

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

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

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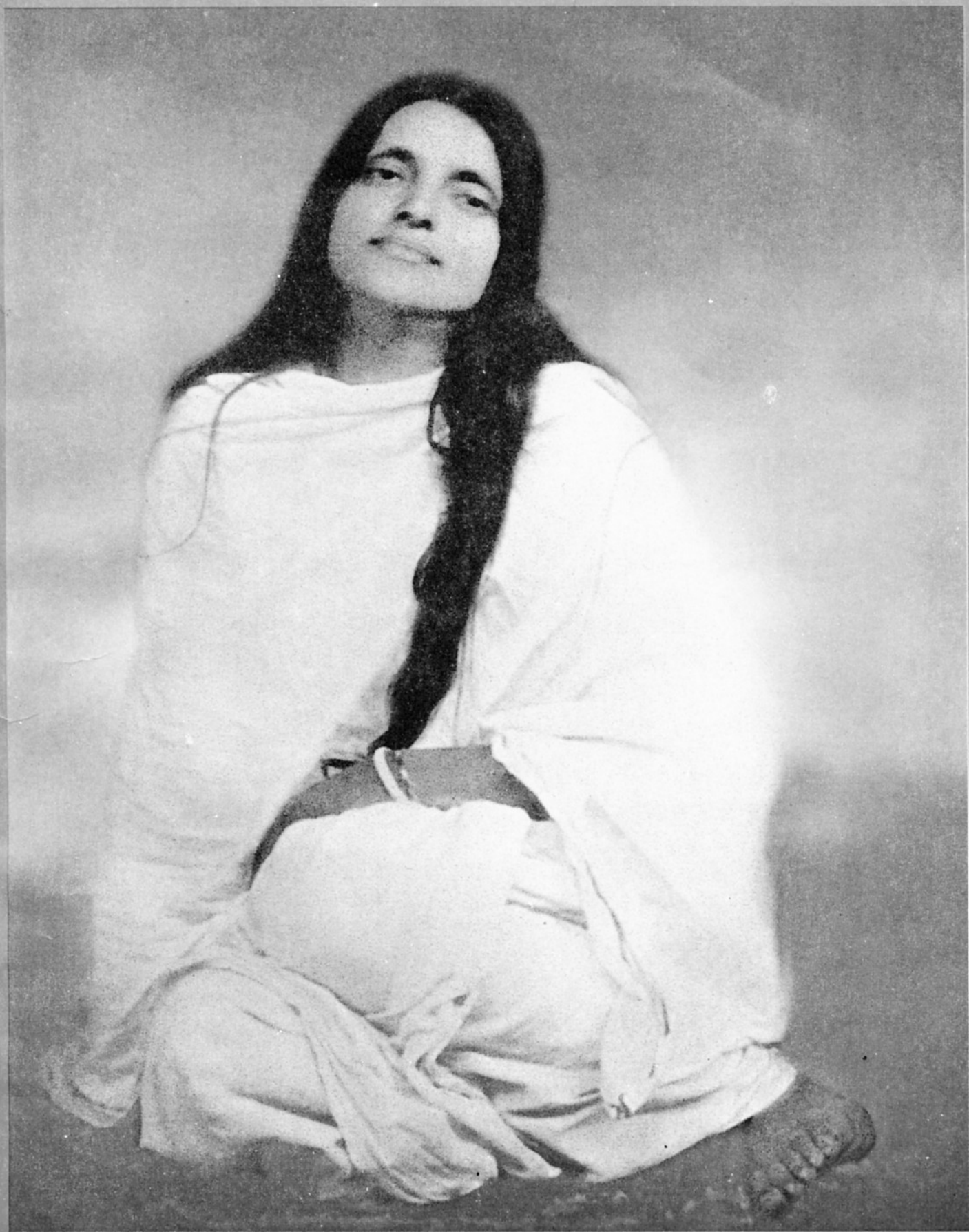
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MATRI VANI

The intense desire for God-realization is itself the way to it.

* * * * *

When you leave everything to Him who is the Fountain of Peace, then only is there hope of peace.

* * * * *

Be anchored in fearlessness. What is worldly life but fear ! When you live in the stronghold of fear, must you not be afraid ? It is futile to expect fearlessness there.

That you may be delivered from all sorrow you should endeavour to seek refuge in God alone.

* * * * *

This is the time to mould yourself. You will have to resort to renunciation and fortitude. So as to be released from the evil propensities acquired in previous lives which lead to pain and suffering, try to make your mind the consecrated shrine of the All-Good (*Sadbhāva*) and desirelessness. The first thing is to feel drawn towards God.

Be unflinching in service. Whatever has to be done for anyone, do it in a spirit of service.

There is yet another matter to which special attention must be paid: sloth has to be abandoned altogether. Where it is a question of good work (*Satkarma*), disinclination and lethargy have to be completely ruled out. The difficulties that may arise when doing anyone a service should be borne cheerfully.

* * * * *

Invoke Him, rely upon Him. Wherever you may be you are in His arms. If happiness is to be found in this world you have to aspire to God-realization.

What worldly life is, you have seen: day in and day out one is immersed in an ocean of misery. This is what is called *Samsāra* (Life in the world).

* * * * *

Through the stream of Godly thoughts lies the path that leads to the destruction of *Karma*. So long as the goal has not been reached, one is bound to reap the consequences of right action, wrong action and inaction according to *Karma*, the law of cause and effect.

* * * * *

Losing hope is losing all indeed. But has this loss of everything occurred ? Is not the heart bubbling over with desires and hopes ? This is only natural - it is the innate tendency of the individual.

Perfect resignation gives deeper joy than anything else. Accept it as your sole refuge. Whatever God does at any time is wholly benign. If you can bear this in mind you will be at peace.

* * * * *

The more time is devoted to the thought of God the greater the gain. Where worldly life is, there is want: this is its very nature. If- with or without inclination - you can keep your mind consecrated to His Feet, there is promise of peace.

* * * * *

To expect peace from worldly life is in vain. Try to live exclusively in His presence and do all service from a sense of duty. The world is certainly not an abode of happiness. The sole hope of peace is to take refuge at the Feet of God.

* * * * *

Keep your thought on Divine things (*Hari Katha*). To surrender mind and heart and body to Him who is their Lord gives peace; but to expect peace from the world will of a certainty bring sorrow in its wake. Try to live a life of holiness and asceticism, that is, abide in a state of Godliness and virtue. Why dissipate mind and body by useless worry ? What He does - whatsoever - is all for the best. Why, by harbouring only longings and desires invite sorrow ? In whatever circumstances you may be placed, reflect thus: " It is all right, it was necessary for me; this is His way of drawing me close to His Feet"; and try to remain content.

By Him alone should your heart be possessed.



THE REAL OBJECTIVE OF HUMAN LIFE

—Sri Virajanandaji Maharaj

The objective of human life is to realise the 'Self'. This can be regarded as the theme of knowledge for any aspirant of this path. The objective here being the 'Self' yet ever unknown that a riddle which can never be solved by the self. Guidance from somewhere becomes an absolute need. Here comes the role of a Guru, i.e. only a guidance of Guru can lead to know the 'Self'.

The riddle is obvious, a 'Self' is ever known to the self, all the same, it remains ever in the darkness. In short, The guidance of a Guru is absolutely sought for to solve this riddle. What is 'sadhana'? It is nothing but to act in obedience to the guidance of the Guru to the letter. In our institution, one has been most lucky to be carried to the feet of a personality who is not only a guide but the objective itself, something unique combination not usually heard of. With a small note above we should therefore have a firm determination to follow Her words without question and there should not be any deviation or hesitation or question to doubt such guidance, i.e. as unflinching obedience to which we shall move ahead.

However, a human mind in the world is always unsettled in its query to settle down. In this helpless situation, it can never remain steady on any solution ever remaining in the darkness in absence of that it can hide for the time being without realising the Guru's guidance is the only way for such solution, he is ever on a move to seek one or the other way. Evidently a movement in the darkness the light remaining far far away ever.

Without realising the importance of Guru's guidance, the only way to lead to the objective, a human mind is to qualify his guidance under a mundane light of intelligence. That is to say, an interpretation of the guidance in his intellectual understanding. This sort of understanding remains ever a movement in the whirlpool. The problem remaining ever unsolved, i.e. we create problem after problem in following our intellectual understanding failing to realise Guru's guidance.

Here is a small episode narrating such helpless pursuit ultimately leading to worldly confusion and never to lead to any solution. Lord Buddha's brother and sewak 'Anand' prayed to the Lord to accept Buddha's foster mother "Parajita" with ascetic order. Buddha tried to make 'Anand' understand, "This was not a right pleading to accept a woman with the association of man in sadhana. All the same, conceded to your pleading knowing fully well the course of events will one day

speaking for itself that the life of Buddhism by this act of surrender will be reduced by 500 years' and it did happen so. With this small deliberation as above, should we still insist on moving against the principle as laid by 'Ma' for an ascetic, i.e. a sadhu or a Brahmachari should not insist on any act or suggestion which will go straight across against Ma's firm directives. Once we give indulgence to such liberty, i.e. to liberalise the Guru's words to suit our own way, it will clearly open a downfall path. By stages, as we shall continue to move like that, one fine morning we will find that we have lost all our values and we have been far away to redeem the same. So, if the above picture is truly realised should we not make a determined effort to follow Ma's words as ever and ever and never to make any foolish attempt to make our mundane suggestion to dilute the above ideology and distract ourselves to a destination ever remaining far far away from the destination desired.

We have tried to impress that sadhana is nothing but to follow Guru's words. However, sadhana as such what it is. Ma says sadhana means to regain *sva-dhan* i.e. self wealth. The very word we gain clearly points out that we have lost our wealth already. Here the word self wealth signifies 'Self' the only wealth means the permanent asset i.e. on reality. Does it mean our reality can ever be lost? It is not really but drawn under a cover which has got to be removed. The cover means action of diverse *gunas* to which a *Jiva* has been made a slave to regain his mastery. A *Jiva* has got to conquer over the forces of his *gunas*. This conquest implies various actions and behaviours in life to have a command over these negative forces. These actions are various in their method and application in every behaviour, thinking, moving, eating etc. in our daily actions and thinking. That is to say our way of life has got to be disciplined in every phase of activity, thinking, eating, moving etc.

In the land where these things are obeyed and practised since very very long past as an atmosphere of its own which is conducive to imbibe such qualities by living in the same land itself. So it is called a *Yoga Bhumi*. The reverse is called a *Bhoga Bhumi* where all sorts of mundane enjoyment freely is the way of life. (So it is called a *Bhoga Bhumi*). In this *Bhoga Bhumi* one has become a slave to propensities, i.e. 'eat, drink and be merry only'. Here the importance of *samyam* is hardly understood. A *bhoga*, i.e. physical enjoyment with no restraint whatsoever gradually makes one to lose the power of developing a spiritual understanding at all. He is now in a state of to be a slave only of mundane enjoyment and ultimately leads to a frustrated life without any mooring. The objective of life is never understood and lost as ever. Therefore, one lost totally under the forces of *bhoga* can

never gain the spiritual wealth and ever remains a poor, i.e. all joy of life lost, whereas in *Yoga Bhumi* a poor is rich ever having in possession of *Samyam* (spiritual discipline). i.e. gaining and developing his own spiritual power that only helps to gain his self wealth.

In any case, to regain the spiritual wealth, one under the clutches of mundane power can never be its master by his own effort only. Here the need of *Guru Shakti* coming to play is essential, i.e. the extrovert forces cannot be totally overcome by self will. The pattern of such a person has got to be changed creating a field of its own where his own *shakti* can be unfolded. This is what is the help of Guru that makes it possible. His self *shakti* as an active force now helps a *Jiva* to overcome these exterior forces and discover his own *shakti* (power) to move aiming at the objective, i.e. a counter force against the mundane forces. This is called an arrest of *Abhāb Gati* (i.e. a mundane movement to enjoy objects of senses without end) even in infinite births. This is only possible to arrest this *Abhāb Gati* (i.e. movement to the world of sense object).

In *Bhoga Bhumi* one is in fact a slave of propensities, all the same, be considered himself an independent personality. This illusion is only realised in course of time when one is completely a slave of *bhogas* and lost all possibilities to redeem the same. That is to say, enjoyment of senses leads to a total loss, whereas a *samyam* helps one to gain a mastery over all sense objects and ultimately his life becomes one pointed life. Ma says this is the stage where one has shaped in the form of a *sadhaka* i.e. he remains fixed with his own objective only and illusive world is completely dropped. This is the stage where *sadhana* develops to take place by itself which Ma emphasises the effort of doing of *sadhana* would lead to *sadhana* taking place by itself. The purpose of life is on the way to regain its wealth completely. This is what is called to be in the stream of '*Swabhava* (*Swabhāvagati*).



THE DIVINE MOTHER

— Dr. Premlata Srivastav

[Continued from before]

Ma's *Sādhan Leelā* (1918-1924)

The history of Ma's deep religious practices can be understood only by the sayings that have emanated from Her lips on different occasions in some context or the other. I have tried to knit them together.

Bajitpur was the main centre of Her sadhana where she came with Bholanath in 1918. By and large the sole witness of this wonderful leela of Sadhana on Ma's body was Bholanath together with only few lucky ones who had the glimpses of this leela.

On being asked whether Bholanath could understand the happenings, Ma said—"How he could ? Until one reaches to that stage".

Ma's sadhana has been described as Her *Leela* because of two reasons. Firstly, this illustrated Her '*Kheyala*' and secondly, this whole drama took place on Her body in its own way automatically, effortlessly and with no intention of Her own. She used to watch in silence, she being only a passive participant, "what an unique unparallel experience' she has said.

Thus in Ma's case—it is "Realisation of the Self by the Self."

Her days during sadhana were not divided into morning, evening and nights. There was only one prolonged period of indescribable bliss.

Evidence of sadhana, its ascendance to higher planes for the realisation of the self or God have no meaning in Ma's sadhana *leela*. For Her, *Sādhak*, *Sādhyā* and *Sadhana* are one and one only. It is unique in its own way.

In Ma's words—"It is like one reads a book already read or revisits a place once visited. This sadhana was nothing more than a 'play'. One day while bathing in a pond this body had a '*kheyal*' to play the role of a *sadhak*, and that is how it all started."

In Ma's words "this body has not followed only one particular line of sadhana but has covered all the known lines. It has passed through all the different varieties of practises referred to by the sages of ancient times. In order to attain to a particular

stage along one of these lines of sadhana an ordinary individual may have to be born again and again, but in the case of this body it was a matter of few seconds."

During those days Ma had an unusual life style. After finishing Her daily household work with care and concern she would scrupulously clean the surrounding area, then she would go round the place with incense likening the place to a temple. Then she would sit (it used to be night by that time) in the corner of Her room for daily puja without a break. The various pujas and asanas would start automatically. Bholanath used to watch awfully lying on his bed. And what did he see in the dim light of the room ? Ma was sitting inert like a statue and suddenly Her limbs would be in brisk motion. Her body would perform various *asanas* and *mudras* in quick succession. Her complexion also changed from time to time. Quite often Her respiration assumed frightening proportions and occasionally it appeared she had fainted. A solitary spectator to all these nerve-racking transformations repeated night after night Bholanath knew not what to do ?

Ma's image as a forceful religious personality thus began to blossom as that of a newly wed bride gradually went into oblivion.

Watching the effect of *Harinaam* on Her, one day, Bholanath asked—"why do you chant Hari-Hari" all the time ? We are *shaktas*, this is not proper, he objected.

Then what ? Ma sprang back like a child, should I then repeat "Jai Shiva Shankara Bom Bom Hara Hara" ?

Yes, this is alright, Bholanath opined. Ma explained later that she felt the same kind of happiness with the changed call for God as Hari and Har are one and the same. When I prayed with my heart and soul into it an unparalleled undescrivable joy descended on this body. The initiation was yet to be done so the effect whatsoever was due to the repetition of '*Naam*' alone."

Narrating the *leela* of Her sadhana once she has said "this body has experienced so varied stages, so diverse and extreme in their nature that words fall short to explain them. In general stages do occur and last in *sadhakas*, but here it is all different. "

She further clarified- "As long as you are in different stages so long only the levels exist. After that it is just like moving in a lift. There you cease to exercise your will power. You only remain a witness of the show."

She said "As seeds are planted and pressed into the soil for saplings to come out, likewise during sadhana it is to be kept as a guarded secret otherwise many invisible and indirect hurdles come in the way."

Elaborating on the point Ma said 'Secrecy then was absolutely necessary. There are *kriyas* of sadhana which are required to be exercised in private. The different forms of sadhana were not meant for this body but are meant for you all. When you relate your spiritual experiences to me, I often say that this body had those experiences and that is how it knows what they are. Not only that if anyone discloses to this body a specific line of sadhana it can describe in minute details the various stages of that very line."

During those days of sadhana different *mantras*, and seeds used to come out of their own from this body's mouth. Now I hear from you people that in ancient days *mantras* used to be automatically pronounced by Rishis. How enchanting are these *mantras*, their form and their meaning and respectively different manifestations through human bodies. Even breathing turns different with the chanting of different *mantras*."

Further she said "Even different *asanas* and *mudras* were performed spontaneously. This body never knew about what are *asanas* and *mudras* or how they are performed ?

Sri A. K. Dutta Gupta has very well recorded Her sayings in this context.

"Sometime I would hear distinctly 'repeat this mantra', when I got the *mantra*, a query came to my mind whose *mantra* is this ? At once the reply came. Again how does it look ? A form was revealed to me in no time."

"While sitting for yagna fingers will automatically draw the *mandal* on the floor. No formal arrangement for the puja was made, yet this body spontaneously reacted to the rituals."

Ma said "while in the fifth month of sadhana a time had come when everything around this world appeared to cry and pray to show them the way to spiritual bliss. They all prayed, even the dry wood. And not only that, even 'exercises' would take the shape of an image and will go bidding good bye to this body."

She once mentioned, "one day when the various effects of sadhana were evident she had noticed a glow around Her body. The glow was so bright that she could easily walk in pitch dark with its illumination."

"At one time this body was a frail slender frame because of the '*Kheyal*' like sages do extreme austere meditation *Krichha sadhana*, this body also went through such sadhanas to retain only the skin and bones."

During the period when Ma's body was devoted to sadhan *leela* it is learnt that even a scratch on the bark of a tree would cause pain to Her body.

"As it happened sometime people were scared to see this body seated with eyes upturned, looking indifferent with tongue protruding out, the hands and elbows looking different from each other."

During talks with Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj some illuminating utterances welled up from Ma.

"Look in the case of a sadhaka there is aspiration towards a goal, but here there is no question of goal or aim. Every artery, vein and nerve, their functioning and vibration are clearly seen just as when somebody in a darkroom holds a lamp in his hand and throws light on every object one by one exactly like this. But for the sadhaka who is still on the path it is impossible to perceive in this manner. He has to advance, overcoming various kinds of obstacles. Baba, here there is no question of this. Here the artery is myself, the vein myself and the observer myself. Of course when saying 'myself' it is because some word has to be used."

Someone asked Ma, "though you were bestowed with supreme knowledge since birth the sadhana *leela* has dawned upon you. During that stage in what form did the complete fulfilment of sadhana take place ?

Ma said, "It happened in Dhaka (at present capital of Bangla Desh) but in what form it happened I am not able to describe now. Completeness or manifestation of it can be said to be the culmination of sadhana." She paused for a moment and then said—

"There is a stage in sadhana where answers to any query would come out spontaneously. At that stage, it is possible to speak on any subject with conviction. This body had no formal education, leave alone the method of following or imitating. Baba, you have not taught this little daughter of yours to read or write. What is said therefore is spontaneous and true."

It is for you to see and understand the beginning of complete fulfilment and enlightenment."

Asked whether all these stages are mentioned in the scriptures Ma said, "How many of these can be mentioned ? Like time table only the important ones are noted. If you walk down the road you will find many more things. Scriptures give only the broad indications."

In the month of Dec', 1922 Ma all of a sudden took *mauna* (complete silence), not any normal reticence but a severe absension. She would speak to Bholanath or to somebody else when it was absolutely necessary. She would draw a circle with the index finger of Her right hand. Then *mantras* will gush out from within and she

could now speak. Again after the talks she would pronounce *mantras*, wipe out the drawn circle and once again she would turn *mauna*. However this was not a regular feature.

(c) Meals during Sadhana

'My food is dedicated lives', Ma once said. In Ma's words, "During sadhana this body had hardly taken water from a glass in full. Years after years passed without taking breakfast or full meal. No bath, no breakfasts, no meals. Now for the sake of keeping up the routine to satisfy you people, it is taken."

Ma once explained—

"Once this body lived on three grains of rice daily for 4-5 months. Nobody can live for so long a time on such a meagre diet. It looks like a miracle. But it has been so with this body, because it can be so. The reason for this is that what we eat is not at all necessary for us. The body takes in only the quintessence of the food, the rest is thrown out".

"As a result of sadhana the body becomes so constituted that though no food is taken physically, it can imbibe from the surroundings whatever is necessary for its subsistence..... secondly one can live on air alone, in everything there are all other things. So that the properties of other things (edibles) are in the air in some measure. Therefore by taking in air alone we get the essence of other things."

"Again, it may so happen that body is not taking anything at all, yet it is being maintained unimpaired as in a state of samadhi. So as a consequence of sadhana it is quite possible to live without what we call food. In a similar way, sadhana can effect such transformations of the body that by virtue of it any part of it can discharge the function of the eye."

In 1924, when Ma came to Dhaka, she used to take three morsels of food with drinking water twice a day. Gradually, she restricted this intake to only Mondays and Thursdays. On the rest five days, she would eat just nine, three or five grains of boiled rice. However, on persistent request of Her followers, Ma has at times broken this schedule. Once during *Amavasya* Pratul—the son of Pramath Nath—dedicated '*bhog*' (a feast) to Ma at Shahbag. Ma accepted it and thus began the practice of dedicating '*bhog*' in the name of 'Ma' during *Amavasya* by Her followers.

Bholanath's nephew Amulya had just got employment during those days. He arranged special puja and '*bhog*' out of his first salary. This also became a tradition. Much later, at Kashi Ashram, Ma narrated these incidents and said, the pujas and *bhog* during *Purnima* and *Amavasya*'s are continuing since those days.

In 1924, Bholanath noticed that Ma was not able to feed Herself properly as Her hand would not lift and reach the mouth which had to be lowered in the process, creating difficulties for Ma. Bholanath himself decided to feed Her instead. Later, Didi also got this opportunity frequently.

Once Ma had a *Kheyal*. She would take only three grains of rice as meal. If there were four grains, it would automatically come out Her mouth. For some days, she would eat only as much as one could feed Her in a single breath. That would be Her quota for the next 24 hours, she won't even drink water after that.

During Her stay in Shahbag, for some days, she ate only those fruits which, upon ripening, fell from trees in the adjoining garden, which had mostly Mango and Lichi trees. Incidentally, when she resorted to this practice, it was no season for these fruits. Hence, Ma's wish to skip meals would naturally be fulfilled. She had an uncanny knack of following systems and she made others follow them too.

Thus many of Her sadhana *leelas* were such extreme changes in food habit. Sometime very little intake; total abstension, and also occasion of overeating. Once she abstained from drinking water for 13 days at a stretch, on another occasion, she did the same for 23 days and to the point of not even washing Her mouth with water.

Ma said, "Realising that use of water was being forgotten, this body once again started normally to bring a balance."

Once, after abstaining from meals for six months, she resumed it to eat cooked rice and vegetables meant for 7-8 people.

In 1925, Bholanath's sister came to their place to spend Christmas holidays. Wishing to prepare *kheer* for Ma. She cooked 20 litres of milk for the dish. On that day Ma was supposed to be fasting. On Bholanath's request, Ma agreed and that lo and behold, she took all the *kheer* made of 20 litres of milk. *Kheer* was prepared again and Ma quickly finished that too.

On another occasion, Bhaiji (Late Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy), quietly supplied *ghee* and *maida* to serve Ma with *pooris* at mealtime. Accepting the food for a few days, Ma suddenly changed mind. On that day, she asked *pooris* to be made of the entire *maida* and *ghee* in stock. And in Her charismatic gesture, Ma ate all the *poories*—60 to 70 pieces—and said: "If this body eats this way daily all your money put together will prove insufficient. This body will not go on like this."

Didi used to say, "Ma would unconsciously eat everything including the skin and seeds of fruits unless foretold about."

Habitually, Ma hadan extremely simple and little diet. However, despite this, nobody has even found Her weak or weary.

Ma remembered once that while in Kashi a tiny brass container with lid was bought. Bholanath would eat the rice cooked in the fire of Yagna at Shahbag while for Ma, Didima would put little rice dal and vegetable in that tiny container and drop it in the big utensil in which rice, for Bholanath and others were cooked. Ma would remain on fast the whole day. Only after dusk, she would take whatever she wished from that tiny container. This became a routine for several months.

(d) Sri Ma's Spiritual Initiation (*DIKSHA*) Bajitpur, 1922

Sri Ma, Herself recounted Her initiation ceremony on devotee's request. I may be pardoned by Sri Ma for any error in interpreting and writing about that solemn occasion.

This particular *leela* of Sri Ma is as incredible as it is astounding.

Diksha is a sacred ritual, requiring *Guru, Sisya* and *Ishta*—*Beej Mantra*. Here Ma alone is *Guru, Sisya* and *Ishta*.

Ma has emphatically mentioned that at no stage she was in need of a Guru or initiation, so what is the meaning of *diksha* to Her?

'He who is the Guru, is also the *shishya* (disciple).

On 3rd of August, 1922 (Jhulan Purnima or Rakhi Purnima) the spiritual initiation of Sri Ma took place between 10-12 at night all by Herself. In Ma's words—

"On that special Jhulan Purnima day, this body was unusually placid since morning. After finishing all the day's household chores this body sat in a corner of the bedroom at night fall for daily worship. *Asanas* and *mudras* started all by itself. Requirements for the Puja were not procured from outside. Rather they were brought out from within and arranged in order. Although nobody could have visualised this, there was no doubt of the offerings present. In between all these activities this body was a silent spectator, nothing was done intently.

"Try to visualise about Guru in the same way as God and Goddesses appeared from this body during puja and faded back into the body after the rituals.

After the puja and lighting of the pious fire in brief took place, many rituals started spontaneously. Fingers automatically drawing a mystic design (*yantra*) on the floor. This body never before knew what is *yantra* and how to draw. The *yantra* thus drawn conformed to the requirements laid down in the scriptures.

Awakening of the *Beeja Mantra* took place within Herself and it welled out from Her lips leaving distinct visible impression in writing by Her fingers inside the *yantra* already drawn. In Ma's words:

"The ritualistic prayer was also done spontaneously of its own. Instead of repetition of name (*Naam*) *Beeja Mantra* now started. Slowly the fingers started

responding to 'japa'. Puja in tune with japa was held non-stop. Several Gods and Goddesses were worshipped. They would come out of this body and after the Puja was over, they will again go back inside the body. Specific requirements for specific pujas were offered. Even the *namaskar* used to be in a specific posture instantaneously. Prayers and *Mantras* were more distinctly pronounced than before."

So after the initiation, the spiritual exercises grew more intense.

Ma's maternal cousin Nishi Babu, who happened to be there, witnessing Her doing Puja and evening prayers in a different style, one day, asked Bholanath why did not latter object to Her japa like this when she was yet to be initiated.

When Ma over heard this comment, she sprang out of Her usual calm and shy composure, and retorted—

"What do you want to say?" Repeated she, "What do you want to say?"

Nishi Babu: "How do you take these exercises? Have you been initiated?"

Ma: "Yes, I have been".

Nishi Bahu: "Who are you?"

Ma: "Purna Brahma Narayan".

Bholanath asked : "Who are you?"

Ma: "Maha Devi".

Later Ma explained the two different answers. 'Purna Brahma Narayan' came out first, but Ma being a lady they had-doubt. That is why Purna Brahma Narayani, Mahadevi etc. were pronounced later. There was a reason behind the pronouncement 'Mahadevi' At that time, the soul and body were in oneness for puja. That's why 'Mahadevi' was pronounced.

Nishi Babu said: What's the proof of you being Purna Brahma Narayan."

Instead of a clear answer a stream of *slokas* and *mantras* flowed eloquently from Ma's mouth. Ma asked Bholanath to be seated and then touched his '*Brahmatālu*' with Her right hand. The moment she touched him, Bholanath uttered "OM" and went into a deep, self absorbed meditation. He remained in that state for hours together. Bholanath's nephew, Ashu, became visibly scared. Janaki Babu and others requested Ma to bring Bholanath back to his normal self. Ma touched Bholanath's *Brahmatālu* again and he returned to normalcy instantly. Bholanath said, he was during this period, in a state of Supreme Bliss.

Nishi Babu asked Ma again, whether Ramani Babu was initiated. Ma replied "No. Not yet. It will happen after five months," She predicted even the date, day and time to the utter disbelief of Nishi babu. It was difficult for Nishi babu to comprehend how did Ma, an illiterate village woman, know about calculation of

time according to stars, movement. In fact, he knew little about this method and he confessed his ignorance to Her.

Ma asked him to contact Janaki babu who, she said, would now be fishing in the pond. This was another shock for Nishi Babu, as the pond was not close by, it was well out of sight from that place and secondly, Janaki Babu was supposed to be at his office during that time. But infact Janakibabu was there. When Nishibabu went to him and got the details about Ma's calculations of Ramani Babu's date of initiation, it was found correct.

(e) Bholanath's *DIKSHĀ*

When Bholanath heard about this, he decided not to take it on that day. He usually took his breakfast before going to office. On that fateful day, however, he left for office early without taking his breakfast, fearing to be held up on that pretext and compelled to take Diksha.

Meanwhile, the auspicious moment for the initiation ceremony was imminent. Ma sent somebody for Bholanath at his office, the collectorate. Bholanath first refused straightaway. But on second thought that Ma might Herself drop in, Bholanath preferred to return home.

Ma was taking a stroll at that time and *mantra* and *stotras* were being pronounced by Her. Ma asked Bholanath to bathe. When Bholanath came back after the bath and took his seat a *Beeja Mantra* came out of Sri Ma's lips. Bholanath on Ma's instruction brought his ear closer to Ma and he was told to repeat that *mantra*. In this manner, Bholanath's *diksha* took place at the time Ma ordained it, five months back.

In the annals of *Matri leela*, this was a unique example of '*Mantra diksha*'. The second example was that of Bhaji's *diksha* with Sanyasa mantra on the banks of the holy Mansarovar near Mount Kailash in 1937.

[To continue]

AFTER THE FIRST MEETING

—A European devotee

[Continued from before]

For the next 6 months I remained at Sri Ramanasramam, but once again by early July, 1973 I found I could at last go to meet her again. A couple of days before leaving for Kankhal - where I heard she would be for Guru Purnima - I had a dream that Ma would be in a place called "Rajgir". This seemed a strange name but I did find out that Ma had an ashram in Rajgir, near Varanasi; could this be the place?" Anyway I took the overnight mail flight to Delhi and was told that shared taxis could be hired near Kashmiri Gate. After waiting there a taxi became available and one of the other occupants was an old devotee of Sri Ma, Dr. Sen. The 5 hour journey passed quickly in the presence of the devotee. When we reached Kankhal we were soon ushered into Sri Ma's room for immediate darshan. This was unexpected to say the least, a result of being with this old devotee. We climbed the narrow stairs and there she was once more before me, a figure in spotless white, talking so sweetly to the people around. We took our leave and Dr Sen then offered to share a room with me and we visited several dharmasalas, but all were "full". He then told me they were "full" because they did not want to take a foreigner. This annoyed him but he was determined to find a place where we could both stay and we did find one near the Harki Pauri in Hardwar. It was enough - two string cots, a table and a "bath room", simply with a tap and bucket. The next day was Guru Purnima and being monsoon time it was cool and drizzling. Dr Sen kindly took me for a bath in the Ganga at the Harki Pauri and then we proceeded to Sri Ma's ashram in a cycle rickshaw. At that time only the old ashram buildings were there and I found one could sit in the courtyard under some upper floor rooms, which was where Ma stayed. So even though Ma was often not to be seen and one was waiting for hours, accompanied by a host of flies who sought refuge from the rain, actually one was very close to Sri Ma.

I found another quiet corner where I could sit undisturbed at the back of Didima's samadhi. On Guru Purnima day itself whilst there, I noticed that one of the ashramites came to sit nearby. Shortly after Sri Ma herself suddenly appeared and went to him holding a silver plate, which she wiped and then showed to him.

Soon he himself got up and left. I later came to realise that the plate was a mantra plate and Sri Ma had given him some sort of *diksha* by showing the mantra to him.

Nothing much else stands out in my memory during the 5 days of her visit except that Atmananda sang bhajans so beautifully one evening.

My plan had been to follow Sri Ma for some weeks and there were two Americans also with the same idea. However Ma was not saying where she was going after Kankhal. Atmananda tried very hard to find out for us but after she repeatedly asked the question Ma told her very firmly to keep quiet. All Ma would say was "wait until you hear". On the morning of Sri Ma's departure somehow I had been able to sit quietly outside her room upstairs. Coming in my mind again and again, I know not from where, were the insistent words "You must go to Rajgir, you must go to Rajgir, you must go to Rajgir". Ma left in the afternoon and a group formed round her as she sat on a chair on the station platform and we could all do pranam.

And then she left and there was nothing one could do but wait, and for how long? It was not an easy time as I had very little money and I used to visit the ashram daily, (which was almost empty after Ma's departure), and sit next to Didima's samadhi. after a few days of this I almost bought a ticket for Rajgir, but remembering Ma's words ""wait until you hear", I could not bring myself to ignore her instructions. It later turned out that Ma had in fact gone to Rajgir and spent 3 quiet weeks in seclusion.

One of the Americans had remained in Kankhal also and at the end of 3 weeks we decided to go to Delhi so that we could travel more easily when news of Sri Ma's next move came. Soon it did-she was going to be in Ranchi, not too far from Rajgir, for Jhulan Purnima. We bought our rail tickets and then visited a Sufi saint, Rehana Tyabji (author of "Heart of a Gopi"), who was also very devoted to Sri Ma. We had an enjoyable talk with her in a darkened room. She gave sweets for Sri Ma. Then we went to the station. When we arrived we found to our great dismay that there was a rail strike and the railway staff were lying on the track to stop all trains. My heart sunk into my boots. The Americans had then decided to fly but I did not have enough money left for that. Had I now to go back South after waiting 3 weeks? Suddenly my woeful thoughts were disturbed by one of the Americans who offered to lend me money for the flight. Life became bright again and we made for Indian Airlines and were able to reserve flights for Ranchi on the next day.

We took off next morning and changed planes in Patna. The flight to Ranchi was on an ancient propeller plane, a Viscount. There was no air conditioning, and indeed no air, and for some reason the plane was waiting for at least 20 minutes on

the runway in the August sun - full of passengers. I have never perspired so much in my life! I was totally drenched. After that little experience we soon reached Ranchi and made for Sri Ma's ashram. We were told she would be arriving in about an hour and a half. And she did. After all the waiting we were with her again.

Ma's ashram had arranged accommodation for us at the nearby Self Realisation Fellowship ashram of Sri Yogananda. The inmates there were very fond of Sri Ma, and would visit her every day and she would accord them great hospitality, and indeed visited their ashram on one occasion. We three foreigners were given a comfortable room there in that lovely ashram.

There was tremendous excitement as many Bengali devotees had come from nearby Calcutta. Ma sat in the Kali temple of the ashram and all the ladies were doing "Ulla", the peculiar sound in the throat, made only by Bengali ladies on auspicious occasions. Ma was encouraging them with gestures into almost a Bengali frenzy ! Within a day or so we three foreigners were given a message from Sri Ma, that we could come for meditation to her room at 11 am. We had not asked for this but it had been in my mind. When we went upstairs to her room on the roof we were asked by Swami Bhaskarananda to sit in front of her, and she said in English "Five minutes", meaning 5 minutes for each of us, total 15 minutes. I remember the Bengali pronunciation clearly. I then remembered how I had overstayed my welcome in Poona; somehow Ma clearly did too! Whilst we were sitting before her my eyes were as it were being urged to open, but I kept them firmly closed. Later the others told me that they had opened their eyes and Ma had been looking at us in turn. When our time was up, we each had to pass right in front of Ma to leave, as the room was narrow. Ma's eyes were by then closed and I looked at the lids just before my face as I passed. Immediately her eye opened and we looked at each other. I remember her deep brown fathomless eyes.

Meanwhile I had taken some water to drink from the ashram tap, and it tasted so foul I spat it out almost immediately. I was told that in the monsoon season, with low water pressure, ground water with sewage etc quite often seeped back into the pipes. Anyway within a short time I had developed loose motions, a high temperature and splitting headache. I thought it might be typhoid. There was to be a late night program to celebrate Jhulan. Though I felt so ill I thought I would try to go, and sat near the back feeling miserable. Strangely enough at the end of the program I realised my fever and headache had left me. Still I went to the hospital and was prescribed Chloramphenicol, a powerful but weakening anti-typhoid drug, that is now banned.

It was probably the next day and Ma was to visit the house of a devotee. I was specifically asked to go in advance to help decorate the place of darshan with flowers. The significance of this will be clear as I was away from the SRF ashram for several hours. I spent the whole afternoon picking beautiful flowers in the garden, and making the best I could of the task given, as flower arranging was not something I was used to. Then Sri Ma arrived, though I do not remember the details of her visit. When I returned to SRF I found our room empty, and one of the American friends was not to be seen. On enquiry I was told he had been in the room all afternoon with excruciating stomach pain, and had to be rushed to the local Mission Hospital. At first the hospital would not do anything without a guarantee of payment for his costs, and it was only after SRF agreed to this did they operate. It was none too soon because his appendix was on the point of bursting.

The next day I visited him in his room on the ground floor, accessed through the garden. He was very pale and had a drip in his arm. What now, for Ma was to leave in 3 days? News of this crisis had reached Ma and she came to visit him in the hospital. As I was looking after his needs (indeed it was only because of his loan that I was there and it was the least I could do) he asked me to prepare a little offering with nuts, fruit, flowers from the garden, in a little basket. It was ready just as she arrived and I did pranam to her, feeling a little pleased with myself. I was totally ignored as she went straight past to his room. Because of the presence of the other ashramites I could not see clearly but it seemed Ma blessed him by putting her hands on his head. Anyway by the next day he was so much stronger and was able to discharge himself a couple of days later, with stitches still in, to follow Ma to Delhi. He had been asking Ma to give him *diksha* for some time, and finally after his ordeal, this did take place at the Delhi ashram. Immediately after that he flew back to the US, still with his stitches in.

During the evenings a number of us found we could go up to the roof and watch Ma through one of the windows, chatting with other ashramites. On one occasion as we were watching Ma suddenly asked for the shutters to be closed. We thought she did not want us looking in and got up to go. Just then Pushpa came out and said "Mother only asked for the windows to be closed because of the smell from the kitchen". We happily returned to our places and watched a little later as the ashram girls had their arms down Ma's back under her cloth ferreting around, trying to take out a moth or insect that had got down inside.

The night before Ma left I was asleep in the SRF ashram and had a very vivid dream of Ma. I had frequent dreams of her over this period but I remember this so clearly as I immediately awoke to find the moon shining into my eyes through the

window. I had been sitting in a boat at the Harki Pauri, though strangely the water was flowing up stream, and not in the usual direction. Ma got into the boat and asked me "Do you have an old gold ring?" When I said I did not, she said "You must get an old gold ring".

The next day I puzzled over this as the dream was still vividly in my mind. I thought it might be connected with the SRF as they recommend the wearing of certain metals. So I asked one of the swamis, and he suggested I speak to Ma. Thus I spoke to Mr K.P. Roy, who was very helpful to the foreigners and he agreed to take me to Ma and translate for me. Shortly before Ma's departure she was sitting outside so people could take their leave of her. I sat in front of her as indicated and waited for an opportunity. Ma's hands were right in front of my face and I watched them intently. They did not seem to have a physical substance, not solid, but concentrated energy. Finally I had my chance to relate the dream. Ma then asked me if I ever had a gold ring, and I recollected the signet ring given to me by my father. It had engraved on it the family emblem, a boar, like the symbol of Vishnu, and I had given it away to my flat mate before leaving England for my new life in India. "You must get it back", she said, "and if you do not you must write to me and I will tell you what you should do". Accordingly I sent a letter to the last known address (the flat we shared) asking my friend if he would kindly return it. About 3 or 4 weeks later an envelope arrived with a bulge in it. Inside was the ring wrapped in cotton wool, quite safe in spite of coming through the Indian post unregistered. The letter accompanying it said my friend was amazed that my letter ever reached him as he had moved from the flat some 2 years before and had then moved on again to another place. I still have the ring.

After another day I accompanied my American friend by plane to Delhi, as described above. Though he could move slowly he could not carry anything. We went to Sri Ma's ashram at Kalkaji and they arranged accommodation at the local college. By this time I was beginning to feel very ill and decided I should return to Sri Ramanasramam to recuperate. I was certainly not up to traveling by train and my American friend again came to my rescue with a loan. I had spoken to Swami Bhaskarananda and asked him if he could tell Ma I planned to leave.

However with so many jobs constantly in his hands it must have slipped his mind. During an afternoon darshan I was sitting at the back feeling so ill but in my mind was the thought that I could only wait as I did not want to leave without Ma's permission. Suddenly Sri Ma called Swamiji and whispered something to him. He immediately came over and said I could take leave. I went up to Ma to do pranam

and she looked at me very sweetly but in a way that made me feel I was in for some trouble ahead.

I left to go to the airport, feeling even more ill and the sensation was that I had to hold on to stay awake or I would lose consciousness. When I reached the plane I felt worse still and everything was spinning in front of me. I had to ask to leave the plane and was taken to the airport doctor, who checked me over, gave me some pills and told me to rest. After some time I returned to the town centre and with my few remaining rupees found a hotel for the night. I believed that once I went to sleep I would never wake up! But though I tried I could sleep little and took the plane the next day, arriving in Madras with about Rs 20/-. Luckily there were friends there going to Tiruvannamalai the next day by car, and I was given a place for the night and a lift. It was as well because I was not up to traveling by bus. Recovery from this condition was a long process and I was not fit to go anywhere or even leave the ashram for 4 months.

(To be continued.)



URGENT CIRCULAR

All those subscribers who have not yet paid their subscriptions for the next year are specially requested to send the same either by M.O. or Bank Draft latest by 15th December, 2005. No cheque will be accepted.

**— Managing Editor
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SOME MEMORABLE EPISODES

—Anima Ganguly

My late husband Brig. Rasamay Ganguly and I were residents of Pune in the sixties. He was the Professor of Surgery at the Armed Forces Medical College. He had the privilege of operating on one of the sanyasis belonging to Ma's Ashram. After the sanyasi's successful recovery, Ma requested "The Doctor" to pay her a visit. We were very honoured and hastened to the Ashram. Our first audience with her moved us deeply.

Sri Ma used to visit her Ashram in Pune once a year and never failed to inform us about her arrival. We used to rush to obtain her darshan. On hearing of our arrival, she always used to invite us into her presence. Once she enquired whether we had performed the Sacred Thread ceremony for our son. On hearing that it had not been done, she set a date which happened to be just two days away. We spent a sleepless night wondering how the arrangements could be made so quickly. To our relief, the next morning we received a call from the Ashram advising us that we could hold the ceremony a year later. She also offered us the "Purohit" from her Ashram in Benares. We were thrilled to accept this offer since it was difficult to get a Bengali Priest in Pune.

A year later in the month of July, Sri Ma arrived in Pune a week before the ceremony for the inauguration of the Shiva temple at the Ashram. She was observing "Maun" (silence) during those days. Once our request to attend the sacred thread ceremony at our house was received by her, she smiled and pointed at the sky. It had been raining incessantly in Pune for the past week. The day of the ceremony, the sun shone brightly. The ceremony went off smoothly. Sri Ma attended and offered the first alms to the newly initiated Brahmin, my son. Word spread that Sri Ma was in our home, a crowd gathered to seek her blessing and she distributed *prasad* to everybody with her own hands.

In 1971, India was at war to liberate Bangladesh. Wounded soldiers filled the Army Hospitals. Sri Ma wanted to distribute *prasad* to the unfortunate soldiers lying critically wounded in the hospitals. They were fighting to liberate Her homeland and Her heart went out to them. She honoured us by using our car to make this trip to the hospital. My husband drove and I sat in the back with Her.

Unfortunately on the way, the car suddenly stopped. Sri Ma eagerly got out of the car, crossed the road and entered the wooded area, next to the road where there happened to be a Shiva temple! She spent half an hour in the temple and when she returned, the car started and we proceeded to the hospital. At the hospital, she personally distributed *prasad* to the bed ridden patients.

I decided to take *diksha* from Ma soon after. In the morning of the auspicious day, my husband and I went to the Ashram with the required articles. My husband was in army uniform since he did not expect to take any part in the proceedings. Gurupriya Didi 'exclaimed how is it possible that I would be initiated but my husband would not'. Sri Ma calmly said that the work my husband was doing was already in the service of God and eventually his time would come. She advised me to prostrate before my husband to seek his blessings and permission to undertake this new path in my life. My husband finally became Her disciple several years later after his retirement from the Army.

There is another episode memorable in my life. Sri Ma was to depart from Pune, so we went to the Ashram to pay our respects. As we were reaching the Ashram, we saw Sri Ma in a convoy of cars departing from the Ashram. She waved to us to follow. Following Her we found ourselves at the gate of the National Defence Academy. Sri Ma tried to give the sentries at the gate some *prasad* but they could not accept it as they were on duty. At this point my husband intervened, requested permission from the Commandant and she was able to distribute the *prasad*. Thereafter we took her on a sightseeing trip inside the Academy which is very picturesque with its beautiful lake and lovely mountains and majestic buildings.

My husband's final *darshan* of Sri Ma happened to be on his visit to Vrindavan in 1980. Sri Ma was resting, so he was about to depart when suddenly she sent for him. She chided him for trying to leave without seeing her and requested him to examine her pulse since she was not feeling well.

Memories come flooding back as I remember my Ma.



THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

— P.C. Mehta

[Continued from before]

Later Buddhistic schools:

We have briefly dealt with the two stages in the history of Buddhism. The later phase of Buddhism began from the first or second century A. D. The number of Buddhistic schools that arose in India were eighteen. However, we will refer only to four of them as they are the ones generally mentioned in Hindu and Jaina works and are significant to the development of Indian thought.

As we have seen, Buddha's teaching is pragmatic. Buddha laid stress only on what was necessary for overcoming evil. Due to sharp controversy that developed during this period between Buddhist and Hindu thought, there arose the need to defend and refute each point of view. As a result there sprang up an extraordinary theoretical development of Buddhist as well as Hindu doctrines. Several Buddhist works of this period got written in Sanskrit. All the shades of realistic and idealistic philosophical theories found place within Buddhism.

The views under later Buddhism are classifiable under the two realistic schools of *Hinayana*, which come under the common title *Sarvasti-vāda* and are called *Vaibhasika* and *Sautrantika*, and the two idealistic schools of *Mahayana* called *Yogacarā* and *Madhyamikā*.

As the word *Sarvasti* can be broken down to, *Sārva* meaning 'everything' and *Asti* meaning 'exists', the title itself suggests that this is the school which starts from the premise that everything exists. This is in contradistinction to another school of '*Sunya-vada*' or 'nihilism' which claims that nothing exists. '*Sunyavada* is represented in its mature form by the *Madhyamika* doctrine of *Mahayana* Buddhism' and will be discussed later

Sarvasti-vada

Under *Sarvasti-vada*, fall two schools called,

- 1) *Vaibhasika* and

2) *Sautrantika*.1) *Vaibhasika* :

The chief exponents of the *Vaibhasika* school were Dinnaga (500 A.D.) and Dharmakirti. Dinnaga's works like *Pramana-samuccaya* are lost. Dharmakirti who is earlier than Sankara, is an interpreter of Dinnaga. His work 'Nyaya-bindu' is a treatise on logic. A very important commentary on it is by Dharmottara. Hindu writers have cited numerous quotations from the works of these two thinkers.

2) *Sautrantika* school :

Kumaralabdha (200 A.D.) is the founder of the *Sautrantika* school. There is not much difference between the tenets of *Vaibhasika* and *Sautrantika* schools.

Both *Vaibhasika* as well as *Sautrantika* do not admit any distinction between substance and attribute, meaning that there is no substance as the base for the attribute to cling to. When we say that a thing is red, we attribute redness to an object. But there is no object of which anything may be predicted.

3) *Sva-laksana* and *sāmānya-laksana* :

There is only the sensation of redness which is *sva-laksana*. Common perceptual experience is true only so far as the *sva-laksana* is concerned. The '*Sva-lakshanas*', which are the ultimate basis of external reality, may be taken to stand for the data of sense like 'color' or 'taste', only we should remember that the momentary sensation is, merely 'blue' or 'sweet' and not something that is qualified by 'blueness' or 'sweetness'. Each member of this series of momentary external reality though unique is but 'like itself i.e. having '*Sva-lakshana*'. The number of *sva-lakshanas*, which are the ultimate facts of the outer world, is infinite. This is the earlier stage of perception described as *nirvikalpa* or indeterminate. Here the mind is passive.

In the next stage, the mind becomes active and there takes place subjective elaboration of *sva-laksana* leading to *savikalpa* or determinate perception. All the determinate conceptual elements called *sāmānya-laksana* are the universals which are superimposed by the mind and such superimposition is called '*kalpana*' through which reality is transformed when experienced. Thus the particular alone is real not the universal.

Vaibhasika holds that *sva-laksana* are directly perceived, while the *Sautrantika* maintain that they are known indirectly since according to the doctrine of momentariness, the same objects are not present when they are perceived. Therefore this so-called perception is more in the nature of *anumeya* or inference. *Vaibhasikas* refute the *Sautrantika* view that the *sva-laksanas* are known indirectly,

on the ground that it contradicts experience and that if perception is abolished, there can be no inference.

Does the *Sautrantika's* contention that the objects are known indirectly mean that they are inferred ? That would be so only if the objects perceived have to be contemporaneous with the act of perception. 'They are known', means that they are perceived, not inferred, but this perception is sought to be made consistent with the doctrine of momentariness.

Only *Vaibhasika* school can be called pluralistic realism. It believes in the existence of an indefinite number of fleeting *sva-laksanas* and regards them as the basis of external world. They all are diverse with no principle of unity underlying them. Each *sva-laksana* is produced by the preceding one in its series and gives rise to the succeeding one, but it is otherwise absolutely independent and relation less.

Since these *sva-laksanas* are directly apprehended by the senses, they are the material of bare sensation. When perceived, they are always accompanied by *kalpana* or mental forms which are subjective determinations. These subjective determinations are divided into five classes which are : i) '*ati* or generality, ii) *guna* or quality, iii) *karma* or action, iv) *nama* or name and v) *dravya* or substance including relation to other substances. These are the categories of thought. Everything that appears to us appears through their medium. Thus perception includes much more than what is actually presented to the senses. Though imaginary, they are important for practical life. Time and space also are equally mental devices and no *sva-laksana* has either extension or duration. Time and space being relational, are included in the category of *dravya*.

The *sva-laksanas* are not ultimate, but secondary. They are constituted of certain primary elements which are *bhutas*. These *bhutas* are atoms which are not enduring entities (unlike in Jaina or Vaisesika doctrines). Thus the world conception of the *Vaibhasikas* may be called atomistic.

We have seen that Jainism regards such features whether universal or particulars as actually characterizing objects. Buddhist view is therefore quite different.

As regards the inner world of mind, a parallel classification is adopted with *citta* and *caitta* corresponding to *bhuta* and *bhautika*. Of the five *skandhas* i.e. I) *rupa-skandha* is the physical body, ii) *vijnana* is 'self-consciousness', iii) '*vedana*' is 'feeling', iv) *samjna* is 'perception' and v) *sanskara* is 'mental dispositions'. Of these the *vijnana-skandha* is *citta* and the other four are either *caitta* or derived from '*citta*'. The idea is that self-consciousness as a succession of momentary ideas is fundamental and the other psychical features are modifications. They depend not

merely on outside factors, but also on the predispositions of the individual so that in mental life the past has a very important part to play in determining the present.

An obvious criticism of the *Vaibhasika* world-view is that a *sva-laksana* is as nothing and may be dispensed with. The doctrine however, so far as it retains belief in an external world, is more loyal to old teaching than the subjectivism of Yogacara. It also means that the investigation of objective reality was not pursued to its limit. An unsatisfactory trait of the doctrine is that after abolishing time and space, it tries to think of reality from an objective view-point. Its dimensionless *sva-laksanas* can have no verity about them.

The *Sautrantika* position is identical with *Vaibhasika*, except that instead of dogmatically asserting the existence of *sva-laksana*, it only admits them as a hypothesis to account for experience.

This doctrine of *Sarvasti-vāda*, accepts the validity of both, i) the external objects as well as ii) the self. It does not deny either. It is therefore considered realistic.

However as noted under the doctrine of *Nairātmaya* or 'The doctrine of non-substantiality' of things, or the doctrine of *Anātta* (*Anātmata* in Sanskrit) i.e. absence of any eternal self everything i.e. both the self and the external reality were considered *Samghata* i.e. 'an aggregate' of their respective components.

This view gets modified in accordance with the hypothesis of momentariness, with the result that both the external reality and the self lasts no longer than an instant. Everything continues only as a series.

It is the similarity of its several members, that gives rise to the illusion of sameness or identity in our minds. In other words, there are modifications but nothing that endures through them. Therefore there is no identity, but only an illusion of identity.

This view is different from the view under Jainism, which as we saw acknowledges both similarity as well as identity. We have seen that Jainism accepts identity or *Sadrasya* as a new kind of knowledge.

Since Buddhism repudiates any enduring substance, the self is only a continuous stream of ideas or a constantly transforming psychological center through which one acts. Enlightenment is not a momentary flash but a gradual process.

[To continue]

OUR MEMORABLE DAYS AT MODINAGAR

— Shraddha Davenport

The train arrived in Delhi on time at 10:30 a.m. and we went to our usual hotel. Both of us were feeling peculiar and out of touch with our surroundings. We were in a sort of shock from suddenly leaving Mother's presence and the intensely high atmosphere of the mela, then dropping abruptly into the cold material vibration of worldly life. It was a great blessing that we had a few more days before returning to the west, as the contrast would have been too much to endure.

We ate in our room and rested most of the day. It seemed that I was always packing or repacking. That evening was no different. We would have only three days in Modinagar and were taking just enough for that short stay. Our flight from India was out of Delhi, so we left the rest of our luggage in storage at the hotel pending our return.

The next morning we ran a few errands, then hired a very nice car to take us to Modinagar. There at Modi Bhavan, a complex across from the magnificent Modi Mandir, we found that we were expected at the Gaylord Guest House. Our driver was told how to find the place and he took us to the north end of town where it was situated. Only in India could one leave an austere little grass hut and next be housed in the pampered comfort of a "Gaylord Guest House".

The room which we were given was very large, carpeted, and furnished as a suite. It had a dining table and chairs at the far end, a couch and coffee table, a desk, vanity, closets, and two double beds. The bathroom was white tiled with all ceramic fixtures. There was even one refrigerator ! Downstairs we found a small restaurant that would serve us either there or in our quarters. After putting our things in the room, we went by rickshaw to Modi Mandir in search of Mother.

Modi Mandir is the same beautiful red temple which is described in our 1972 trip. It was with great joy that we once again came to that holy place where Sri Hanumanji lives. All of the gorgeous images in that temple are alive, but I must admit that Hanumanji with great moist eyes had claimed me when first I had His darshan.

The Bhagavat Saptaha was conducted by Sri Swami Vishnu ashram of Suktal. It was held near the temple in a building that was like a large room unto itself. Many people had filled the room, but Mother was clearly visible from the doorway. When we arrived and pronounced to Her from the door, She smiled at us and held us with Her wonderful eyes for a very long time. As we stood before Her during the ensuing one hour, she frequently graced us with Her loving look. We basked in the joy of her nearness, smiling at our shared good fortune.

After the Swamiji concluded his talk, the people stood and began to leave the building. We were delighted to see Swami Keshvanandaji among them. He chuckled as he said that our wish brought him there. Upon leaving Allahabad, at the last minute a ride became available and he was told to come. By Mother's grace we could enjoy his company on these last few days.

As we moved away from the building and through a pandal we met our friend Lakshmi whom we had last seen before the Kumbha Mela. She and her daughter, Gopalpriya, had recently arrived in Modinagar.

Mother was coming out of the building, and as She walked past us we stepped behind Her, following as She went to an awaiting car. From the temple grounds Mother went to Krishna Ashram where She would give a brief darshan. We took rickshaws to join Her there.

Krishna Ashram was like a graceful estate. Upon entering the gate, we followed a private road through surrounding orchards to a secluded spot where a house was nestled amid flowers and a green lawn. A small pandal was erected beside the house. This was not an ordinary house, but its construction was as such. The Modi family had provided this lovely spot for Mother's use during Her visit.

Dasu greeted us as we arrived. He gave us prasad from a basket of fruits which he held. Inside the front door we found a large carpeted room with a marble fireplace against the far wall. There were curved sectional sofas and in the middle of the room was a raised platform for Mother's asana. There were only a few people there and we sat upon the carpet near Mother as one lady sang for Her. Swami Keshvanandaji called for Satya to sit by him and Mother gave me another of Her sweet smiles as She looked tenderly into my eyes.

After sitting with Mother for a short time, we were asked to step outside as two privates had been scheduled with Mother. When we went to pronam before

Mother, She looked at us as though She was really glad to see us and said something to us twice which I could not understand. Nirvananandaji was near and I asked him what Mother had said. Without replying he handed an orange and a guava to Mother which She gave to us. As Satya pronounced, Mother looked at him with a very sweet and tender smile. We stood outside the screen door, looking in at Mother.

Before we left that day we were treated to a rare sight: Mother alone. She arose from Her seat, walked across the room, opened a door, and entered another room. It was so nice to see Her in such a peaceful environment.

We were told that the daily program began at 9.00 a.m. with a Bhagavat discourse, and then at about 11:30 a.m. there would be darshan at Krishna Ashram. In the evening Bhagavat was at 4:00 p.m. and darshan about 5:30 p.m.

That evening we enjoyed hot baths, a snack of cheese toast, and good night's sleep. The nights were quite cold, but daytime was very pleasant.

The following morning we arrived at the mandir at 8:50 a.m., but Mother did not come until about 9:45 a.m. We sat with Her until 11:00 a.m. then went to Krishna Ashram for darshan.

There were some things which we wished for Mother to bless. I had brought those things with me that morning and the time was perfect. Bhaskaranandaji called for us to come and sit before Mother. He kindly translated for us. First Mother blessed our japa malas, then we each gave her a new tulsi mala. The shell garlands which Satya had dipped in the river at Kumbha Mela received Her touch. She smiled as She held them. Gadadhar had given some tulsi seeds to me and I asked Mother to bless them that they might grow. She held them in Her tiny fingers.

One friend in America had asked for an asana and a silk shawl. I asked that Mother place Her feet upon the asana. She not only touched it with Her feet, but scooted them all over it until I became hard pressed to think of parting with it! Of course I did give it, along with the shawl which Bhaskaranandaji had so nicely laid upon Mother's shoulders. She also held a beautiful sandalwood Narayana murti which we had purchased in Varanasi. Mother looked him over carefully and exclaimed, "Bahot accha" (very good). She smiled, then touched him to Her heart, head, and eyes, Now he was truly beautiful.

Mother gave prasad to all of us there, then She stood and left the room as we pronounced.

Two young people who were from an ashram in California had arrived. They were called Krishnapriya (the same name as our Swiss Friend) and Ashok. They had come to meet Mother for the first time. We had a nice lunch and visit with those two at Gaylord Guest House, then we all returned to Krishna Ashram to see Mother. She was seated with the Modi family members and young children around Her. Mother was very animated and it was a joy to watch.

Brahmachari Nirmalanandaji had just arrived from Delhi, and after a long talk with Mother about pollution and the purification of sacrifice, he sat near Mother's feet. We were sitting very near to him. Satya was very quiet and in a sad mood. Mother had noticed Satya and spoke to Nirmalananda in Bengali ("so that everyone would not understand," he later told Satya) saying, "Satya looks so sad, why?"

Two jolly sadhus had arrived and took Mother's attention for the moment, so Nirmalanandaji was able to tell Satya what She had asked. Satya told him that he was sad because we had only one more day with Mother, then we had to go back to the United States. It was something we did not like to face and wished that we could have stayed near Her forever.

Mother and the two sadhus had everyone in the room laughing. It was great fun to see Her so playful. When the sadhus left, Mother went into an adjoining room and some devotees followed for a private.

As we visited with people there, a young man stepped near where I stood and said, "Excuse me." I did not recognize Bhaskaranandaji's nephew, Kamal, until he smiled. In the two years since last we had met, he had gone from boy to youngman. We all laughed that I had not recognized him, then I heard about the trick he and Bhaskrananda had pulled on Satya. Bhaskaranandaji had said to Satya, "You have room for another person where you stay?" Satya wondered what was happening, but said, "Yes." Then Bhaskrananda said, "Well, This young man will stay with you." Satya thought, "Oh my God! What is he saying, who is this stranger?" then Kamal smiled and Satya recognized him and had a good laugh at Bhaskarananda's sense of humor. We were delighted to see Kamal and enjoyed having his company in our large suite.

Nirvananandaji had arranged for us to have a private with Mother the next day and came to tell us that it would be in the evening. Our host, whom we only knew as Mr. Modi, had invited us to take tea at his lovely home. We enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and visited with his beautiful daughter who served tea and sweet to us. After a comfortable ride to our quarters in our host's car, we met Kamal who joined us for dinner. He then spent the night sleeping on the large couch in our room.

In the morning we went to the temple. Mother was inside where puja was done on this last day and fire sacrifice would be performed afterward. Satya and I took that opportunity to have darshan of the magnificent Hanumanji. There was not much light, but I managed to get one photo of Him. When we saw Mother as She accompanied the family to witness the fire sacrifice. After that rite was completed, Mother was driven to Krishna Ashram and we followed in rickshaws. She sat with us and talked with some people who had just come. Then She said that we would have our private. We did not expect it to be then as we had been told it would be in the evening, but with Mother the unexpected is the norm and truly exciting if a little unnerving at times.

Bhaskaranandaji and Nirvananandaji stayed to interpret as everyone else left the room. It was one of those times when the questions and answers did not quite mesh. But most of our important questions had already been answered by Mother. At one point She spontaneously told us, "Try to speak only the truth, speak of spiritual things only, and not of things. "Who can live up to those standards? We can only try, then pray for Her grace.

We went for our noon meal and visited with friends until time to rejoin Mother.

I took our little Gopal, and when we entered Krishna Ashram I sat Him by Mother's seat. A man came to arrange Mother's pillows and placed one in front of Gopal, He started to move Gopal, but Nirvananandaji told him not to touch Gopal. He told the man to move the pillow instead, saying, "Small Gopal cannot see over the big pillow to see Ma."

Mother came and took Her seat. She talked with some of the family members and others who had just arrived. We had a long lovely darshan. Mother spoke of how blessed the people were who had been at the Kumbha Mela. One man asked Mother how he could get the blessing of Kumbha Mela though he had not been there. Mother told someone to bring some of the Mela water. A clay cup of that

water was brought to Her and Mother sprinkled that man. Then She sprinkled all of us. I asked Her to please sprinkle Gopalji too, but She did not hear me. So Nirvanananda told Her and She looked at Gopal for the first time that evening. She sprinkled Him and everyone laughed. Nirvanandaji looked at Gopal very lovingly and Mother did also. Then She picked Him up and touched Him to Her heart, head, and eyes, showering him with Her grace. She gave us prasad and blessed us by touching us on top of our heads.

That evening I had my bath in the holy waters of Kumbha Mela but most important to me was that it came directly from Her hand.

Soon we had to go outside as someone was there for a private with Mother. We stood on the porch and gazed at Mother through the screen door until She finished the private and then left the room.

We asked Nirvanandaji if we could come in the morning to see mother before we had to leave. He told that Mother said for us to come at 10:00 a.m. I asked if that was darshan time and he said no, it was just for us.

Swami Keshavanandaji was in front of the building and we had a last visit with him before going to our room to pack things for our morning departure.

When we awoke, we finished putting our luggage together and went to see Mother by 9:50 a.m. One lady there said that Mother had been asking about us. Soon She called for us to come into the small room where She sat. Pushpa was the only one with Her and she interpreted for us. When we bowed, Mother gave us each a little yellow towel, some roses, a few sweets, and the two hibiscus blossoms which we had brought for Her. We started to place our heads next to Her knees and She smiled and made a little sound like "Tucka-Tucka-Tucka," which seemed to mean "Wait just a minute." Pushpa laid a towel over Mother's lap and then we were allowed to put our heads there and she patted them.

Tears ran down my face as I asked Mother to bless us that we might return soon. I said, "I love you." She looked at us so sweetly and said, "Send word when you arrive safely." Moving reluctantly into other room, we stood looking back at Her until the door was closed.

Our taxi, with luggage piled high upon the roof, carried Kamal, Ashok, Krishnapriya and us to our hotel in Delhi.

Mother would be taking a train out of Delhi that evening, going to Varanasi. After our meal we went with the two young people to the train station for one last darshan. As our taxi moved through the crowded Delhi streets, Krishnapriya said, "Oh look, there is Swamiji...Oh Ma!" We looked, and a car that was right along side us sat Mother with Bhaskarananda, Nirvanananda, and Udas. Mother was laughing and greeting us with folded hands. The others laughed and greeted us as we all pronounced and laughed at our sweet fortune—a shining jewel to brighten our melancholy mood.

At the station Mother sat for some time in a chair on the platform. There was great crowd pushing to see Her. Then She went inside the train to Her compartment.

We said good-bye to Swami Keshavananda, Bhaskarananda, Nirvanananda, and Dasu.

Just as the train was rolling away, we were granted one last glimpse of Mother and pronounced as we stood there watching the train carry Her from our sight.

Feeling the emptiness that is always left where once She stood, we did not move right away. Then slowly, as if in a dream, we did what had to be done and returned to the other side of the earth.



REMINISCENCES OF A VISIT TO MA'S ASHRAM

— Dr. Rakesh Kumar

It is not easy to know and understand every aspect of the personality of Ma Anandamayee. It is beyond our reach to comprehend what she stands for and what she is in reality, People often think about her as an *Avatar* or incarnation of God or Goddess. But it is always a matter of great pleasure to know something about Ma Anandamayee through discussion, reading, writing and worshipping.

First of all, I would like to thank Prof. (Dr.) Bireswar Ganguly, who has inspired me to know about the Mother through his book - "Vedanta from Sri Krishna to Ma Anandamayee". In his book, he has portrayed different facets and discussed several aspects of Her life, personality and some playful roles. His elaborate discussion proved to be helpful in many ways. Indeed, after going through his book, I was inspired to know more and more about Her. It is not an artificial reaction, rather it is natural and spontaneous one. Consequently, to satisfy my urge, I had a telephonic talk with a devotee of Mother in Rajgir ashram. Thereafter, I visited Rajgir with the purpose to satisfy my curiosity and to have some more discussion and also to purchase some books and other literatures available there. I did not feel any problem to locate the Ashram as I was accompanied by one of my teachers Prof. Narendra Kr. Dar, who is also an ardent admirer of Ma Anandamayee. As he has already visited the place several times, he had close association with almost all the devotees of the Ashram. I stayed there about three to four hours having elaborate discussion about Mother.

I reached my place at about seven o'clock in the evening. I felt very much tired because it was a journey on a full summer day. After taking a rest for a short while, I took my dinner. I tried to read atleast the preface of the books I had purchased from the ashram but I was so overwhelmed by the personality of Mother that I went through the book in only two sittings, though I am not in the habit of continuing my study till late in the night. So, it was very surprising and amazing fact not only for me but for all the members of the family. Thus, I finished my reading through the available materials within a few hours. But still I could not satisfy my urge completely. At that moment of time, I realized the importance of the saying of Ma. "Hari Kathā hi Kathā aur sab Vritthā Vyāthā". (To talk of God alone is worthwhile, all else is in vain and leads to pain).

Such readings apart, I had to go through other books also. So, I was in search of such opportunities so that I might be able to purchase some more books and spent some more time with ardent devotees of Ma. Fortunately, I got a call letter from the U.P. Government to appear at a test examination and the centre for which was in Varanasi. It was very much amusing and interesting for me to have such a good opportunity. I have already heard about the Ashram there. So I made up my mind to visit the Ashram at Varanasi during my trip over there.

My scheduled trip to Varanasi was on 8th June by the Shramjivee express from Bihar Sharif and reached Varanasi in time. I used to stay there usually in a hotel or guest house nearby the Jn. But that day I could not do so. I enquired about the place where the Ashram is situated. The place is atleast 4/5 kms away from the Jn. After a short while, I decided to go to Durga Kund which was somewhat familiar name for me. And from there, I went to Bhadaini on foot. I had already had a talk with Swami Nityanandaji during the course of enquiry about the Ashram. Thus, I reached there with the help of local people. I reached at the gate of Mata Anandamayee Hospital and again asked for the whereabouts of the Ashram. After passing through a narrow lane I reached there in the Ashram and sent the message of my arrival to Swami Nityanandaji with the help of the gate-keeper. I met Swami Sri Nityananda, who was perhaps taking rest. After having a glance at me and after a brief introduction he called me inside the chamber. I took my seat and explained every thing to him. I had to purchase some books on Ma Anandamayee. Unfortunately, the in-charge of the publication division was not there. Sri Panu Brahmachari, the Managing Editor of Amrit Varta, was also not available. It was, therefore, a tedious task for Utpal da to help me to a great extent. However, he tried his best and showed me some books and booklets and asked me to select among those. I selected three or four books, paid the amount but could not get the cash-memo. Sri Utpal da told me that if you need the same you will be able to get that tomorrow.

In the course of discussion, I asked him about my stay in the Ashram's Guest House. After getting permission from Swami Sri Nityananda, he made arrangements for my stay there in the aforesaid Guest House. The guest house is situated nearby the Mata Anandamayee hospital and at some distance from the Ashram's main building.

Thereafter, I went to the market with Sri Utpal da to purchase some fruits for Ashram's puja and some articles for the Kanyapith, which is one of the main and integral part of the Ashram. The whole discussion would remain incomplete if I do not put the reference to an interesting episode that happened in the market place.

There was too much rush in the market as it was time for shopping for the local people. Sri Utpalda purchased three kgs of mangoes from the nearby shop. Both of us left the place without taking the bag of mangoes. He hired a rickshaw and went near Lanka where the fruits in abundance were available. He gave the list of items to me and asked to say one by one and write down the price of each of the item. I did so. When we were about to move from the place, he counted the number of items purchased. But the bag containing mangoes was not there with him. It puzzled both of us. He asked the shopkeepers and fruit vendors one by one the about the bag. He did not get satisfactory answer. Sri Utpalda was quite puzzled and more nervous than me. We came back to the previous spot from where we purchased mangoes. Surprisingly, the bag was lying there in the shop untouched even after an hour. Our joy knew no bounds. He thanked the fruit vendor. Amid such interesting and amusing situations, we both returned back from the market.

In the evening, we sat there in Matri Mandir for *dhyān* and Japa. In the course of *dhyān* japa, I was chanting various prayer songs and mantras. The most common and popular among them was :

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव
 त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।
 त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव
 त्वमेव सर्वं मम देवदेव ॥

The next sloka that I was remembering —

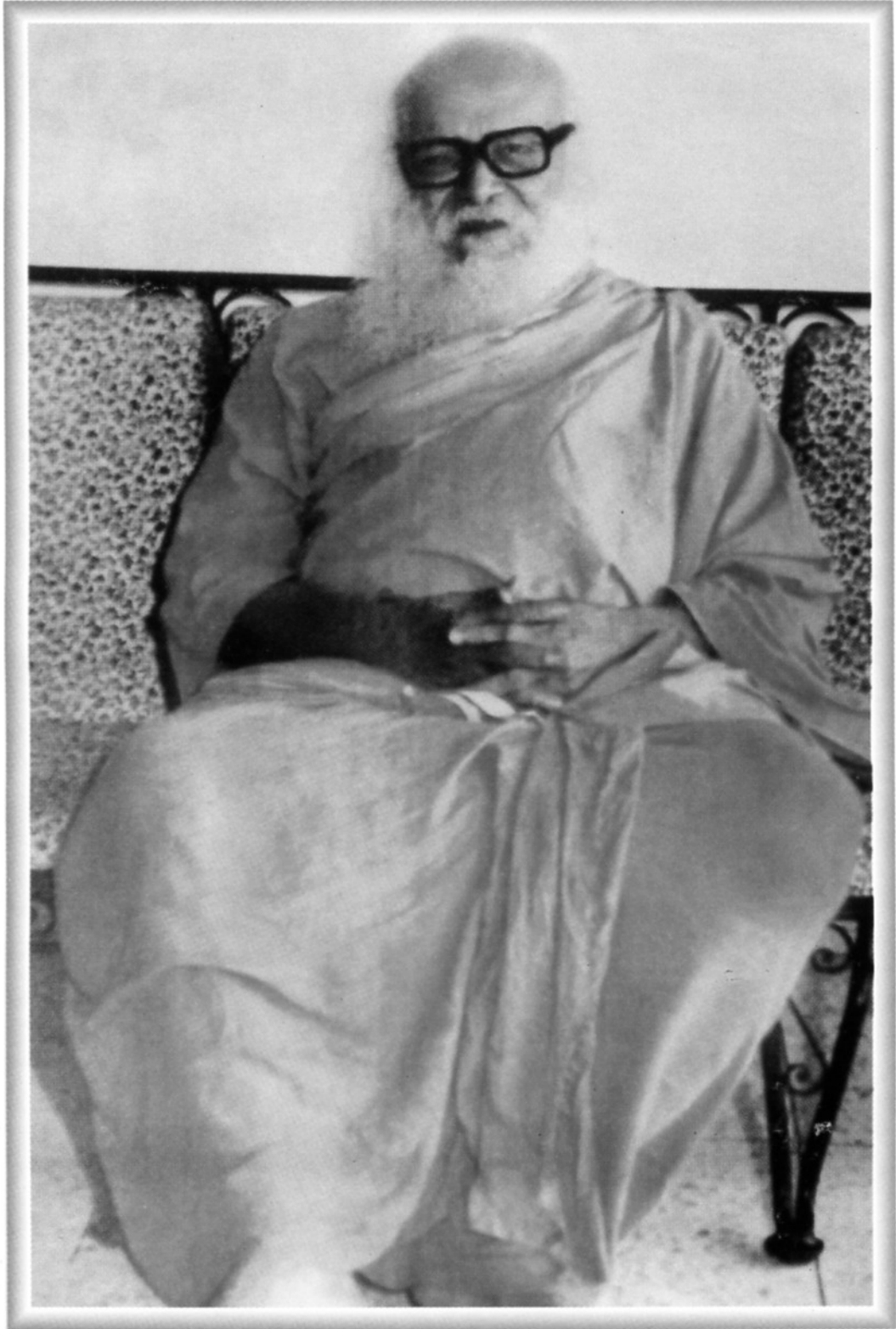
विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयां ददाति पात्रताम् ।
 पात्रत्वात् धनमाप्नोति, धनात् धर्मः ततः सुखम् ॥

Another song that I was singing :

हरे मुरारे मधुकैटभारे
 गोपाल, गोविन्द, मुकुन्द, सौरे ।

For a long time these sweet tunes came floating into my ears.

Thus I spent one and half hour over there in chanting and singing the holy songs and prayer couplet of Ma Anandamayee. Thereafter, I took my dinner in Ashram and went to the guest house. On the way to the guest house, I remembered the advice of Utpalda and thereby I went to purchase a candle and a match. It was very much amazing and astonishing for me when the shopkeeper told me that I was staying in the Ashram guest house. At this, I became so much puzzled and nervous that I could not ask any further question. It was really very intriguing for me that



Sri Virajanandaji Maharaj

how he came to know about this. Any way, I returned from there to the guest house. I felt somewhat lonely in the absence of any fellow being, and, it was a challenge before me to stay atleast one night over there. I could not have a sound sleep the whole night and remained alert allthrough. Thus, I spent the whole night restless .

Next day, I went out for the morning walk. I returned after getting information about the whereabouts of the place where I had to go. I took my bath and got ready to move towards the Mandir. I wanted to narrate the whole experiences to Swamiji but could not do so. When I became face to face, I could not utter even a single word. I went towards the Matri Mandir for darshan and sat there for a few minutes. After getting free from puja and dhyana, I took *prasud* and moved away from there.

Now, it was time for parting. I took permission from Swamiji and departed from there. I went straight to the Varanasi Railway Station. After waiting for atleast two hours, I caught the train and returned to my place ruminating the entire happenings during my visit to Ma Anandamayee Ashram in Varanasi and my joyful company of Utpal da, an ardent devotee of Ma Anandamayee.



IN MEMORIAM
Sri Virajanandaji Maharaj

—Sri S.C. Banerjee

The senior-most sadhu of the “Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha”, Sri Virajanandaji Maharaj expired on 1st August 2005 at 6.25 PM at Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Kankhal. At the time of his demise his age was nearly 102.

Before joining the Ashram, Virajanandaji Maharaj was known as Shri Kamal Bhattacharya. He belonged to a place named Vikrampur within the district of Dhaka in Bangladesh. He was an engineer in the Tata Industries. For the first time he came in contact with Shree Shree Ma in 1925 at Dhaka and since then he was maintaining regular contacts with Ma. He left his home and joined the Ashram of Shree Shree Ma in 1942.

His aged mother came to Ma at Varanasi in order to take back her son from the Ashram. Shree Shree Ma allowed her to do so, but Virajanandaji did not like that proposal and prayed to Ma to retain him in the Ashram. One day his aged mother unfortunately injured an infant mouse while sweeping the floor and ultimately that mouse died. The simple lady was very much shocked due to that incident. She felt necessary to show repentance towards the Almighty so that she need not lose her own son Kamal (Virajananda) and accordingly she took her son to Kashi Vishwanath Temple and offered him at the lotus feet of Baba Vishwanath forever. In this way, Virajanandaji Maharaj need not return back home and he could continue in the ashram. However, Shree Shree Ma did not dishearten the aged mother and she retained her in the Ashram so that she may get company of her son. The pious old lady passed away after a few years at Kashi Ashram itself.

After establishment of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha in 1950, Virajanandaji was offered an important portfolio for the management of the Sangha considering his extra-ordinary working capabilities. His working was very much appreciated for the success of the functions at Varanasi Ashram, like elaborate Gayatri Mahayajna and the Diamond Jubilee celebration of Shree Shree Ma there. After serving the Sangha for more than eight years he requested Shree Shree Ma to relinquish him from the work. Ma accepted his prayer and helped him adequately to gain religious knowledge and perform meditation at suitable places for his spiritual

advancement. Accordingly, he practiced meditation for a long time at Rajgir and at other important meditation places on the bank of the sacred river Narmada in Gujarat.

Once he was proceeding along the bank of the river Narmada towards the confluence of the river and the Arabian Sea. At a very lonely place, suddenly a lady appeared at a distance and she pointed him out the existence of a dangerous sandy swamp in front of him and signalled him to keep away from that place. Thus he was saved from getting lost within that sandy swamp. Later on, Shree Shree Ma indicated that Ma Narmada herself came in disguise to save his life in this way.

While residing at Rajgir, Virajanandaji used to go almost everyday to meditate at the place on the hilltop where Gautam Buddha used to meditate. One day he became late for return journey and he was on the way even after sunset. When he reached at a curve of the hilly road, suddenly he found a big tiger in front of him. He stopped immediately and prayed to Ma. When the tiger was about to attack him, right at that moment suddenly a truck arrived at that spot with its headlight on. Hurriedly Virajanandaji boarded the truck and saved himself from that tiger. After about a year, Ma came to Rajgir. One day while she was going with Virajanandaji by car and reached that spot, she asked the driver to stop the car there and enquired from Virajanandaji whether that was the spot where he had to face the tiger. Virajanandaji was very much surprised and could realise that nothing could be unknown to Shree Shree Ma. He could also realise that he was saved from the attack of the tiger on that day by the grace of Ma only. Virajanandaji had many such experiences in his spiritual life.

After joining Ma's Ashram, he regularly used to note down the spiritual talks of Shree Shree Ma in his diary. In this way he was collecting Ma's 'Vani' (spiritual talks) for pretty long time. During discussion on certain religious matters with the renowned learned philosopher and saint, Mahamahopadhaya Pd. Gopi Nath Kaviraj he gave him one of his diaries for his reference. Kaviraj Ji was very much impressed and got attracted with the words of Shree Shree Ma, seeing uncommon nobility in Her words. He showed his eagerness to publish those spiritual talks of Ma and he himself wrote the explanations of those parts, which were difficult to be understood by any common person. Thus, the words of Ma alongwith explanations given by Kavirajji were regularly published in sequence in the quarterly journal 'Ananda Varta,' which used to be published by the Sangha at that time. Later on, Sri Virajanandaji compiled all such articles and published the book 'Amar Vani' which was very much appreciated every where.

Afterwards receiving inspiration from Shree Shree Ma, he published the most valuable book '*Swakriya Swarasāmrita*' in six volumes in Bengali language. Those books were published as per *kheyal* of Shree Shree Ma and She called them as '*Parama Bhāgawat*'. Shree Shree Ma Herself dictated contents of every topic of that book. Thus it was Ma's self-creation in self oriented language with Her fluent flow of words. When Virajanandaji was told that the words of Shree Shree Ma were not easily graspable, he told that the capability to understand Ma's words would depend on advancement in *sadhand* (devotion). As a person would gain more and more spiritual advancement, inherent divine meaning in Ma's language would be revealed to him accordingly. Virajanandaji also said that Shree Shree Ma disclosed many secret aspects of divinity in that book, which would not be seen in any of the religious books or just touched those aspects only. Some of the volumes have also been published in Hindi and English languages.

While writing the book *Swakriya Swarasāmrita*, he regularly got the opportunity to get company of Shree Shree Ma in seclusion for long periods. He said that Shree Shree Ma Herself was the vital root of all spirituality in this world. She had a complete divine experience of all those religions which were created in the past since eternity or those which are presently being followed and also those religions which would be created in future. We never heard about such unique experience attained by any one in the past. Virajanandaji also translated precisely each volume of '*Swakriya Swarasāmrita*' in English language. Translation of the sixth volume was his last writing, which is under publication.

Virajanandaji was extremely faithful to religious norms and he used to cook his meals himself all throughout. However, he could not continue it during last few years of his life when he became almost blind. At that time he surrendered himself completely to Ma and always used to feel the presence of Shree Shree Ma. His unflinching faith and commitment to the ideals and teachings of Ma have left a great lesson for others to follow. Although Virajanandaji Maharaj is no more with us but he will always be remembered through his publications, '*Amar Vani*' and '*Swakriya Swarasāmrita*.'

JAI MA





New Memorial Gate, Bhimpura Ashram



6th Samyam Saptaha, Bhimpura Ashram



Sadhana Kutir, Bhimpura Ashram

(1) Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Primary Health Centre, Dadadra, Distt. Surendranagar, Gujarat
(2, 3, 4) Inauguration of Primary Health Centre by Sw. Bhaskaranandji & Hon. Min. I.K. Jadeja (Health)

