

After that it was decided to give some rest to Ma, but it was not possible. Crowds of devotees were arriving to have a *darshan* of Ma's lotus feet. Ma was also laughingly conversing with them. There was no sign of tiredness. Everything of Ma is extraordinary. I have seen Ma several times in Dhaka, Calcutta, Kashi and other places conversing with devotees continuously for day and night without any sign of tiredness. Devotees in groups were coming and going, even at 2am and 3am in the night the visits of the devotees did not stop. Saw Ma sitting in one *bhāv*. Not one day but for several days I have seen this sequence being followed. At last Ma took rest at late night. People who had arrived from far took rest in the Ashram itself.

Three to four days after the ceremony the renowned wrestler Shri Rammurtiji sent his car and personl to pickup Ma for a visit to his 'Shakti-ashram'. Ma went there in the afternoon. He welcomed Ma with full of respect. One day he himself came to meet Ma with his devotees. Ma called him as 'Baba'. Sweets were offered for snacks. He fed Ma with his own hands and Ma too fed him. All were in joy. Coming in the presence of Ma everyone becomes overwhelmed with joy. After that he wanted to hear some *kirtan*, Triguna babu sang *kirtan* for him. After some time he bowed to Ma and departed. Because of an injury in the leg he could not walk. With a lot of difficulty with others support he climbed into the car and departed.

Aphorisms of Ma

Anil Ganguli

***Jār jemon bhāva tār temni lābha* (as one's emotions thus are his gains)**

It postulates that the seeker's *lābha* is commensurate with his *bhāva*. With regard to the context, *lābha* means gain, reward, acquisition, advantage, etc., and *bhāva* implies feeling, condition, emotion, sentiment, love, intension, idea, etc.

Ma says that God appreciated and accepts all kinds of *bhāvas* offered to Him and gives evenhanded justice precisely what one deserves. Ma also says that in some instances God is over-indulgent in granting *ahetuki kripā* (grace which cannot be accounted for); adding that in any event, if a seeker sincerely tries to proceed one step towards God, He responds by coming ten steps towards the seeker.

What really matters, Ma emphasizes, is the seeker's sincerity of purpose, his *bhāva*; the reward, the *lābha*, will follow as a matter of course. This aphorism is very true in our relationship with Ma; She is revealed to us according to our respective *bhāva*.

***Ek nīsvāser viśwās nei* (there is no idea of that one breath)**

This aphorism reminds us that in the midst of life we are in death. It suggests that we must not allow a single moment to be wasted. Breath is the symbol of life which is so transitory. Indeed, one cannot be sure that the present breath would not be the last. Citing the well known dictum that spiritual pursuits must proceed (or precede) along with the awareness that death has caught the aspirant by the forelock, Ma teaches that awareness of the imminence of death at any moment induces whole-hearted preparation for the final exit. What is the fate of a person departing from this world without preparing himself for the next? According to the *Isopanishad* he is 'a self murderer and goes to demonic worlds enveloped in blinding darkness.'

Yamaraja, the god of death, asked Yudhisthira, in the Mahabharata, "What is most surprising?" Yudhisthira's answer was, "Day in and day out people are dying, yet the survivors hanker after everlasting life. What could be more surprising?" Here is Ma's word of caution and admonition, "The day that is gone returns not. To be a human being means to be Self-aware. Do not squander invaluable time. Beware of becoming a 'Self-murderer'; realize that you are none other than the immortal Self."

"The joys and sorrow of the world," says Ma, "are fleeting shadows of your own self; playing with the divine forces brings in everlasting peace and happiness."

***Jemon bājūbe temni sunbe* (as you play thus you hear)**

This aphorism is Ma's almost invariable answer to a common question as to Her identity and spiritual status. She compares Herself to a musical instrument and smilingly says, "What you hear depends on how you play the instrument." Thus a violin gives out notes not of its own initiative but in response to strokes and vibrations received from outside, and the music that is heard as a result depends on the skill of the player, the instrument remaining the same.

Perhaps this aphorism explains why Ma is seen differently by different persons, depending on the angle of vision of each - *Jār jemon bhāva tār temni lābha* (mentioned above).

***Haate Kaam Mukhe Naam* (work with hands, God's Name on lips)**

Ma does not ask the spiritual aspirant to turn away from his worldly commitments or to renounce the world. In fact, She says, action or work cannot, and need not be renounced. This aphorism only recognizes the principle laid down in the Gita that we cannot live for a moment without work. "Verily, no one can remain, even for a moment, without doing work. Every individual is made to work, by the impulses of nature, in spite of himself. Even the bare maintenance of your physical life will not be possible if you remain inactive."

So work we must. But work usually leads to bondage. Hence the antidote prescribed by Ma; work with the hand should be invariably accompanied by the repetition of God's Name on one's lips. According to Ma, God's Name is God Himself. His *Naam* acts both as a curative and a preventive of the disease known as *bhaav-*

roga, usually a concomitant of action. Ma is very emphatic that constant remembrance of God, through repetition of His Name, turns work into worship and ensures deliverance from the attachment to the things of the world.

Ma also says, “By whatever Name you may invoke Him, your effort will be crowned with success. The main thing is to cling to the Name with constancy.” “Whenever you possibly can, sustain the flow of a sacred Name. To repeat His Name is to be in His presence. If you associate with the Supreme Friend, He will reveal His true being to you. Just as a dancing girl fixes her attention on the water-pot that she bears on her head even when she is dancing on various tunes, so also a pious man does not give up his attention to the blissful feet of the Supreme Lord even when he attends to his many concerns.” We must engage in the work of the world retaining our consciousness of Eternity.

Tapasyā māne tāpa sahā

Tapasyā is austerity. The word ‘*tapā*’ literally meaning ‘heat’ is used by Ma as a symbol of misery. And the word ‘*sahā*’ means to bear. For every individual there are some spells of storm and rain, dreary days of unbearable misery. Ma says, “The distress that is experienced burns to ashes all pleasures derived from worldly things. This is what is called *tapasyā*. The heartache, the anguish over the effects of obstructions, is the beginning of an awakening to Consciousness.” To a weak man, suffering is usually a stumbling block; to a strong one it may be a veritable stepping stone leading to a higher level. Thus, suffering can be a blessing in disguise. Ma says, “Joys and sorrows are time-born and cannot last. Therefore do not be perturbed by these. The greater the difficulties and obstructions, the more intense will be your endeavour to cling to His feet and the more will your prayer increase from within. And when the time is ripe, you will gain mastery over this power. It is by crying and pining for Him that the One is found. In times of adversity and distress seek refuge in the One alone.”

Shree Ma at Calcutta (Kolkata)

Somesh Ch. Banerjee

Shree Shree Ma came to Calcutta for the first time in 1927, on Her way to Haridwar. Shree Ma was accommodated in a vacant house, which belonged to the 'Bhagyakul Estate'. During that visit, the Nawabzadi (Princess) Pyari Bano, the owner of 'Shahbagh Gardens' in Dhaka, invited Shree Ma at her palatial residence in Calcutta. There, to welcome Shree Ma, she arranged for a *Hari Naam Kirtan*. During the *kirtan*, Shree Ma was immersed in deep *bhuvan* (divine mood).

Shree Ma visited Calcutta again, at the earnest request of Pyari Bano to grace the occasion of the marriage of her son and daughter. Amongst the several distinguished guests, Smt. Basanti Devi, wife of the renowned Congress leader, Shri. Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was also present. Smt. Basanti Devi was overwhelmed by Shree Ma's dazzling and attractive presence and exclaimed that she had a vision of Shree Ma in her dream. She could not resist embracing Shree Ma lovingly and insisted Her to sit on her lap. Later, her daughter Smt. Aparna Ray became a devotee of Shree Ma and stayed several times in Shree Ma's Ashram to have Her divine company.

In October 1938, Shree Ma came to Calcutta for a short stay in the 'Dakshineswar Temple'. She was accommodated in the *Nahavat khana*, where Shree Shree Sharada Ma, wife of Thakur Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev used to stay. During Shree Ma's stay here the renowned Congress leader Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose came to meet Her. About a year ago his eldest brother a well known patriot Shri. Sarat Chandra Bose had paid a visit to Shree Ma in Calcutta.

Shree Ma said to Subhash Babu, "We have heard that you are a great speaker. Speak something here too." Denying the request he immediately replied, "I have come here only to hear you." Thereafter a long conversation ensued between Shree Ma and Subhash Babu in the nearby sacred 'Panchavati' garden. When he told Shree Ma, that he gets pleasure to serve the country, Shree Ma appreciated it but at the

same time told him that, such pleasure would remain for only a short time; while meditating on God, he would get eternal bliss. Receiving religious guidance and *prasād* from Shree Ma, he took leave with a desire to meet Her again.

Gradually the number of Shree Ma's devotees increased in Calcutta and they felt the need of an Ashram. In July 1944, a small Ashram was established in a small three storied building at Ekdalia Place in Ballygunj area. Seeing the shape of the building Shree Ma called it 'Govinda's Tiffin Carrier'! Later in 1958, a spacious Ashram was established for Shree Ma on the bank of the river Ganga at Agarpara. That year, Shree Ma's Birth anniversary (*Janmotsav*) was celebrated there. And the Ashram at Ekdalia Place was disposed off.

A huge function was arranged in September 1960 in the Agarpara Ashram to celebrate the establishment of the three temples. Several large functions have been held here in the presence of Shree Ma like *Janmotsav*, *Durga Pujā*, *Samyam Saptāhā* and *Bhāgwat Saptāhā*. Huge crowds were present whenever Shree Ma was present in the Ashram and it was a difficult task to manage them on such occasions. Sometimes Shree Ma had to be shifted elsewhere to provide rest to Her. There is a small hut in the Ashram near the bank of the Ganga, where Shree Ma would go for a short rest. It is said that centuries ago, Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, while proceeding to Panihati had taken rest here in the shadow of a tree.

An interesting incident took place during the *Durga Pujā* in 1960. A lady from a royal family while performing *Pujā* of Shree Ma, offered a costly necklace of pearls to Her. Standing nearby, an apparently poor girl with a dark complexion was watching the ceremony. She was fascinated by the beautiful necklace of pearls. Quite unaware of its value, she spontaneously begged Shree Ma to give her the necklace. Shree Ma asked her to come later. On the evening of *Vijayā-Dashami*, when Shree Ma was distributing sweets to the devotees with Her own hands, the same little girl came up again to have her share of sweets from Shree Ma. After she received the sweets, Shree Ma asked her to wait nearby. Shree Ma then asked one of Her attendants to bring the costly necklace of pearls and on receiving the same gave it to the little girl. Overwhelmed with joy, the little girl simply ran away.

Narayan Swamiji, a *dandi swāmy* and a senior monk of the Ashram, was sitting nearby and watching all these. He could not resist asking Shree Ma why She

had given the costly gift to the unknown poor girl. Surely, there was a secret behind it! Shree Ma smiled and replied that when She was running a household in Her early life at Bajitpur, the little girl in her previous birth worked there as a maid servant. She loved caring and doing chores for Her. Shree Ma further revealed that the little girl then belonged to a lower caste, but in this birth, she has gained a higher caste. Thus, the secret was revealed. Surely, all were happy at the little girl's good fortune! The incident also revealed that nothing was unknown to Shree Ma, even the details of the previous births of any one. Once Shree Ma told Gurupriya Didi that whatever desired facts the great saints like a *rishi* or *muni* could know by concentrated meditation, She was capable of knowing these instantly without any effort on Her part.

In February 1974, Shree Ma visited Calcutta for the *Bhāgwat Saptāh* at Jodhpur Park. Huge crowds in thousands, thronged to have a *darshan* of Shree Ma. After completion of the *Bhāgwat Saptāh* on the day of *Dol Purnimā*, Shree Ma along with the renowned saint Sri Sri Sita Ram Das Omkarnath were taken in a procession in an open carriage to Deshapriya Park. Shri. Tushar Kanti Ghosh, an eminent journalist and the devotees of the *Vaishnav Sampradāya* organized the procession. Lakhs of people gathered on both sides of the road to have *darshan* of Shree Ma and Sri Omkarnathji. In Deshapriya Park, She sang a few devotional songs at the request of the devotees.

Shree Ma visited the Agarpara Ashram in April 1982 for the *murti-prathisthā* (consecration) ceremony of Swami Muktananda Giriji. On Shree Ma's instruction, Mamaji's eldest son Bachchuda performed the *murti-prathisthā* rituals. This was Shree Ma's last visit to Calcutta.



Durga puja at Kankhal Ashram - 2019



Durga Puja at Agarpara Ashram – 2019



Durga Puja at Agarpara Ashram – 29th Sep. to 8th October 2019



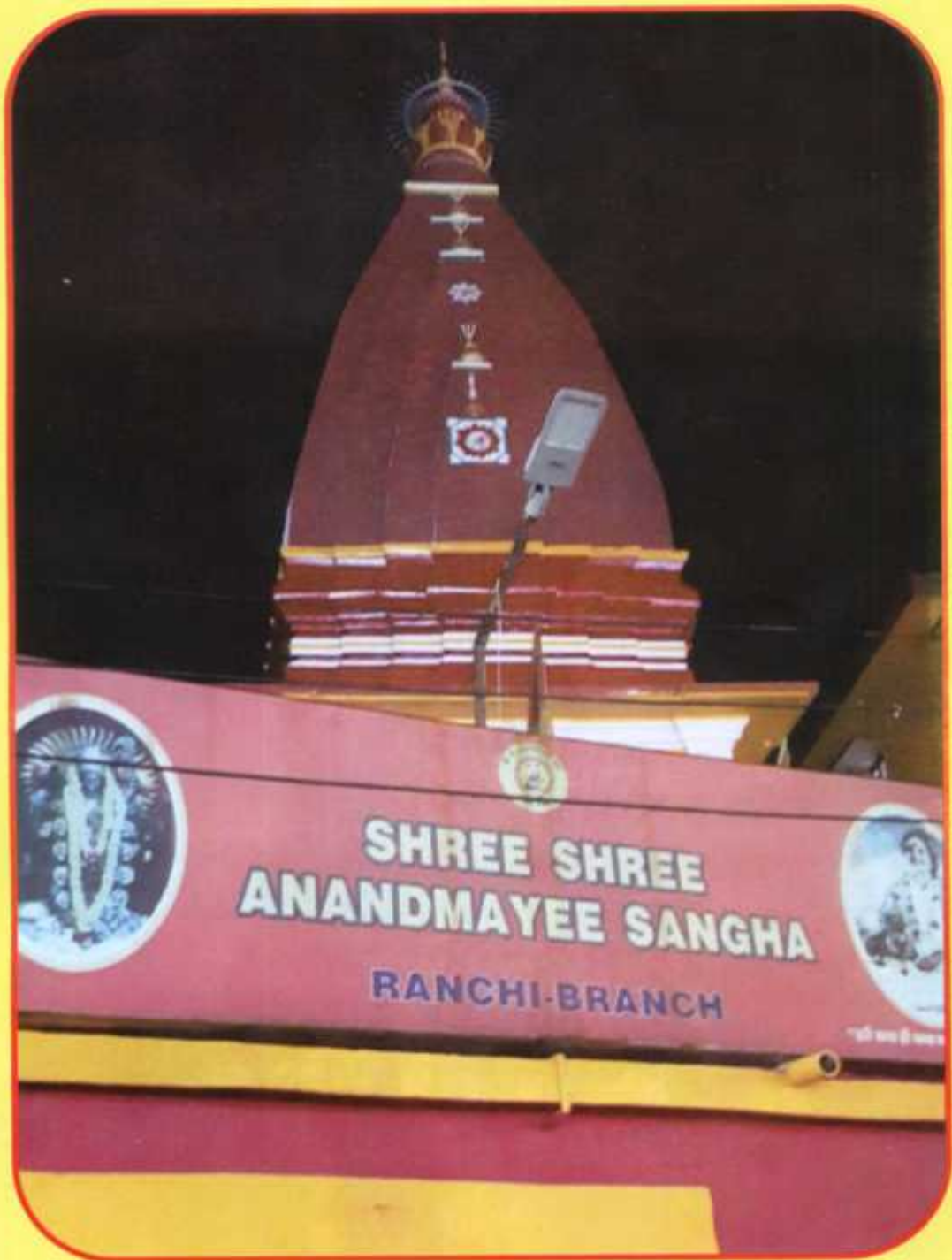
Kumari Puja at Agarpara Ashram – 2019



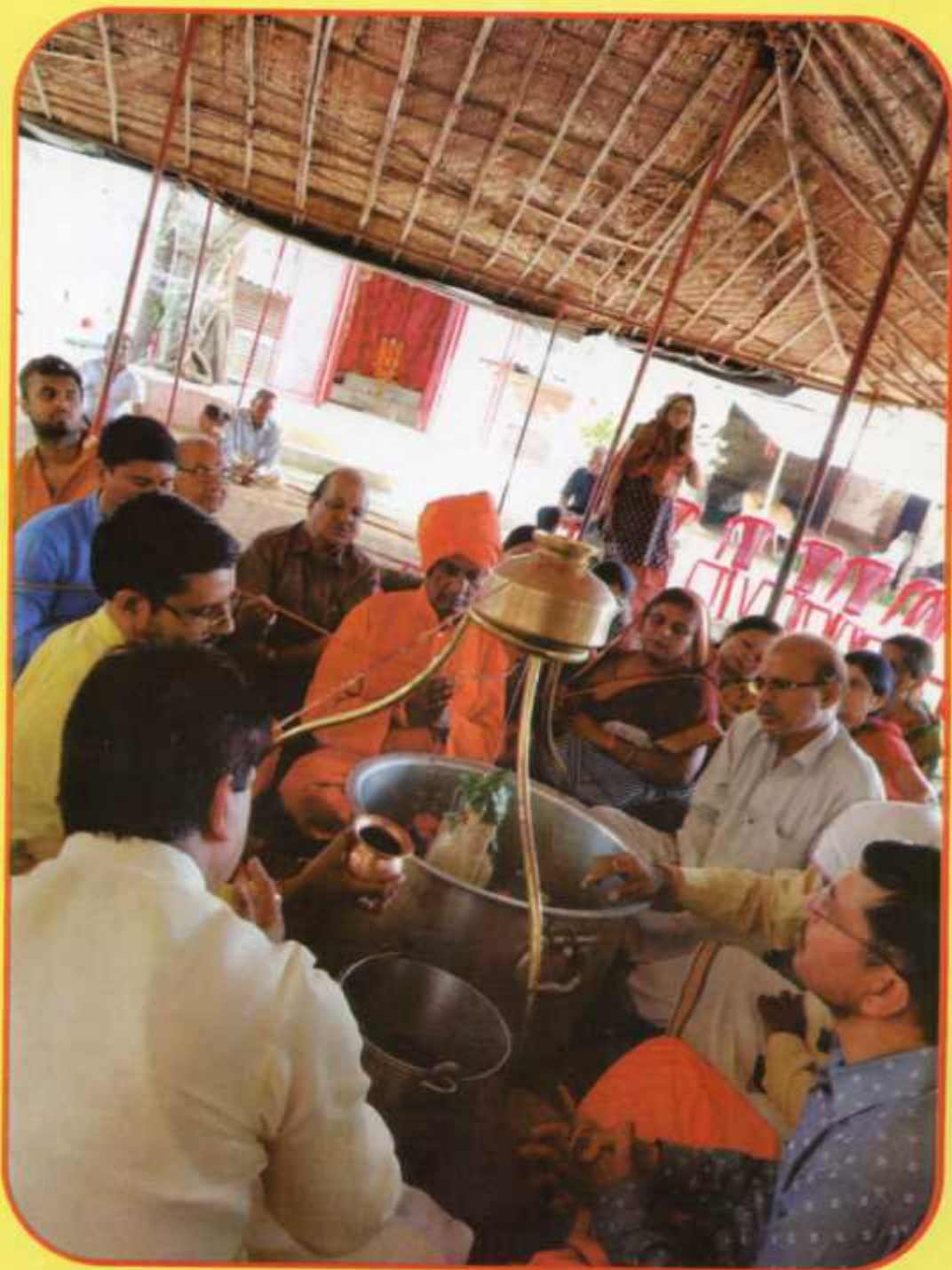
Lighting of the Diamond Jubilee candles by Swami Achyutanandaji and Swami Madhvanandaji



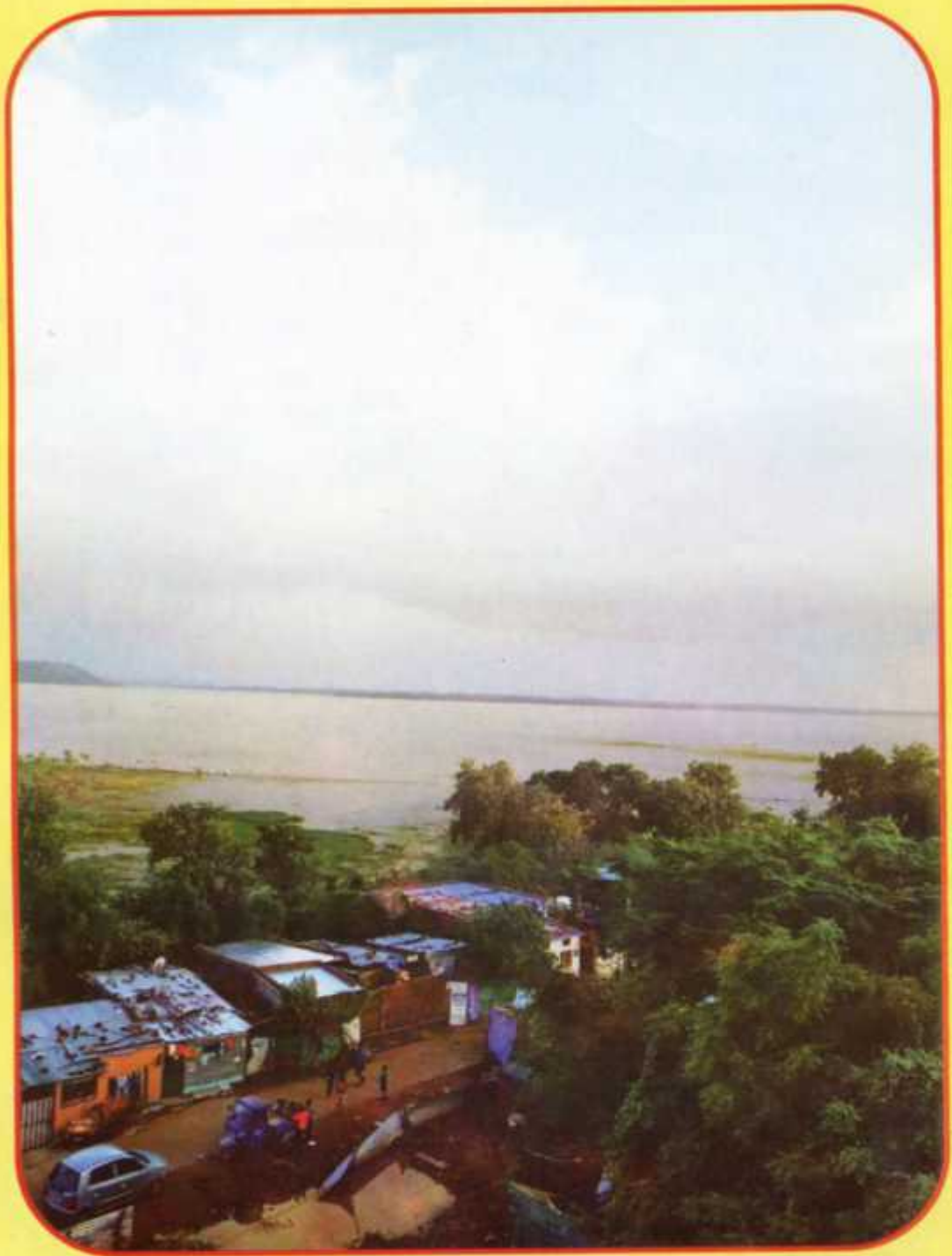
Sadhu bhojan, Saptami 5th Oct. 2019



**SHREE SHREE
ANANDMAYEE SANGHA
RANCHI-BRANCH**



Parthiv Rudrabhishek for rain.
Performed by Yogi Satyanand Giriji (Girnar)
S. S. Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Bairagarh, Bhopal, 26th June 2019.



After three years, the dry lake of Bhopal full of water
after the *Havan* by Swami of Girnar

An Invitation from Abroad

Bithika Mukerji

In 1972, I received an invitation from the World Council of Churches in Geneva to participate in a programme of dialogue for the Graduate School at Chateau de Bossey under the sponsorship of the University of Geneva.

Now, I had a problem; I knew that Sri Ma did not approve of people going abroad. I had heard her say so to many young people and that it was better to remain in their country even in reduced circumstances rather than live abroad in affluence. To be quite fair she gave the same advice to foreigners who asked if they should settle in India. She seemed to consider everyone's cultural background as crucially formative. It is easier to swim with the current than against it, as it were. My problem was that knowing all this, how should I ask Sri Ma for her permission to go abroad at my age?

In the end, after much thought, when I sat in front of her, for my private interview, I explained about the invitation from Geneva. I then said, "Ma, I am tired of the working conditions in my college. This is a rare opportunity for me to go abroad and learn more about the academic world. I would very much like to accept this invitation. Now tell me your *kheyāl*, should I go or not?"

Sri Ma was observing silence at the time. I had gone to the Kalkaji ashram in Delhi to seek her permission. She was half-reclining on her *chowki*. She looked at me for a few moments and then asked me a number of questions regarding the assignment. She spoke in a soft voice just audible to me. It gives me a thrill now as I write this, remembering her incomparable leniency toward the self-indulgent request I made. At that time, I did not even appreciate the fact that she was breaking her silence and would speak to me at length. I eagerly answered her questions – explaining about this Christian dialogue with other religions at Bossey. It did not surprise me

that she instantly understood the whole background and its problems. She spoke of the situation as it would develop for me later on. I made hasty notes in a small notebook. There was little light where we were and I wrote by feel rather than looking at what I was writing, because I was also looking at Sri Ma's face and at the slight gestures of her beautiful hands, which always gave her words such expressive emphasis.

I put forward my own understanding of Christianity to Sri Ma, saying I would be expected to enter into dialogue with its spokesmen.

I asked her: "Ma, how can one explain the personification of the Supreme Being as God?"

Sri Ma: (Whether you say) Personal, Impersonal – The Lord is Himself as He is. He is ultimate reality, pervading the universe as well as indwelling the innermost being (*antaryāmin*). He is beyond all comprehension as well as being the innermost self in each, would you not say? He alone is, whether you say unknown, or knowable, the one who is nameless, formless, yet all Names are His, He is all-pervasive and universally manifest. Where is He not? When you touch the hand of a person, he says, "It is I", when you touch his head or foot, he says, "It is I". Even his clothes indicate his presence.

All religions recognize His presence – they originate from Him. How to grasp this vastness? Take the example of a single person and the eddying relationships (radiating from him) – he is father, son, husband, brother, etc. So it is with all religions. All are intimate relationships and each unique in itself.

Question: Christians believe that Christ is an Incarnation, the only Incarnation sent to save mankind. He is the sole mediator between God and man.

Sri Ma: Well, certainly it is right for the Christians to believe so, why not? Faith loses in spiritual vigour if it is universalised. It is unnecessary to do so. The boundless mercy of God is all-pervasive; He alone knows what is good for everyone. If every individual looks to his own spiritual journey then he renders the best help to his fellow travelers.

Any dispensation of Truth is a unique event. Not one may be compared with another. In celebration of this Truth, brotherhoods (*sampradāya*) are formed or come into being. Brotherhoods are also necessary. They provide cohesion, general unity of purpose, and provide courage to flagging spirits too; it is a good idea to belong to a brotherhood and follow its guidance for enlightenment. It is not necessary to distrust the faith of fellow seekers of Truth.

Question: Christians hold fast to the unique historical event of Christ's Incarnation. They are committed to their mission.

Sri Ma: Why should one put limits on the infinite or restrictions of time on the timeless, the eternal? The infinite has infinite ways of revealing itself. No one is entitled to say 'It is only thus and not different' – although strictly speaking such a creed is also allowable because every perspective is true. Where, after all, is the scope for rejection within the entirety of Truth? To claim exclusivity is a way of strengthening one's own faith and devotion, but to deny the loyalties of others is uncalled for. The true pilgrim should appreciate the efforts of fellow wayfarers.

Question: If one believes in a one-only Incarnation, how can one understand the truth of other manifestations?

Sri Ma: Incarnation is truly one only, a descent, a coming, an advent, each unique in its way. As I said, there is nothing or no one apart from God. The real crux of the matter is, keep walking! To advance in one direction, a supreme effort, single-minded and undeviating is required. To distract oneself by comparisons and contrasts is to slow down; unless they are used for the strengthening of purpose in a spirit of togetherness. The One encompasses all paths to the realization of its truth.

Question: Ma, they do not, cannot believe in the One only – the creature is forever separate from God.

Sri Ma: Yes, indeed, Because God cannot be grasped by the mind, He is forever separate. To be human is to dwell in the world of mental images. The mind circumscribes the understanding. God is separate from the creature because he remains beyond mental idealizations. The supreme is, therefore, ever beyond, so it is right to say God and his creature. *The understanding of the separation is itself the divide*

(emphasis added). He is one's innermost self, the inner witness, most intimately you yourself.

Question: Is a mediator necessary for knowing God?

Sri Ma: Yes, but God himself reveals himself as the Guru (Mediator). The Guru is God himself. He alone knows the requirements of the true disciple. To invoke the presence of the Guru one must become a true disciple.

Question: Are all paths of equal value?

Sri Ma: In as much as a path is followed one-pointedly, sincerely and persistently. However, there are highways and by-ways which turn out to be deviations. You see, one is born with certain predilections which shape attitudes. – your way of life is an amalgam of actions, beliefs and knowledge (*karma, bhakti, jnana*). The way you organize your life will determine the path you would like to follow. In the sphere of God-seeking, help is inevitable – even if one is ignorant and not given to evaluations, our path is straightened out by the Guru who appears invariably in order to render help and give guidance. It is your own effort and sincerity which are to be evaluated, not faiths.

Sri Ma: Whoever is on the path of the quest for That is touched by the peace of Truth. In this realm of seeking and finding, there is no possibility of any true effort going to waste, or non-sincerity producing results. Effort is required because man uses his will toward the achieving of worldly goals. So the will can also be harnessed toward carrying man beyond its limitations. Actually God's mercy prevails. You walk one step towards Him, He will come forward ten steps. He, in fact, is ever with you. The seeking itself, therefore, is a finding.

In all my dialogue with other religions these words of Sri Ma worked as a sheet anchor. As I studied and researched in later years they acquired greater meaning for me.

Children section

Result of the *Naam-Kirtan*

Swami Shivananda (Shri Sailesh Brahmachari)

One day a hunter went to a forest for hunting but he could not come across any animal. He has been in the forest several times earlier too and has hunted animals every time. But what was happening today? He did not get a single prey. He became frustrated and roamed around the forest for a kill. Dusk descended and he being very tired sat down beneath a tree.

Now what to do? He was brooding on it when he noticed a smoke far away. The hunter thought that if smoke is coming out, so someone must be residing there. Otherwise who will burn the fire? He was extremely tired, worn out due to hunger, and the chest bursting for thirst.

He proceeded towards the direction of the smoke, thinking that though I have not hunted any prey at least will get some food and water.

Reaching the spot of the fire he found a small hut of a *sādhu* (monk). The *sādhu* seated in his hut was repeating God's name (*naam-jap*). He looked exalted, with a glow emanating from his body.

The moment the hunter stood in front of his hut the *sādhu* stood up and approached him. The hunter bowed down before the *sādhu* and introducing himself said, "Baba, I am very hungry and thirsty. If I get something my life will be saved."

Hearing him the *sādhu* took the hunter inside his hut and offered a seat to him. After the hunter was seated he offered water from his *kamandal* (water vessel used by monks) to him. The hunter was very thirsty and requested for two more glasses of water. The *sādhu* offered water from the same *kamandal*. The hunter was surprised to see this. The hunter started pondering how such a small vessel could hold so much water? He looked amazed at the *kamandal*; it was still full of water.

The *sādhu* then kept in front of him some food in a leafy plate. The hunter was tormented with hunger; he thought that with so less items his hunger would not get

fulfilled, on the other hand it may further increase. It is not good to deny the *prasād* (offering) given by the *sādhu*, hence accepting it, he touched it on his head and ate the *prasād*.

But what a surprise! After eating the *sādhu's prasād* he felt as if he had no space in his stomach to eat anymore. The satisfaction that one gets after eating a stomach full, he started feeling just like that.

How was this possible, this he could not understand? He at last questioned the *sādhubaba*, "how was this possible with so less food?"

Clearing the doubts of the hunter the *sādhu* replied, "Son, all these are the fruits or reward of *bhagwat naam kirtan* (praising God by taking His name). Wherever *bhagwat naam kirtan* is held with heart-felt sincerity, there only such incidents occur.

Who stands on my heart's door

Sw. Amritanand Giri

Suddenly today on my heart's door who thou stands.

Oh! friend recognize you now after so many births.

O friend! O lover! O saviour! O my Death!

From this human cage have thou given freedom several times.

Then had seen your wrathful guise, O Lord could not recognize then.

O Lord I have truly loved this world.

Hence while departing from this cage rolled down tears from my eyes.

Hence could not recognize your saviour guise.

O friend! O lover! O liberator! O my Death.

I have recognized you now, have recognized you now,

You Who stands at my heart's door.

First *Darshan* of Sri Sri Ma

Sw. Narayananda Tirtha

One of my teachers knew that from my schooldays I had an attraction for *sādhus*, *sannyāsis*, *yogis* and *tapasvis*. Though he was a teacher, later in my life he used to behave like a friend. One day in the evening he came and informed that, one Mataji has arrived in the house of Sri Kunjamohan Mukhopadhaya in Ramapura locality in Kashi. If I wish I can go and see Her. I could not gather any other information about Mataji from him.

Till now I have heard of male *sādhu*, *sannyāsi*, *yogi*, *tapasvi* and *mahatmas*, but had never heard of any Mataji till now. I became very curious about this Mataji and lots of questions cropped up in my mind – who is She, from where She has come, what is Her name, does She meet or talk to any unknown male etc. I became confused and could not decide whether I should meet Her or not. However, I decided to visit Mataji, late in the evening. It would be great if She meets me otherwise I would be back.

I am a motherless son and She is like my mother too. Let me go and visit Her. There is no harm too, on the other hand there is more chance of being benefitted. If I can get a small portion of my mother's love and affection from this Mataji, then there maybe a bit of satisfaction in the heart of a motherless son.

My affectionate mother had passed away in Kashi sometime ago before this incident and her absence made me sad and gloomy all the time. I failed to concentrate on any work. In the late evening with all these thoughts in mind I got ready to depart for the house to have Mataji's *darshan*.

An old tale, of about half a century ago. It was the month of either *Phalgun* or *Chaitra* in the year 1333, Bengali era (February or March in 1927). Late in the evening, after completing *sandhyā puja*, with the hope of having Mataji's *darshan*,

mentally praying departed from the house. I have never ever seen a lady *sadhu* before. Thinking about Mataji all through my way I reached the house of Sri Kunja Mohan Mukhopadhyaya in Ramapura locality. I am already familiar with the house and its members. Sweet sound of the *kirtan* entered my ears as soon as I reached the entrance of the house. A gentleman was standing in the entrance and on enquiring learnt that Mataji was staying in a ground floor room on the western side near the staircase where the *Hari naam kirtan* was going on. He kindly showed me the room the moment I informed that I had was hoping to meet Mataji.

Our ideas of *sādhu-sannyasis*, in general is that they wear saffron clothes, either marked or with knotted hairs, *tulsi* or *rudrāksh* garland, the whole body smeared with ash, the forehead marked with *vibhuti* or *chandan*. We see more of this type in the present world. I am trying below to describe a bit of the form in which I had *darshan* of our discussable Mataji.

A simple oil lamp was burning in one corner of the room. Few people were lost in the *kirtan* uttering '*haribol haribol*' in a melodious voice. All these people were facing east. Serene and motionless a motherly figure was seated on a small cot covered with sparkling white bed sheet, in front of them. Her dress consisted of a pink sari on top of a pink robe. The two hands covered with golden bangles and *shanka* and *loha* wrapped with golden wire. A large sized vermilion *bindi* on Her forehead and a golden coloured garland made of skulls or shells on Her neck. The sari was a little pulled over Her head. Dressed as an empress as if *Māhāmāyā* the Universal Mother Herself, was seated illuminating the room. Her eyes were very beautiful and absorbed in emotion. Completely engrossed within an unknown divine nectar. The Goddess form submerged in divine supreme consciousness. Having *darshan* of that divine conscious form I felt as if She was not of this mortal world. From a divine world She has appeared to wipe out the three afflictions (material, spiritual, divine) of the people of this world. Observing Her glowing form I felt as if for dispensation of peace of the world's misery laden people, compassion was flowing out in a continuous manner from Her whole body. There were few other women in the room but I did not require asking anybody who is Mataji. She had on Her face such a quality because of which She can be recognised amongst thousands of people at ease. Her magnificent countenance in divine elegance is incessantly estatic like the blooming of hundreds of lotus.

On the very first *darshan* I sensed that She Herself is Mataji, *Vishwa-janani* the Universal Mother. As if someone signalled deep in my heart that, one who has lost his affectionate biological mother, all his dispossessions will be fulfilled by this Mother and will guide me in the infallible path to eternal bliss. Don't know when unknowingly this Mataji occupied the void that was present deep within me till now for my biological mother. Concluded, that now I will get from this Mataji itself, the forgotten motherly affection. I experienced an extraordinary joy on observing steadfastly at Shree Shree Ma's impeccable pure and divine form. At the same time I was thinking that for the one whom I was missing deep in my heart, for which I had to appear at the holy feet of so many *sannyāsis*, *yogis* and *mahatmas*, That itself after having taken the form of a pure Motherly body has appeared before me in this manner.

All the desires of this mortal world, compassion, affection and love and the available knowledge of the next world, devotion and divine love, all are present in the lotus feet of this Mataji. Anything that is desired all can be obtained from this Mother if one can grasp Her as one's own. Explaining in short I can say that in the very first *darshan* I felt as this Mataji is so much my own. As if there is no difference between the mother that I have lost and this Ma. As if that mother and this Mother are identical and one. That Ma has only today manifested in this form.

The biological mother is only mother, but within this Mother in one way mother, father, brother, friend and Guru are all present. The origin of all emotions - mother's affection, father's protection, brother's love, friend's goodwill and Guru's shelter, is this 'Ma'. Without reasoning, in that pious moment when unknowingly within my unrestrained heart I accepted this Mataji as the one alone helmsman of this boat of life. Right from my schooldays till today, for all these years I have seen so many of *sādhu*, *sannyāsi*, *yogi*, *tapasvi* and *mahapurush*. But never have I loved anyone like this nor could accept anyone as my own. From my childhood till to date, I have been roaming around searching for so long to attain this Mother. Today She Herself sending me information in an unforeseen manner, shown Herself and pulled me forever at Her lotus feet. Even after lot of thinking and research could not come to any conclusion, how was it possible to get this highly yearning *Mātri-darshan*? Who had inspired my teacher friend to inform me about Mataji's arrival? Is it not actually a matter to give some thought!

Sitting for a long time in an unswerving and emotionless state, suddenly Ma stood up. In this silent and dark night without waiting for anyone in that spellbound state, rockingly, She came out of the house. Crossing the courtyard, sitting room, veranda and the inclined road She started walking north towards the church. Three ladies and two men were following behind Her. The author of this book was one of the men. Seeing the movement of vehicles on the main road we were feeling afraid that it may not collide with Ma. None of us knew how to protect Ma's body when Ma is in Her *bhaav*. The other gentleman with me (Shri Akhil Chandra Bandyopadhyay) ran back to the house and brought along a middle aged *sādhu*. By the time he arrived Ma had gone far from the house. The *sādhu* caught hold of Ma in Her emotionless state and brought Her back to the house. Returning back Ma covering Herself lay down on Her cot. I had learnt later that, the *sādhu* was Shree Shree Mataji's husband, Shri Ramani Mohan Chakravorty. In his later life he was known to everybody as 'Baba Bholanath'.

With an unsatisfied heart seeing Ma for a short period I was forced to return back to my house. Before returning to my house learnt that, Ma taking along Her companions will leave for the *Kumbh-Mela* in Haridwar. Ma's mother, husband Shri Ramani Mohan Chakravorty, Dr. Shashank Mohan Mukhopadhyay and his daughter Smt. Adorini devi, and a few devotees had arrived with Ma. It was almost twelve in the night when I reached home after *Mātri-darshan*. This is my first acquaintance of Shree Shree Ma's *darshan* in an unexpected manner. I do not think that even in this long fifty years there is a slight fading of Ma's glorious image of that night. On the other hand, I feel that just now only I have had the *darshan* of that *Rājrajeshwari* (empress like) image. I can never imagine in my dream too that I can love somebody so much with only a few moments of *darshan*. Is it possible for such to occur if there wasn't a connection of some kind before this? It is a topic for discussion as to what that connection is.

Reminiscence of *Mātri-darshan*

Jiten' da (1903-1974)

Smt. Karobi B. Ray

Shri Jitendra Nath Dutta (known as Jitenda in the ashram) had the first *darshan* of Shree Shree Anandamayee Mā in 1936 at the Shimla Kali Bari. He was a deeply religious man and seeing Mā for the first time was the culmination of his search for the Divinity.

Jitenda, who was born around 1903 got *diksha* from their family Guru, Yogi Maharaj Tulsidas Baba when he was just 5 years old. During his college days in Calcutta, Jitenda regularly visited the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur Math and the famous Dakshineswar Kali Temple.

He worked in several places and companies and finally joined the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to which he stayed attached till the end of his career. He retired as Member of the Tariff Commission at Bombay. Because of official reasons he used to stay with his family in Shimla every year from April to October. The Bengali officers had established *Hari Sabha* in the Shimla Kali Temple. One of their annual functions was the *Nām Yajña* held during the month of June and since most were followers of the Bhakti cult, *kirtan* became their obvious choice. It helped because many of them were good singers. This group had religious leanings and most of them were initiated by renowned saints of that time.

In June 1936, Mā visited Shimla and stayed at the Kali Bari Temple complex. Two days after Her arrival, the annual *Nām Yajña* was held in the entrance hall (*nāṭ mandir*) of the deity. The *Nām Yajña* started in the evening and soon the spiritual fervour heightened to an intensity that affected Mā. However, She controlled Herself and stayed in Her room. Next morning, the *kirtan* continued with similar fervour and

Mā, in a state of *bhāva*, came to the *satsang* hall. She circumambulated the *mancha* (holy altar) with raised hands, eyes looking up, head bent backward, face flushed red. She went round with the kirtan party, spinning on one toe then fell to the ground and rolled on the floor like a dry leaf being blown in the wind. Then, She slowly sat up with half-closed eyes, face flushed and *stotras* streaming from Her lips. Witnessing this, the participants were overwhelmed with joy and remarked that all the symptoms of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's *bhāva* (the great saint from 550 years ago who was considered an *avatār* of Lord Krishna) were clearly being depicted in Ma. During Mā's short stay in Shimla, the government officers and their families had Mā's *darshan* regularly, drawn to Her by Her divinity. This was Jitenda's first *darshan* of Mā.

During Mā's next visit to Shimla, Bhaiji (Jyotish Chandra Roy) had accompanied Mā. He noticed some special characteristics in Jitenda and gazed at him intensely. Mā teased Bhaiji by saying Jiten is married; to which Bhaiji expressed surprise saying that Jitenda did not manifest the signs of being a householder. Mā added, that Jiten's wife, Kanti was good natured and devoted and Bhaiji could see for himself when she visited. Bhaiji, took a liking to him and guided him to observe Mā from a distance and watch every movement of Hers to see the manifestation of divinity. Bhaiji communicated with Jitenda regularly and kept him posted on Mā and Her movements until he left his body in August 1937 in Almora.

Jitenda opened his home to Mā's devotees in Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. It became the home for all inmates of the ashram who often came and stayed for long periods to seek medical treatment in these big cities. Jitenda often paid the travel expenses of the *kirtan* party when Mā expressed for a *Nām Yajña* to be held at a places. He had to borrow often to meet the financial commitments.

Bhaiji was responsible for motivating the devotees to construct the Delhi Ashram. Prior to this, Mā used to tell them to set aside a day every fortnight and spend it in the contemplation of God, doing *japa*, and reading scriptures. The efforts of few of these devotees and their contributions led to the construction of Mā's Ashram in Kalkaji, Delhi. The men spear-heading this project were Jitenda, Dharendra Nath Dutta (Jitenda's older brother), Rai Bahadur Narain Das, Rai Bahadur Pankaj Sen and a few others. The construction of the ashram was done in phases over the period 1953/54 to 1969. Subsequently, additional rooms, a guest house and a temple complex was built.

In 1949, Jitenda was transferred to Calcutta (now known as Kolkata) as Joint Chief Controller of Imports and Exports. In 1952, Jitenda sought transfer from Kolkata to Delhi on the advice of the famous physician, Dr. Bidhan Roy. Back in Delhi, Jitenda's condition deteriorated and he developed acute pleurisy and was soon confined to bed. One afternoon, the attending doctor informed Kantidi that the medicines were ineffective and Jitenda's condition was critical. In the middle of that night, Kantidi became aware of a sweet perfume surrounding them. Jitenda who did not have the strength even to turn, suddenly sat up. Kantidi rushed to help saying, "What are you doing?" Jitenda answered, "Mā, Gurudev and Bhajji, have come, do pronaam." The fragrance lingered for a while before gradually fading away. The next morning, the doctor who visited daily was surprised to see the improvement in Jitenda's health. Slowly, he got better and recovered completely.

In 1964, Jitenda constructed a house in New Delhi but would not perform the *Griha Pravesh*, determined that, Ma should enter the house first. Hence he lived in a rented house nearby. A year later Mā visited Delhi and surprisingly instead of going to the ashram went to Jitenda's house and stayed there for four days without leaving even for a short while. Devotees came from all over to visit Mā: everyone was welcomed and fed *prasad* like the custom followed in the ashram. The Panchen Lama, Rihana Tyabji, the famous lady muslim saint who worshiped Krishna and a Christian priest also visited on their own. On the third day, a *Nām Yajña* was held in the evening. Next morning the devotional fervour of the kirtan reached a pitch and Mā circumambulated the *mancha* in *bhāva*. All were overwhelmed. Few people even experienced spiritual symptoms. On the fifth day, as Mā was leaving for Vrindavan, She rolled on the floor in front of the *mancha* at the far end of the drawing room. Then Mā instructed that the temporary *manch* should not be dismantled right away but kept for a week and *ārati* performed in the evening.

Thereafter, having had his wish granted Jitenda and Kantidi moved into the new house. Mā, who never entered a domestic house made several surprise visits to Jitenda's home. In response to a query, "why She entered Jitenda's home?" Mā said that his home is like an ashram.

In September 1974, Jitenda and Kantidi visited Mā in Vrindavan where a *Bhāgwat Saptaha* was scheduled to start from September 23rd on the *Rādhā Ashtami*

day. Over the weekend, Jitenda's sons, Gobluda, his family and Patunda drove up from Delhi to celebrate in Ma's presence Gobluda's son's *anna prashan* (rice feeding ceremony) on September 22nd. After the ceremony, as the family was leaving for Delhi, Jitenda looked at them with a *karuna dristi* as if he was bidding the final farewell. Noticing the look, Gobluda who was driving the car, remarked 'Baba has become very sentimental'.

In the early hours of September 23, around 3am, Jitenda had the urge to use the bathroom. As he stood up, he had a heart attack and collapsed. Kantidi tended to him giving him medicine and whatever she could to bring him relief. When she said that she would quickly go and inform Mā, Jitenda replied, "Isn't Mā everywhere?" Within a short while, uttering the words "Mā, Mā", he left his body.

Earlier that day, Mā had asked Patunda thrice, at different times in different locations, whether he was on leave from work. This surprised Patunda and he asked his mother whether he should stay back. She felt that he should proceed as he had work the next day. So Patunda and Gobluda had left for Delhi. In retrospect Patunda says, this incident was a big learning to never question any of Mā's directions.

Simultaneously, Mā had a *kheyal* to proceed to Modi Bhavan but nobody was nearby to accompany Her. She reached a little while later and sat down touching Kantidi, whose hand was resting on the dead body. Then sorrowfully She said, "Jiten went away like this!" Her *bhava* at that time was as if her own child had left. She continued sitting next to Kantidi for an hour or more. The dead body was brought and laid down in front of the *Chaliya* temple. Jogenda had received the news and collected the main *argha* of *Bthariji* which is usually given to saintly persons or sadhus.

This *argha* was placed on Jitenda's head and sanctified *chandan* paste was smeared on his forehead. Mā was standing on the stairs of the *Chaliya* temple directing everyone on what needed to be done. By that time, Gobluda and Patunda had returned from Delhi, for the last rites in Vrindavan on the banks of Yamuna. Once the pyre was ignited it quickly consumed the body to ashes. The water in the Yamuna was knee deep but as the pyre burned, it was observed that the water crept closer eventually touching the pyre, even though there was no appreciable increase in the quantum of water flowing in the Yamuna. This vivid change was noticed by all with amazement.

Afterwards while taking their baths in the Yamuna, Gobluda and Patunda waded to the centre and sat on the river bed with the water reaching below their chests. They cupped their hands to splash water to wet their bodies.

This strange occurrence was described to Mā, and She said that Yamuna herself touched the departing soul and Jiten had carved his own path to spiritual realization. Then She revealed that his *Ishta* mantra was of *Krishna* and since he had his initiation in childhood he had got the mantra corrected by Her. Mā spoke continuously about Jitenda and said that Jiten closely followed Bhajji's principles of life. Then on Her own Mā started narrating Jitenda's spiritual state and expressed how he showed the way to salvation through sincere devotion.

There are various modes of living: one is the *āshram* of the householder; another to do *sevā* (service) regarding whomsoever one serves as a manifestation of the Supreme Being; a third way is to fix Self-realization as the one and only goal and advance towards it with uninterrupted speed and determination. Maintaining one's inclinations and bent of mind, one chooses any of these modes of living. God Himself will take care of everything that concerns a person who puts his whole trust in Him.

By doing *sevā* (service) heart and mind are purified; be convinced of this! To engage in service is a very powerful *sadhānā*, do not become impatient. Rather serve your people with the utmost calm and have a kind word for everyone. Whenever you say or do anything wrong, beg to be forgiven and try your best not to let a similar error occur in the future. Even though others may be unjust to you, you yourself should neither do nor say anything unseemly.



A tribute to Brahmacharini Aruna-didi

Brahmacharini Guneeta

In the early decade of 1940, Shri. Baleshwari Prasad became a staunch devotee of Shree Shree Ma, after having *darshan* of Her divine and serene appearance. In 1943 and in 1958 in the presence of Shree Shree Ma, he organized the *Sharadiya Durgā Pujā*.

In this devout family fully engrossed in the devotion of Shree Shree Ma, *brahmachārini* Aruna Pandya was born in the year 1945 to Smt. Kamla Pandya and Shri. Jagdish Pandya. Her elder brother Shri. Krishna Pandya and younger brother Shri. Raman Pandya are both devoted to Shree Shree Ma like Aruna-didi.

Recently on 29th June 2019, our respected and beloved Aruna-didi left this material world for ever to the heavenly abode (*Avyakt-Dhām*) to continue her service to Shree Shree Ma for eternity.

Pleasant and humble Aruna-didi's childhood passed in Allahabad and Lucknow. She completed her higher studies in Calcutta. When Shree Shree Ma used to stay in Dehradun along with the kanyapeeth girls, adolescent Aruna-didi also came there along with her parents and taught English to the young kanyapeeth girls.

While staying in Calcutta, Aruna-didi had fallen seriously ill for several days. With Shree Shree Ma's Grace only she recovered and felt reborn. After that incident, with the agreement of her parents, Aruna-didi detaching herself from the material world decided forever to take shelter under the lotus feet of Shree Shree Ma.

In the Ashram, Aruna-didi wearing a white sari with a thin border was seen moving around Shree Shree Ma, with Ma inspiring her to distribute *prasād* and fruits to both monks and the royal families visiting the Ashram. Hence, slowly under Shree Shree Ma's guidance she became expert in managing and packing the various types of *prasād* like dry fruits, fruits, sweets etc.

In 1981, on Shree Shree Ma's instructions, she was part of the organizing committee for the *Atirudra Mahayag* held in Kankhal Ashram. During the ceremony she was seen moving around here and there managing either the construction of the *yagnashala* or the items required for the *yagna* or meeting officials.

After Shree Shree Ma withdrew from this physical world towards the *Avyakta*, the Shree Shree Anand Jyoti Mandir was established in the Kankhal Ashram. Aruna-didi played a leading role in managing the temple in the pious and orderly manner as had been dictated by Shree Shree Ma. Later she was handling the management of the yearly *Sanyam Saptah* held in Kankhal Ashram.

With time and age, she gradually started suffering from pain in the knees. Though the problem deteriorated with time, she maintained her duties efficiently with only Ma's name on her mind and lips. With Shree Shree Ma engrossed in every pore of her body she tried her best to dutifully and piously fulfill her duties in the ashram till her last breath.

Do not feel distressed because you are deprived of his physical presence. It is the duty of the dearest and nearest of the departed to pray that he may progress on his upward path. Perfect resignation gives the deepest joy of all. Accept it as your sole resource. Whatever God does at any time is wholly benign.

Matri-Leela

Swami Kedarnathji

1. The incident of '*Vishhari Ma*'.

This incident is of Ma's Ashram in Raipur (Dehradun). Swami Narayan Tirth is groaning due to an unbearable pain. Some poisonous creature had bitten him on the leg in the darkness under a tree. The pain was constantly on the rise. With the help of his Vedanta thoughts, he wanted to become an observer of the incident but he writes, "The unbearable and intense pain, in the form of a wind, blew away these thoughts scattering them here and there." Ma came to know about it. Ma could not bear this pain, and hence put Swamiji's head on Her lap and gently started rubbing Her lotus hand from the *brahma tālu* on the head to the end of the spinal cord at the back. Fetching some fresh cow's milk from the village by sending a brahmachari and then mixing cow's *ghee* and *haldi* powder to it, gave him to drink. By the time it was morning the pain had subsided. Ma said, "Saw a beautiful lady form wearing a colored sari like that of a Marwari woman, covered in a veil and crowned with a golden flower hanging from the hairs on her forehead, go away from there. That was the form of '*Vishhari devi*'.

Everybody say with affection "*Vishhari Ma ki Jay*."

2. And the *tantric* was stupefied..

The world of *tantric-mantric*'s is altogether very different and weird. Their moods too are of a different nature; attaining a bit of *siddhi* they start feeling that they have become very powerful and important on this world and getting subjugated by greed and ambition, they start displaying their negligible power, without attaining the power and knowledge of human wellbeing.

Such a *tantric* once had a feeling of displaying his power of *mantra-tantra* in front of Ma. He had become quite popular, had lots of pupils, devotees and admirers. Also crowds gather very fast near such magical *tantriks*. So he proceeded to Ma's Ashram along with his group of admirers. Reaching near Ma, his devotees said, "He

is a great *tantric*, has infinite capacity." Ma, saying "Narayan, Narayan", folded Her hands with humbleness and told Her devotees to welcome him with garlands. The devotees ran to bring the same, but where was the *tantric's* patience? When one is full of cash one cannot sit quiet, wealth makes his body, mind and senses impatient. Also maturity of the fundamentals is required to hold and retain spiritual power. The *tantric* "wait! I am fetching it now," so saying raised his hand up towards the sky, but his hand was empty. Murmuring something he again stretched his hands up, again there was nothing in his hands...

Ma was watching this play of Her child. When he started getting disheartened Ma took hold of the situation saying, "Baba, it is very hot today, drink cold water." By this time the garlands had arrived, the devotees welcomed him with garlands and *chandan* and offered him snacks. For the sake of *mukh shudhdi*, Ma told the devotees to give him clove and cinnamon. "No, no, not required" so saying the *tantric* again spread his arm upwards, again the hand was empty... The *tantric* was now sweating. He started thinking 'have I lost my powers? till now anything of this type had never occurred that, on raising the hand something has not come in the hand. What has happened today?' He was not able to understand anything; he kept on trying again and again, but, as if his powers had surrendered in the presence of Ma. Now he was hesitating to even sit in front of Ma, was feeling afraid and hoping something forbidding may not have occurred. With a swearing attitude he asked for leave from Ma. Ma folded Her hands saying, "Narayan, Narayan. All are forms of God." Ma in a disguised manner conveyed the message of Her divinity.

The devotees of Ma with due respect went up to the entrance to bid farewell to the *tantric*. A simple devotee not understanding anything put forth a question, "Sir! When you were sitting near Ma then why were you occasionally raising up your hands? Was there any problem in the hand?" The *tantric mahasay* had in the meantime gone out of the entrance gate, saying, "nothing, nothing," he again raised his hands upwards; he was happy, a whole packet of sweets was in his hands, with a healthy attitude he distributed the sweets outside and walked away deep in thought...

Mahashakti had paralysed the *shakti* of the *tantric*, in order to awaken the feeling of prudence within him, and which had awakened too. On reaching his ashram he again got engaged in pure *sadhana*

Everybody say with affection – "*Tantreshvari Maiya ki Jay.*"

Ashram Varta

Last 16th July, 2019 on the auspicious occasion of *Guru Purnimā*, special *shodshopchar pujā* of Shree Shree Ma and Shree Shree Muktananda Giriji (Didima) was held in all the Ashrams of Shree Shree Ma. In Kankhal Ashram a lot devotees had gathered. The devotees were blessed and gratified by offering *puspānjali* on the lotus feet of Shree Shree Ma and Shree Giriji. *Sādhu Bhandārā* was also held in every Ashram. On last 7th August i.e. on *Shravani Shukla Saptami* on the occasion of *Nirvāna Tithi* of Shree Muktananda Giriji, *shodshopchar pujā* and *Sādhu Bhandārā* was convened. From 10th to 14th August, *Jhulan Mahotsav* was nicely held in Varanasi, Vrindavan and other Ashrams. On Independence day i.e. 15th August the festival of *Rakshābandhan* was held with gaiety. Also the Indian Tricolor Flag was hoisted with proper salutations, enthusiastic speech, etc. in Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth Varanasi, Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth Kankhal and in Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Shiksha Upvan Bhopal.

This time a notable function of the Bhopal Ashram was that, a special *yagna* was held for rains in Bhopal. The *MāhāSiddha* of Girnar was present and the *yagna* was performed only on his instructions. On 23rd August, especially in Vrindavan and Varanasi Ashram, *Janmāstami* was held with great enthusiasm. In Varanasi, Gopalji's temple was nicely decorated with flowers, leaves and fruits. Then at midnight 12am Gopalji's *Maha-snaan* and *Maha-abhishek* was held. Then special *bhog* with variety of food items was offered to Gopalji. The main *pujā* was completed by 2:30am. After the *arati* and *puspanjali*, devotees had special *prasād* of *Mukhan-misri*, *malai*, *ladhu*, etc. In Vrindavan Ashram too on the occasion of *Janmāstami*, *Anand Chaliya's* and *RadhaKrisna's* worship was held with too much enthusiasm. On 24th August *Nandotsav* was held.

From 4th to 8th October, *Sharadiya Durgā Pujā* with the Durga idol decorated in the *Dāker Saāj* form, was celebrated in various Ashrams like Kankhal, Agarpara, Ranchi, New Delhi, etc. This year Ranchi Ashram celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the *Sharadiyā Durgā Pujā* with great joy and dedication, in the presence of Swami Achutanandaji and others. Souvenirs have also been published on this occasion.