

*"The Self, self-contained,  
calling to Itself for its own Revelation—  
this is happiness."*

## MATRI VANI

One of God's names is Love. He Himself resides within all, at every moment, everywhere. When man—true to his calling—aspires after the One with uninterrupted intensity, then only His Presence manifests.

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God, the Self, is all-pervading. Where is He not? In all forms and the formless, in all names and the nameless, in all places and conditions, at all times is He. When the desire for Realization awakens, this is an actual manifestation of Him, the indivisible One. Since all names are His indeed, He will let Himself be grasped by any one of them. The keen desire to attain to the Goal must be conceived. The very fact that Self-realization is one's goal means to seek and to find.

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The search after Truth is the one thing by which the shape of human life should be determined. Genuine desire itself opens the road to fulfilment.

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All without exception are actually embodiments of Bliss. Having found one's Self it is natural to experience the Bliss of the Self.

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Who am I? With this attitude endeavour to let the mind stand back as a witness. Search after your Self. As long as may be, sit immersed in meditation, becoming quite still, steady and fully concentrated.

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Try your utmost never to succumb to anyone's influence. In order to become firm, calm, deeply serious, full of heroism, with one's personality wholly intact, pure and holy out of one's own strength, one has to be centred in God.

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# Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULI

( Translated by Atmananda )

( 13 )

Ranchi Ashram,  
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At 9 p. m., when the silence was over, Mataji said of Her own accord : "By invoking God He may certainly be found; and by clinging to the Great Mother (*Mātā*) the Self (*Ātmā*) will be realized."

*Question* : How can I be one with God (*Īswara*)? I am a perishable human being. After liberation I shall be indestructible, immortal. Both are contained within God (*Paramātmā*), are they not ?

*Mataji* : When realizing oneness, duality will also be known in its totality. Having become immortal, the perishable human being will be fully understood as well. So long as there is a lack of real vision, discussion\* is unavoidable. Seen from one point of view, the *Paramātmā* has become divided and, as the world, has been, is now, and will continue to be in constant flux. Again, viewed from a different angle, He is ever indestructible and there never has been nor will be any world. In Reality the question of being or non-being cannot arise.

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\* A play upon words: *Lochana* eyes, *a-lochana* without eyes, *alochana* discussion,

*Question* : For so many days learned professors have discussed philosophy with you. This time, we villagers should like to receive some counsel from Mataji.

*Mataji* : A very clever child indeed are you ! You appeal to the Mother and after having called yourself her child, give her good advice. If you become a true child of the Mother, you will place your complete trust in her. Of course, one thing has to be said : the child has now acquired capacity and it is necessary for him to make good use of it. Therefore do something—namely, repeat with fervour God's Name. Since you have got into the habit of desiring things, direct your desire towards the Mother and call out to Her alone. God is Himself the Mother and hence will provide you with everything you need. Relying entirely upon Him, keep still and watch what happens. Not until the faith that whatever the Mother does is for the best of her child awakens in you, can you find Her. In order to arrive at that state of self-surrender, you may also have recourse to the yoga of practice. When the boy grows up, he earns his own living and spends his own money. Likewise will he have to do *sādhana* by his own effort. *Pitāji*, by your own words you have laid a trap for yourself.

*The Questioner* : Yes, of course, the Mother will no doubt be cleverer than the child.

*Mataji* : The relationship to one's mother is not one of give and take. The mother gives to the child according to his needs. One must depend on one's mother like a kitten (which passively lets itself be carried by its mother), not like the baby of a monkey (which actively holds on to its mother and therefore at times falls off). The Mother knows

the right measure with which to give. 'Ma' means 'mayi' (all-pervading). The Mother alone bestows both, worldly experience and liberation—nobody else.

*Question* : Is it correct to say that the place of the heart (*hridaya*) is in the various centres (*granthi*) of the human body ?

*Mataji* : Yes, the *Brahmagranthi*, the *Viṣṇugranthi* and the *Rudragranthi*, in other words, the *mūlādhāra* (at the base of the spine), the *anāhata* (in the region of the physical heart) and the *ajñācakra*† (between the eyebrows) these three are the centres of the *sādhaka's* yogic experience and thus may be called the places in which the inner heart is situated. Apart from those, some yogis experience their heart also at the *sahasrāra* (thousand petalled lotus at the crown of the head).

*Question* : How many kinds of faith are there ?

*Mataji* : Very many. However, one may distinguish mainly between four kinds, namely :

(1) the faith of the *Jñāni*‡—firm, stable, based on direct experience.

(2) blind faith—that may be shaken if hit hard.

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† *Cakras* Psychic zones in the human system, which represent the fields of different psychic forces and which have to be conquered, purified and sublimated by the Yogi in his upward journey to the sphere of Divine Consciousness and Power.

‡ *Jñāni* one who has attained to true knowledge of the Self or Reality in other words, to Enlightenment.

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(3) blind faith—a living faith that cannot be destroyed even when hit hard. Faith in a person may waver, but faith in the Reality for which that person stands, cannot decline.

(4) blind faith—although it is faith in an unworthy object, it is so blind that the faith itself becomes one's saviour. "Even if my Guru takes to drink, yet He is the giver of eternal Bliss." A disciple with a spirit of this kind advances by the force of his faith beyond the achievement of his Guru and even rescues the Guru.

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# Mother as Seen by a Westerner

ARNAUD DESJARDINS ( PARIS )

## II

( Continued from the last issue )\*

The more I observe Ma Anandamayi, the more I am struck by the extreme changeability of her expressions. This is in fact the first thing one notices when comparing all the photos that have been taken of her : one can hardly believe that they are of the same person. All those who come to her have observed this diversity.

At an interval of a few seconds I have seen her appear thirty and seventy years old, be the image of gentleness and the embodiment of severity ; I have seen in her the laughing little girl and the terrifying man, the radiant saint and the inspirer of a heavy congregation.

This unlimited possibility of diverse appearances, giving at the same time the paradoxical impression of ever remaining unutterably the same, reveals that—quite contrary to us who are entirely conditioned and answer to certain types which modern characterology has found—Ma Anandamayi is absolutely free inwardly, devoid of all limi-

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\* The following are short extracts translated into English from the French book by *Arnaud Desjardins* : "*Ashrams, Les Yogis et les Sages*," published by *La Palatine*, Paris-Geneva. ( See also pages 168—18 ) of *Ananda Varta*, Vol. X, No. 4. ).

tations, always perfectly unencumbered and spontaneous, ready to respond to what every moment demands of her.

Does she not say of herself: "This body is like a musical instrument; what you hear depends on how you play."

Mataji has very aptly been compared to a perfectly pure and transparent crystal, which reflects everything that happens around it. I have even asked myself whether ten different people do not at the very same moment perceive her in ten different ways, depending on their respective inner states. I have just mentioned her terrifying aspect. Some Hindus will probably not agree to this. But during one moment I have seen in her the witness to my lie, my impurity, to my contradictions—truths about ourselves of which we usually are not aware. Is it surprising therefore that I was actually terrified, in spite of all the kindness and love by which I felt myself enveloped all the same?

For weeks and weeks I did not understand anything of what she said. What of it? With hundreds of thousands of Indians and a few dozen Westerners I believe that Ma Anandamayī represents a really miraculous event.

And when I say miraculous, I do not only think of the fact that the consciousness of Oneness in which she lives enables her readily to know of happenings of which she has not been told, of future events, and of what is taking place in the present at a distance. Neither, as I have often experienced, of her reading the thoughts of those who approach her, and replying very clearly to questions that have been put to her only mentally, and that in a language which she does not understand. Neither do I merely refer to



the large number of cures that she has effected (leprosy, snake-bite, etc.) Even less to the fact that she has often produced phenomena of radiating dazzling light, such as other saints have before her.

For, all these miracles—if one may be allowed to use this word—are still within the world of multiplicity, within the world conditioned by time: everything that has a beginning has also an end and a cause and is limited by birth and death.

What I really find miraculous in Ma Anandamayi is what I should like to call the echo of her Consciousness in the depth of our own.

We can have absolutely no idea of the level of a Master who lives on a different plane to our own. At the most we may be struck by his extraordinary look. But we can, through that look of the Master, become conscious, by our own experience, of what is happening within us, and of the world which he allows us to glimpse.

The majority of men and women who have contacted Ma Anandamayi and who have not been completely closed to her influence, have felt—and it is here that I find something miraculous—the phenomenon Ma Anandamayi within themselves and known what Life is in its boundlessness, compared to which our life is not Life; have understood “how the blind can discover light and how the deaf can hear.”

This is certainly the most important experience one can be led to have: I live and until today I was dead.

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Near Ma, no matter where we may follow her, we live in beauty. Every moment lies in another dimension, larger,

wider, of another scale in which there is no room for ordinary petty details. This beauty comes from within, from the propriety of every expression, every attitude, and each of them opens out into the Infinite.

Propriety and conformity to what? To the Law of the Universe, to *Dharma*, to the harmony in which everyone must discover his exact place in order to find also his freedom and his spontaneity, just as the Indian musicians improvise for hours within the strict frame of the various *ragas*.

The music of the morning is different from that of midday, evening or night. There is a time for everything and a place for everything. And the way to the Absolute goes through the respect for that order.

Early this morning, the temple became lively by and by. It was hardly dawn when the first person arrived, an old man of extreme nobility with a long white beard. He sat down slowly and began to meditate with his eyes closed. Then a *swami* came, some other men, a few women. The temple seemed to become illumined from within as the light rose. The sky took on a glaring blue, against which the orange robes stood out clearly.

The *swami* slowly rang the austere gong, which answered to a distant bell from another temple. Two women stood motionless and the first rays of the sun spread a rosy hue over their white *saris*. The old man was meditating all the while without the slightest movement. The attitude, the place of everything appeared fixed since eternity and for an eternity to come. The scene was of a poignant beauty that entered my heart like a dart.

Yesterday, in the *pandal*, ( the large tent where gatherings are held ), Mataji was sitting on the dais, surrounded

by a number of *swamis* in their flaming robes. Her expression was so luminous, the faces of the *swamis* so dignified, the whole scene so tranquil, so pure that the same beauty which is beyond time emerged from it. It was so perfect that my heart was aching at the thought of those who will never experience this.

Since that first day at Benares, I have met Ma under many different conditions: in the midst of teeming crowds, surrounded by a few disciples only, and even—very rarely—alone with her.

But most of all I cherish the memory of the blessed days at Vindhya-chal.

After the excitement of the *Durga Puja* celebrations at Benares, Mataji retired far away from the multitude to a very small ashram, perched on a hill, lost in the midst of the beautiful Indian country-side. On no other occasion did I have so strongly the feeling of our being children gathered round their Mother, as her disciples like to express it.

No more formality, no more rules for approaching Mataji. We went freely to her room and for walks with her in the woods. No distance between her and us, only close companionship, familiarity. Mother behaved alike to each one, full of tenderness and affection, so naturally and simply. The whole atmosphere was one of friendship and joy.

One particular evening we are sitting around her on a small terrace that looks out on the vast landscape of plains and hills. Far away, the Ganges draws its glittering ribbon in the light of the setting sun. All is love and contemplation. In that silence one of the disciples reads softly. Mataji says nothing. We say nothing. She looks at us. We look

at her. With the gathering night a peace that passes understanding descends on us and we see her eyes radiate the light of true Life, radiate the message that awakening may pull us out of our world of slumber.

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Here I am, back again near Mother.

Had I really left her? It is not the human being that attracts us in her, but something that we feel to be infinitely greater. If it is true that one sole Reality exists, a Consciousness underlying all appearances and happenings in the phenomenal world, and if it is true that Ma Anandamayi is a direct manifestation of that Reality, one with It, should I not say that all is in her, that I am within her and she within me?

For her disciples this would be the right way of expressing it. But it would be equally right to say the same of Ramana Maharshi and Ramdas, for there is only one Guru under different names and forms.

Ma Anandamayi states this frequently. Twice when I said good-bye to her before returning to Paris, she told me that she was never far away, that the whole world was her Ashram. And last time, when the interpreter had finished translating her message to me, she who does not speak English at all, had known what words to pick up. For she repeated several times with indescribable love: "No boundaries, no boundaries, Paris Ashram, Paris Ashram, *Ek* : One, *Ek* : One."

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During the last three weeks at Poona many things have put themselves into their proper places. The almighty

barrier that separates us from our Self has borrowed its power but from "sleep" and from an ego that cannot subsist except in "sleep." And it seems that portions of that wall are crumbling one after another and that with growing impersonality ever more peace and joy supervene. I believe that today I should be much better prepared if I were granted to receive a new exceptional experience. For, I know it well now, it is there, at the depths of me, that resplendent Truth. And I also know that it is everywhere, concealed behind everything. I have seen for myself—and above all understood to what degree we are incapable, in our present condition, to bear the Vision of Reality.

This Reality exists, whatever be my state of mind, no matter what may absorb my interest. And yet, all along, I am cut off from It, I deny, betray, desecrate and revile It. I am the prisoner of myself. I do not care to have close contact with my truth. I prefer to cling to all that prevents me from being.

But Mother's presence ever proclaims the same good news. The sleep by which I am held is not real: it is *māyā*. From sleep one can be roused. To recognize, to accept what I am at this moment makes an awakening possible. Mother makes more stable, more enduring my desire to be different, to behave differently. We all feel that she 'dehypnotizes' us.

Every attempt made in her presence teaches me that I have to demand from all myself if I want to know who I am. The answer will not be given unless the whole of me is there to receive it. An intellect, even a hundred times more active than it is in Mother's presence, cannot know. Emotion, even a hundred times more intense than it is within the radius of Mother's influence, will not know. A body, even a hundred

times lighter, than it is under the conditions of life in the Ashram, cannot know.

The answer will be given only to the whole of me. And the whole of me is never present. To know who I am and to find God is one and the same, says India. "If I knew myself, I should know Thee." How? Let the ego die. How to make it disappear? For it is the hydra with thousand heads. The more I imagine I am killing it, the more it reappears. Who will liberate me from it? You yourself. Who am I? God alone Is.

Mother, can you help us?

And since thirty years she is helping us.

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She has often declared that she is not a Guru. But to us, who live on the plane of duality and relativity, she appears to be a Master and she teaches.

This teaching has two aspects; it depends on her, on her presence. And, collected in her replies, it will live after her. Yet, should I call it "her" 'teaching'? All her glory lies in her Impersonality, and her teaching has been born with the world.

The most remarkable characteristic of Ma Anandamayi—and this is probably her most important mission—is to awaken or intensify the keen desire for the spiritual life in all who approach her. In this sense, how many retractions, how many conversions has she not effected!

What we lack most is that desire more powerful than all the others. Thus, Ma Anandamayi simply makes you long for Reality. The more we see her live before us, the

more the Love, the Joy, the Wisdom, the Serenity, the Freedom and the fundamental absence of all fear that emanate from her make us yearn for It—yearn more than anything else.

We feel that these qualities have their source in something which is not an individuality—however exceptional—but that we are face to face with a reality of another order.

In her presence we feel that we are required to “seek first of all the Kingdom of God and its justice,” without the slightest thought at the back of our minds that “all the rest will be added unto it.”

I often marvelled when watching the way in which Mother plays—or seems to play—for our spiritual progress, with our attachment to her : how she keeps this love in its place and prevents us from giving too much importance to her person. By attachment (*moha*) to her all other attachment is annihilated. But later she teaches us to destroy even that fervour. Does she not frequently say : “God is the sole Guru. It is a sin to look upon the Guru as a human being.”

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One of the most striking features of her teaching—as is the case with all genuine Masters—is that for all who live around her the best conditions for their awakening are always given.

For one who has lived close to her, it seems that this aspect of her role is quite beyond the usual measures.

However large be the number of those who turn to her at the same time, it appears that the circumstances are at every moment the best for each one of them. Each

one is under the impression that, during the weeks that have passed, Mataji has devoted her whole interest to him and organized all that has happened in the Ashram with a view to his benefit and to what would be the most appropriate teaching for him.

This is something which is entirely beyond all possibility of explanation. No competence, however outstanding, no genius of organization, not even the most prodigious efficiency could obtain this result. One is forced to conclude that Ma Anandamayi teaches as the fire heats, as the light illumines. Just as She is Love, Wisdom and Joy, She is also Teaching. The exceptional conditions for *sādhana* and awakening that ever exist around her are not due to her capacity for execution, however superior, but rather to her Being.

And Being is able to work in her the miracle which Victor Hugo so aptly attributes to all motherhood : of the Love of Anandamayi Ma everyone receives his share and all possess the whole of it.

The most trivial incident becomes for her an occasion to teach. We have all noticed that Mataji seems to attach at least as much importance to thousands of petty little incidents in the lives of her disciples as to the solution of philosophical problems and the various practices of *sādhana*.

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It will be understood that so far as my own person is concerned I am not enlarging on my experiences and not relating how Ma several times nailed to the cross the self-esteem and contentment of the ego that is known by the name of Arnaud Desjardins.



I will only say that Mataji, among other things, utilized the film I took at her Ashram to teach me : giving me at times the opportunity for quite exceptional shots, but also making me accept the waste of my last reels on which I had counted greatly, or to acquiesce to the projection of pictures that seemed to me the most precious by an old-fashioned projector that could not but damage them considerably. When my ego wanted at all cost to attract her attention, 'chance' would not let me see her alone for weeks. But when the right attitude asserted itself in the end—after what may be called great suffering—she took me for a drive and I sat by her side, while no other car was allowed to follow us.

Likewise we have often had the impression that all the others also did help to teach us and that everyone, consciously or unconsciously, served Mother in the fulfilment of her mission. She is a prodigious generator of energy and the centre of immense activity.

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There are as yet few people in the tent. A very pure voice chants: 'Sivoham, Sivoham, I am Siva.'

And I think of to-morrow. I am leaving after breakfast. In the plane this evening, dining with a devotee in Bombay. The moment has come for me to go far away from Mother. A typically Indian detail : after having walked barefooted for weeks and often slept on the floor, I shall travel from Poona to Bombay in a most elegant car with an impeccable driver dressed in a white uniform, his cap adorned with golden stripes. The Secretary of the Governor of the Province had been sitting next to me in the *pandal* and

invited me to make use of an official convoy. He did not consider whether he liked me or not. It is his duty, his *dharma*. We are in the Orient, where the guest is still sacred.

Yesterday Mother honoured me in front of the whole Ashram. But it was of no importance whatever. All was simple. All was well. There was nobody to be honoured.

This morning she has not even looked at me. But this is even less important. All is well. All is simple. There is nobody to desire anything.

The *swamis*, the young girls in white, the foreigner, we are all united by a delicate, subtle and profound bond. We shall all together board the plane and no one will go away from Mother. She had told me : "You have often heard it said that we see Reality through distorting glasses; which have to be removed from our eyes. But today this little girl will ask you to do just the reverse : Preserve in Paris the spectacles of the Ashram. Look at the world through the special glasses you have received here."

And I think of Paris, of France, of our whole outer world "where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, where there are wars and rumours of wars, where nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom, where there are great earthquakes and famines, pestilences and horrors, where all these are only the beginnings of sorrows and where abomination and desolation are near."

And I think of Him who also said: "When ye shall see all these things know that the Kingdom of God is nigh, even at the doors.....Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.....Watch therefore : for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight or at the cock crowing or in the morning : Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all : Watch !"

# Great Thoughts

*A chapter from the 'Dhammapada' (Words of the Doctrine'), a Buddhist work by an unknown author.*

## The Sage

He who has thrown off the fetters and freed himself in all ways, he is free from sorrow; for him there is no suffering; he has completed his journey.

The thoughtful exert themselves. They do not delight in any abode. They leave their house and home as swans their lake.

Those who have no possessions, who nourish themselves according to knowledge and who realize the goal of freedom by perceiving that life is empty and transient, their path is hard to trace like the flight of birds through the sky.

He whose appetites are slain and who is indifferent to food, who has perceived the goal of freedom by realizing that life is empty and transient, his path is hard to trace like the flight of birds through the sky.

Even the gods envy him whose senses are subdued like the horse well tamed by the charioteer, who is free from pride and free from depravities.

He who is patient like the earth, firm like Indra's bolt, like a lake free from mud—for him there is no round of births and deaths.

Calm in thought, calm in speech, calm in actions is he who has obtained freedom through true knowledge. He has become tranquil. He is full of repose.

The man who is not credulous, who has severed all ties, killed all desires, for whom even occasions to act with like or dislike arise not, who knows the ever existent uncreate (Nirvana), he indeed is exalted among men.

Delightful is the place where Arhats dwell, be it a village or a forest, be it by deep waters or by desert-edge.

Delightful are the forests to the Arhat; they charm not the worldly. There the passionless find delight, for they are not allured by sense-life.

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*From 'The Gospel of Buddha' by Paul Carus*

"Nirvana comes to thee when thou understandest thoroughly, and when thou livest according to thy understanding that all things are of one essence and that there is but one law."

"And the Tathagata (Buddha) is the same to all beings, differing in his attitude only in so far as all beings are different...He has the same sentiments for the high as for the low, for the wise as for the ignorant, for the noble-minded as for the immoral."

*Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

"When the object of life is attained, the subject disappears."

*Sri Ramana Maharshi.*

"A Master is one who has meditated solely on God, has flung his whole personality into the sea of God, and drowned and forgotten there till he becomes only the instrument of God, and when his mouth opens it speaks God's word

without effort or fore-thought, and when he raises a hand, God flows again through that to work a miracle."

*Chuang Tzu*

"The mind of the sage being in repose becomes the mirror of the universe."

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*From 'Tao Te Ching', probably by Lao Tzu.*

*Translated by Ch'u Ta-kao.*

Heaven is lasting and earth enduring.

The reason why they are lasting and enduring is that  
they do not live for themselves;

Therefore they live long.

In the same way the sage keeps himself behind and he is  
in front;

He forgets himself and he is preserved.

Is it not because he is not self-interested

That his self-interest is established ?

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Without going out of the door

One can know the whole world;

Without peeping out of the window

One can see the Tao of heaven.

The further one travels

The less one knows.

Therefore the sage knows everything without travelling;

He names everything without seeing it;

He accomplishes everything without doing it.

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He who pursues learning will increase every day.  
 He who persues Tao will decrease every day.  
 He will decrease and continue to decrease  
 Till he comes to non-action;  
 By non-action everything can be done.  
 There is a thing inherent and natural,  
 Which existed before heaven and earth.  
 Motionless and fathomless,  
 It stands alone and never changes;  
 It pervades everywhere and never becomes exhausted.  
 It may be regarded as the Mother of the Universe.  
 I do not know its name,  
 I am forced to give it a name,  
 I call it Tao and I name it as supreme.  
 Supreme means going on;  
 Going on means going far;  
 Going far means returning.  
 Therefore Tao is supreme; heaven is supreme; earth is  
 supreme and man is also supreme.  
 There are in the universe four things supreme, and man  
 is one of them.  
 Man follows the laws of earth;  
 Earth follows the laws of heaven;  
 Heaven follows the laws of Tao;  
 Tao follows the laws of its intrinsic nature.

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Act non-action; undertake no undertaking; taste the tasteless.

The sage desires the desireless, and praises no articles that are difficult to get.

He learns no learning, but reviews what others have passed through.

Thus he lets all things develop in their natural way, and does not venture to act.

Regard the small as great; regard the few as many.

Manage the difficult while they are easy;

Manage the great while they are small.

All difficult things in the world start from the easy;

All great things in the world start from the small.

The tree that fills a man's arms arises from a tender shoot;

The nine-storeyed tower is raised from a heap of earth;  
A thousand miles' journey begins from the spot under one's feet,

Therefore the sage never attempts great things, and thus he can achieve what is great.

He who makes easy promises will seldom keep his word;

He who regards many things easy will find many difficulties.

Therefore the sage regards things difficult, and consequently never has difficulties.

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## Mother Anandamayi

KAMAKSHYA PRASAD ROY

Mother—She is Anandamayi, the ‘Joy permeated one.’

Who is this Mother ? A God intoxicated mystic, a saint, a spiritual leader or a God-incarnate ?

All attempts to determine her status in the galaxy of enlightened souls we know, have so far proved fruitless. And probably the reason is that she does not conform to any limitations, be they mundane or spiritual. To devotees having mystic experiences of Mother’s identity with various Gods and Goddesses at different times, she would only point out that such experiences are due to one’s inherent mental dispositions, they are of purely subjective nature. As such, these individual experiences are of little help to evaluate Mother rightly. Not to talk of ordinary people like us, even some of the eminent contemporary spiritual authorities have often referred to Mother as the emanation of the primal Divine *Sakti* ( Durga, Bhagawati or Kali ) in human form. Be that as it may, we know Mother maintains complete indifference to all sorts of offerings and adoration that are being poured forth to her daily by a large number of devotees.

Let us see if it is possible for us in spite of all our limitations to get in touch with Mother in her boundless freedom.

Look, Mother has a wonderful way of making it easy. For anybody eager to know her real nature, she has a unique reply : “I am what you take me to be—just no more and no less.” May be in this single sentence is condensed the truth



of Mother's self-revelation. Or else, it seems quite improbable that she should use the same words over and over again in a similar context, almost like a truism. These are bold words undoubtedly. Leaving aside the elusive ones, 'no more and no less', if we simply concentrate our attention on her positive assertion : "*I am what you take me to be*" we come to the point that she is just what I can see in her, but yet, at the same time she is more than that, inasmuch as I know that she would have revealed herself in a higher stature to me if only I had the capacity to apprehend such a state. Needless to say, such variation may go on multiplying endlessly. *Unravel my mystery : I am what I am*—this is the spiritual puzzle Mother holds before us, we may say.

After having exhausted all means of evaluating Mother's spiritual status strictly according to the standard laid down in the Scriptures, a great scholar of our time finally sums up his observations in the following words : "Is she then a visible expression of the Absolute Itself ? Is she the outer manifestation within a self-imposed veil, of the inner *Ātmā* of the world, of all of us, revealed to us as clothed in a human form, simply to draw us towards herself away from the turmoils and tumults of fettered existence ? Who can say ?"

Of course, who can say ? Yet, all that we should precisely care to know is that she is our Mother : Mother, not of a particular group or family but of the entire human community. And mind, in keeping with the expectations of her countless children she has no chosen few.

As to her message, we all know she never delivers sermons. She generally replies to questions placed before her

in *satsang* congregations. Though there is always a broad catholicity in the way she responds to her interrogators, yet the replies we receive are somewhat different, depending on our own thought contents and moods. We may better quote her own words to further elucidate this point. "This body," she says, referring to her own self, "responds strictly to the line of thought and to the spirit in which a question is asked. Consequently, what is the opinion of this body and what is not? If there is a line of approach, there must be a goal to which it leads, and beyond that is the unattainable. But where the distinction between the attainable and unattainable does not arise, is that itself. What you hear depends on how you play the instrument."

This again is in keeping with the state of her constant and sustained integral Truth-consciousness.

Yet, she does not only reply to questions put to her in meetings but also speaks to her children each separately. This relates to persons seeking interviews with her alone—popularly known as having 'private' with Mother. Here is an opportunity open to everybody to reach very close to her and receive individual care and attention from Mother as regards spiritual guidance. It does not matter to which faith or fold you belong—to Mother it is of no importance—she only wants her child to be sincere. She has something to offer to everyone of them according to their individual temperament and aptitude. If we only happen to consult the day-to-day list of persons asking for interviews with Mother, we shall be amazed to find that people belonging not only to different religions, but a motly assembly of various nationalities of our globe are almost daily standing in queue in front of Mother's room each anxiously awaiting his

turn to put his problems before Mother. And each of them, we know, would bear testimony to the fact that he leaves her with a better understanding of his respective religious faith. What, now almost a century old study and propagation of comparative religion could not achieve, surprisingly enough seems to be possible without the least effort from any quarter in the mere presence of Mother.

Religion to Mother is not apart from life. Where life is there is Religion. “ধর্মের সংসার কর”—“Lead the life of a truthful and religious householder,” she can often be heard to say. We must remember that she never wants her children to leave their hearth and home to seek righteousness elsewhere. Each human being, whatever or wherever he may be, must fulfil one indispensable condition, which is one-pointedness of purpose with absolute sincerity. Besides that of course, an unwavering loyalty to one’s *Guru* and *Ista* is always recommended by Mother to all those who seek her guidance.

“Come unto me all ye” “মামেকং শরণ ব্রজ” is not then Mother’s beckoning call to her children this time. But instead, the other part of it, equally significant: “*Seek ye the Kingdom of God within you*” “আত্মানম্ বিদ্ধি” may be considered as Mother’s call and message renewed once again to the whole of humanity pining and thirsting for a better life.

Man needs a living religion and a living church today. And, in Mother, we have both.

## Mother's Methods

A DEVOTEE

It is both fascinating and enlightening to observe Mother's innumerable ways of dealing with different individuals and with one and the same person at different times and phases of his growth. The ideal teacher has no method, he is one with the pupil and with what he teaches and therefore master of every situation. So it is with Mother. One can only marvel at the infinite variety of methods that She seems to command with the most perfect ease.

Mother never coerces. She allows everyone the utmost freedom to proceed in his own way, as long as his gaze is steadily turned towards God or Truth. "Never be without Him even for a moment, remember Him with every breath." This is Her 'Leit-motive', Her ever recurring theme, but She has a million ways of teaching it. She does not ask anyone to change his *sādhana*, not unless he has gone astray or feels that he cannot possibly proceed. She guides and actively helps everyone along his own line of approach. What matters is not so much the kind of practice, but the sincerity, intensity and whole-heartedness of the aspirant. "Cry your heart out for God, "Mother says," but never for anything else!"

Mother does not give initiation and She objects to being called a Guru. However, She encourages some, but by no means all to take initiation from a Guru. Once a Guru has been accepted, he must be obeyed implicitly—unless, of course, he is one of those false Gurus who lead their followers deeper into the mire of delusion instead of to the goal of

human existence. In such a case Her advice is to sever the connection unequivocally and to start afresh.

The way Mother dissolves conflicts and doubts that trouble many concerning their own Gurus, is truly awe-inspiring. Just as a whole house can be lit up by the mere turning of a switch, so Mother is able to 'throw as it were, a flood of light on the disciple's difficulties, so that a new understanding and a new interpretation of his Guru's instructions dawn on him, and his peace of mind is restored. Mother does this either by words or in silence—as the case may necessitate—sometimes in the course of a single interview, and in particularly complicated cases, gradually, by the magic of Her healing and enlightening presence. Those who have experienced or witnessed such instances know in a special way what an immeasurable blessing Mother is. "I have no particular path," she says, "all paths are my paths." This is far beyond what is known as tolerance. It has a tremendous import : In Mother's person we find actively united all creeds, philosophies and schools of thought, all methods of yoga.

Mother has Her own unique way of replying to questions. Without fail she throws light on each problem from the point of view of the inquirer and usually from many other angles as well. Her replies are sometimes very short and terse, at times even perplexing, but always thought-provoking. As one ponders over Her words, a wealth of significance and depth becomes gradually revealed. One gets the impression that she is all at once the problem, the solution and the Infinity beyond problems and solutions. It occurs time and again that people who do not get an opportunity of voicing their questions and although even no similar

question is asked by others, get their answer, and in exactly the way that is needed; merely by attending Mother's "question hour." Is it surprising if they emerge from the meeting dazed and speechless with amazement and happiness ?

Mother defeats time. Thousands look to Her for help and guidance, and I wonder whether she ever disappoints anyone. Not only that : she rarely seems rushed. She discusses and sometimes goes into minute details. She jokes, laughs, sings and listens to *kīrtana*, to long discourses and the reading of scriptures. She tells stories of incidents from Her life. On occasions She instructs how to cook, how to tidy and arrange a room, how to decorate a hall for a function or ceremony, how to receive guests in a fitting and courteous manner, how to nurse a patient. She finds time for these and hundreds of other things, which are Her countless ways of teaching how to live a dedicated life under all circumstances, and that for every type and temperament can and must be found an avenue that leads to God.

Day and night are alike to Mother. During most of Her hours of so-called 'rest' in the day and during the night She has private interviews, or letters are read out to Her and she dictates the replies.

There are those who in dreams get advice and solace from Mother regularly at every crucial point of their lives. Instances are known of people, who, when She travels get no chance to approach Her before she leaves their town, or their interview is cut short. Feeling sad and depressed at their bad luck, they go to sleep and that very night have a vivid dream of Mother, which establishes the desired contact and leaves a lasting impression. Some even have received a *mantra* from Her in a dream, and the *mantra* of

which they say they have had no previous knowledge, is found to be correct. Mother does not comment on such happenings, as far as I know. But when asked whether *dīkṣa* (initiation) in a dream must be confirmed by *dīkṣa* in the waking-state, She usually replies: "If you have faith in the *dīkṣa* received in your dream, it is enough. Otherwise you will have to go through it again in the waking-state. All depends on faith, everything is in the mind."

Mother does not often give orders, and probably only to those who by intuition, discrimination and experience have established in themselves implicit faith in Her unfailing wisdom. But when she does command, obedience without asking for reasons is the only way. Together with the task she sets, Mother transmits the power to carry it out. But often it is not easy to do so. It is a common experience that to obey Mother's orders quickens intelligence and develops initiative. It requires great vigilance and concentration—in fact it is as if ingeniously calculated to draw out to the utmost one's capacity, courage, forbearance and power of endurance, as well as to bring to the surface one's weaknesses and shortcomings, so that they may be eradicated.

To place one's life in Mother's hands is to become free bit by bit from dependance on people, things and ideas, to be released from all kinds of fear, such as the fear of insecurity, of what people might say, the fear of failure, pain and death. Anything may be lost, Mother remains.

Mother's love and compassion are far too deep to contain even a tinge of false pity. Mother does not pamper Her children. To grow, to learn and to be healed entails

suffering, which is a necessary part of life. Those who fancy that to be in close contact with Mother means to sit back comfortably and revel in Her glory or to constantly float in a kind of heaven of peace and joy, oblivious of suffering and impervious to disturbance, are greatly mistaken. Mother can be very firm, nay adamant, and if one did not have the overwhelming experience of Her boundless and unfathomable Love, one might misunderstand as cruelty the masterpieces of surgery she performs. At times Mother does something that gives a severe blow to a cherished notion, belief or prejudice, and this is certainly very painful. On an occasion of this kind I heard Mother say, "Whatever is necessary I do for myself." (For Mother there are no 'others'). "If you scratch your skin and it bleeds, do you blame your hand? If you can't bear this much how can you ever know the bliss of the Self?" Looking at Mother's radiant face one realizes that she can never hurt. It is our own error, our own ego that fights for its life, which causes pain, not Mother.

A well-known Mahatma once said of Mother : "Mataji is the ocean itself. All rivers flow into the sea and yet the sea never becomes full or empty. Likewise Mataji's state remains ever one, complete, unchanging. There is no question of more or less. This is how I see it. The intellects of ordinary men are the rivers, Mataji's consciousness is the sea. The Bhagavad Gita is also of the same nature."



# Pages from my Diary

GURUPRIYA DEVI

( Translated from Bengali )

*Kishenpur, 9th August, 1957.*

Last night Mataji's health was extremely bad. Sri Haribabaji Maharaj came at night and, trying all kinds of things, he finally said: "Mataji, please make up your mind to put your health right. You will have to take pity on everyone !"

Afterwards, taking up the thread of what Sri Haribabaji had said, Mataji remarked: "For this body no bondage of any kind exists. 'Don't do this' and 'you will have to do that' is not meant for this body. You also all know that this sort of thing is not its way. Whatever comes to pass is all right. To make up its mind does not lie in the nature of this body."

A little later Mataji said in the course of the conversation: "For this body there is no cause whatever for inconvenience or discomfort. This ( ill-health ) is also a fine play. This body observes in minute detail what is taking place in its every nerve and vein. The body, the observing, and that which takes place are in fact all one. At first some kind of process ( *kriyā* ) began on the left side of the spine. A little later something similar was noticed on the right side. Thereafter some action was going on throughout the spine, starting from its very base right up to its top, at a considerable width. As a result of this action this body would sometimes

look, speak or laugh with great vivacity. But this was also the outcome of that same vibration. Again, due to that very rhythm, the body at times became completely lifeless. It then seemed as if everything were closed from within. What would happen to another body in this condition is for you to comprehend. For this body, however, all conditions are equal. Sometimes it lies down and sometimes it sits up. But in that particular condition anything at all might happen at any moment. For this body, everything without exception is but a play. Once or twice it became such that if the *kheyāla* had come: 'let that which is happening take its course,' anything might have occurred. But the *kheyāla* came: 'no, for this body holds good whatever comes to pass.' Between these two attitudes, as it were, this body remained. Whatever be the *kheyāla* at any particular moment, according to that, things may happen."

10th August, 1957.

By about midday Sri Haribabaji came to see Ma. Pandit Sunderlal accompanied him. The pandit raised various topics in the attempt to induce Mataji to speak or laugh. In between he declared two or three times: "Well, Mataji is immersed in *samādhi*." Mataji replied very softly and slowly: "For this body no such thing as trying for *samādhi* goes. There is no going and no coming, *Pitājī*. Neither the posture of *samādhi*, nor its mood is aimed at, nor is it an established state. So far as this body is concerned, what moving about, sitting, talking and so forth are, exactly that is also *samādhi*."

Today Sri Haribabaji told Mataji a lot about his personal life. Mataji on Her part disclosed to him all that She had seen in connection with his ill-health.

12th August, 1957.

In compliance with Sri Krishnananda Avadhutaji's wish, Brahmachari Kusum was sent to Kashi three or four days ago to see Swami Shanker Bharati, who is a Mahatma of Varanasi of very high spiritual attainment as well as of great learning. Residing in an Ashram in Lalitaghat, he has for the last several years been engaging in solitary *sādhana*. He does not meet anyone, nor talk to any outsider. A cave of that Ashram contains a consecrated image of Devi. In S. B.'s presence the image becomes alive, as it were, and he frequently receives orders and instructions from the Goddess. Many supernatural incidents are being related in connection with his life.

Sri Avadhutaji feels convinced that, in spite of being far away, Swami Shanker Bharati will be able to understand fully the true nature of Mataji's ill-health, and therefore may possibly be in a position to say something definite to restore peace of mind to all of us. This is why Sri Avadhutaji was keen on having someone from here sent to Varanasi to describe to S. B. in detail the condition of Mataji's health and to report to us whatever he might have to say about it.

This morning Kusum returned from Varanasi together with Mahamahopadhaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, who has come to see Mataji. We heard from Kusum what Swami Shanker Bharati had said. After listening to all the details, he had declared that Mataji's condition of health was nothing but Her *Līlā* and therefore should cause neither apprehension nor anxiety. Mataji's presence among us benefited the whole world, it was therefore necessary for all that Her health should be preserved intact. Since the devotees were in any

case praying fervently for this at all times, there was no need for any special action at the present moment.

On hearing this we all felt extremely happy and reassured. Swami Shanker Bharati's opinion was communicated also to Sri Avadhutaji at Vrindaban.

13th August, 1957.

This morning, when Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj was talking to Ma, the conversation turned to Her health. Mataji said: "Look, in the case of a *sādhaka* there is aspiration towards a goal. But here (meaning Herself) there is no question of goal or no goal, of aim or aimlessness. Every artery, vein and nerve, their functioning and vibration are clearly seen; just as when somebody in a dark room holds a lamp in his hand and throws light on every object, one by one—exactly like this. But for the *sādhaka* who is still on the path it is impossible to perceive in this manner. He has to advance by overcoming various kinds of obstacles. *Bābā*, here, there is no question of this. Here—the artery is myself, the vein myself, the functioning myself and the observer also myself. Of course, when saying 'myself' it is because some word has to be used."

Referring to Pandit Sunderlal's statement, the other day, that Mataji was immersed in *samādhi*, Dr. G. K. said, *samādhi* signified the mind's concentration and the consequent abeyance of all its activities (*nīrodha*). But so far as Mataji was concerned, there was no question of mind or overmind and therefore one could not either speak of *samādhi*.

Mataji also said: "Look, just as this body is seen in various attitudes, such as laughing, speaking, moving about,

etc., so you may, from your angle of vision also perceive this body in the posture of *samādhi*. In concord with the rhythm of the breath it assumes various postures or attitudes. Here change or changelessness, concentration or abeyance of activity—there is simply no question of all these.”

After a short pause, Mataji spoke again : “*Bābā*, here, everything is perfectly open and unconditioned. But ordinarily the rhythm of the life-force depends on one thing in the field of *sādhana* and on a different one in the field of worldly life. From the worldly point of view one thinks : ‘my home, my wife, my son, my enemy, my friend.’ Thus the idea of the ‘I’ conditions the rhythm of the life-force. Whereas in the field of *sādhana* it is conditioned by the aspiration towards Realization. The *sādhaka* is ever concentrated on his Goal and therefore, while advancing, he is not aware of the details of the path. If he could once reach the Goal, he would be in a position to explain the path, for then everything becomes illumined by the one Light. *Bābā*, in reality there is only One Thing. The path, the aim—call it what you will—nothing whatsoever is apart from the Self.

A little later Mataji asked Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj : “Very well, *Bābā*, having attained Nirvana, can one still be compassionate ?

*Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj* : When speaking of compassion there must be another in sorrow.

*Mataji* : So then, does compassion constitute an obstacle to the attainment of Nirvana ?

*Dr. G. K.* : Ma, there are two opinions. According to the one, to feel compassion is impossible after the attainment of Nirvana. According to the other, even after the

attainment of Nirvana, the compassion which is an integral aspect of the Self (*Svarūpabhūta*) remains—just as in *Moksha*, even without an object there is Bliss—Consciousness. This is called Buddhahood.

*Mataji* : When speaking of Buddhahood, there is compassion even after the attainment of Nirvana. Just as, however much heat you may derive from fire, its burning power will thereby not be diminished. In God, whom you conceive to be the Absolute, nothing is lost. He is the Self, depending on nothing but Itself, thus self-sufficient and free.

*Dr. G. K.* : There is yet another point : One thing is the compassion that is practised and another the compassion that comes as a natural outflow. It is like the Light which is the essence of the Sun and the light that radiates from it. Is there actually a difference between the two or are they both one and the same ?

*Mataji* : Both are one and the same. 'Being' and 'doing' are in Reality one, but when looked at from the empirical view point of the world they are indeed different. Essentially he who acts is one with him who becomes. Will-power arises because of separation from Essential Being. There is then Supreme Power on the one hand and will-power on the other. The power which inspires the action of the individual is a means to the realization of Supreme Power. But, *Bābā*, when grasping the essence, 'being' and 'doing' are all one. Thinking that there are two, action is performed by everyone. But 'there', who is the second ? In order that this may be revealed there is Self-action (*svakriyā*).

*Dr. G. K.* : Does a state exist that cannot be expressed in words ?

*Mataji* : Yes. Such a state is inevitable. It is a state in which there is no question of vocal expression or anything like that.

After a pause, *Mataji* said ; “*Bābā*, as one goes on advancing, one finds a fellow-traveller. Again, at times no companion is found. All the same, once the Goal is ever before one’s eyes, one cannot be deceived anymore. This is why it is said, He alone manifests as the Scriptures, as the Path.

20th August, 1957.

*Mataji*’s health seems somewhat improved. This morning *Savitri* of the *Kanyapith* arrived here from Varanasi. As soon as she approached *Mataji* to do *praṇāma*, *Mataji* asked : “*Gopal\** is well, isn’t he ?”

A little perplexed, *Savitri* answered slowly : “Yes, he seemed well to me.”

However, *Mataji* did not appear quite satisfied by *Savitri*’s reply. Very softly she said : “During the last night I told *Buni* several times that *Gopal* had come and shown his very red little hand to this body again and again, just as if it had been injured.”

Quite baffled, I exclaimed : “What kind of news is this now again ?” I then remembered that a few days before *Janmastami*,‡ *Mataji* had asked one of us to write a letter to *Atul Brahmachari* and *Makhan*, impressing on them that *Gopalji* should be handled with the utmost care on *Janm-*

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\* *Mataji* here refers to the consecrated image of *Gopal* in the Varanasi Ashram. Much has been published about this *Gopal* in the pages of ‘*Ananda Varta*’.

‡ *Janmastami*—*Sri Krishna*’s birthday.

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*astami* day. Mataji must surely have foreseen something at that time.

I then asked Ma : “Has Gopal complained very bitterly to you ? Did he not say anything else ?” Mataji said with a smile : “No, he did not complain. But that he had a little pain was brought to the notice of this body.”

Savitri listened to everything with amazement. She had been at Varanasi during *Janmastami*, but that Gopalji had been hurt on that occasion had not come to her ears. Yet Mataji had received the news at the time.

Mataji spoke again : “I told Buni last night. But I forbade her to tell anyone. I wondered, whether anyone else would bring the news ?”

I thought to myself : “People call it a ‘stone image.’ But beyond our limited knowledge there is yet much to be known.”

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## Matri Lila

( 1st January—31st March 1963 )

Mataji left Hardwar on the 31st of December for Vrindaban. Before her departure she paid a visit to Swami Krishnashramji at Modibhavan. Swami Krishnashramji is one of the most remarkable living Mahatmas. He has spent years and years at Gangotri ( the source of the Ganges ) in complete silence and without wearing any clothes. He is said to be well over a hundred years old, but one cannot help noticing in him the radiance and energy of agelessness.

On January 1st Mataji alighted in Vrindaban. The *Vidyapith*, the Boys' School run by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, as a rule in Almora, has for the last 2 or 3 years been shifted to the Vrindaban Ashram for the winter. The students and staff, had therefore the privilege of Mataji's company. On the 8th a charming ceremony of planting tulsis\* in a specially prepared place near Mataji's cottage was performed. 14 tulsi plants were planted by 12 Sannyasis belonging to our ashram. Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta related the legend of tulsi and Mataji sang. Finally she fed monkeys with *prasada*. On January 11th Mataji left for Bombay, where she reached on the 12th. As usual she stayed in Her 'pagoda' in the beautiful garden of Sri B. K. Shah's residence in Vile Parle. Sri Haribabaji came to see Mataji that very afternoon. Large number of people gathered for Mataji's *daršana* throughout her sojourn, among them several foreigners from various countries. On January 14th *uttarāyan sankranti*

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\* The tulsi is sacred to Sri Krishna.

was celebrated by an unintercepted programme of Kirtan, Bhajan and the reading of the Rāmāyana. On January 15th Mataji visited the *Udasin sampradaya* Math and on the 17th attended Sri Haribabaji's Raslila. Sri Haribabaji was putting up in a Gurdwara. On the 19th Mataji graced the houses of several devotees in Bombay with her presence. In one of them Kirtan had been arranged. On the 20th, on way to the railway station Mataji stopped at the Siva Temple, Sion, where she used to put up in former years, whenever she was in Bombay, as the guest of Sri Muljibhai Patel. On the 21st Mataji returned to Vrindaban, only to leave for Modinagar on the 23rd by car.

Rai Bahadur G. M. Modi had arranged for a big function for 10 days, to celebrate in a fitting manner the consecration of a new very beautiful temple of Lakshmi Narayana, Durga and Maheshwara. He had invited Mataji and as many of her Ashramites and devotees as could come and also numerous well-known Mahatmas and a Raslila party. By the side of the new temple an enormous pandal had been erected and *satsang* was held there daily for hours, consisting of lectures by Mahatmas, Kirtans and performances of *raslila* mornings and evenings. Mataji and her very large party were accommodated in a quiet and beautiful place called '*krishnashram*', about a mile from the town. The spacious and comfortable main building, in which also Swami Sri Krishnashram, the Guru of Rai Bahadur Modi, was put up with his attendants, is situated in the midst of a very large garden. Under its mango trees many of the guests stayed in tents. At the far end of the garden, a smaller house near a *panchavati* gave shelter to Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta and to several of our own *sādhus*. Mataji used to retire there in the afternoons

for a rest, to be safe from the crowds that constantly besieged the main house for her and Sri Krishnashramji's *darśana*.

Many devotees flocked from Delhi, Meerut and other places in the neighbourhood, staying for weekends, for a day or for a few hours only. The Governor of the U. P. and a number of other officials availed themselves of this opportunity and had interviews with Mataji, who was throughout her stay in a very active, humorous and communicative mood. On the 29th of January a large procession was taken out with elephants, horses, cars etc. In the centre small replicas of the deities of the new temple were carried on a profusely decorated chariot. Mataji sat in an open horse-carriage, together with Sri Haribabaji and some other *Sannyāsīs*. On January 30th, *Vasant Panchami* day *Saraswati Puja* was celebrated in the courtyard of Mataji's residence. Saraswati is the goddess of learning, music and art, but more than that, she is called "*Brahmavidyadayini*," bestower of the Supreme knowledge of Reality that liberates man once for all from *samsāra*, the wheel of birth and death. When after the *puja*, people went to do obeisance to Mataji, she blessed them by putting her hand on each one's head, saying '*Brahmavidya*' (supreme knowledge).

On February 3rd the function at Modinagar terminated with '*akhandakirtan*' in the pandal from early morning until late at night. Mataji attended for the last two or three hours and at the end led herself the Kirtan for quite a long time and distributed the prasāda with Her own hands. It happens only rarely nowadays that Mataji feels inspired to sing for such a long while and with such vigour and abandon. The whole congregation was carried away and welded into one by the power of Mataji's enchanting voice.

On February 4th everyone dispersed and Mataji left for Delhi. On the 5th evening she travelled to Jodhpur at the request of Sri Haribabaji. On February 6 the new *satsang bhavan* was inaugurated there in the presence of Mataji, Sri Haribabaji and Swami Akhandanandaji of Vrindaban. Mataji and Her party were put up in that very building. For a whole week, *satsang* was held daily for many hours, with lectures, Kirtans and *Raslika* performances. Mataji used to be present twice daily and on most nights also sang for a short time. On the 11th she was shown round the extensive gardens of Jodhpur palace and on the 12th she followed invitations to the houses of several devotees. At her departure on the 13th, a large crowd assembled at the station, bidding farewell to Mataji by singing "*bhajo ma Anandamayī*" with great fervour and emotion.

Mataji reached Delhi on the 14th morning. The same evening she boarded the train to Kanpur, where she stayed for two days at the residence of the Jaipuria family. The arrangements were excellent. Two beautiful pandals had been provided for meetings. At Kanpur Mataji also visited the famous J. K. temple which contains shrines for a number of deities of the Hindu pantheon.

On the 17th morning Mataji alighted in Kishenpur with two or three companions only. In the late afternoon she left by car for Kankhal, where the rest of the party had already reached early morning. After spending one night at the Ashram there Mataji with everyone else moved to Baghat House at Hardwar where she took rest for a couple of days in preparation for Sivaratri, which was observed on the 22nd by a complete fast of 36 hours and Puja in the hall and

temple throughout the night. We have on former occasions described in detail the four *pujas*, performed by everyone sitting round *siva linga* in circles, with Kirtan and Bhajan in the intervals. Like last year, comparatively few people had come, although quite a number arrived from Delhi and Dehradun. Even so the hall was filled to capacity. The festival proceeded with the usual solemnity and deep absorption. Mataji was present most of the night, except for a short while when she drove to the Kankhal Ashram, where two Brahmacharis of our Ashram, who had just been initiated into *naistik brahmacharya* performed their worship. *Naistik Brahmacharya* means *brahmacharya* of a strict order. A *naistik brahmachari* cannot become a householder anymore, he has dedicated his life finally to the search after Supreme knowledge and wears the *gerua* robe of the *sannyasi*. He is not allowed to work for money and has to observe very strict rules of conduct.

On February 23rd night, Mataji with a party of about 30 people left for Sitapur. Sri Prayag Narayan Saigal had built a new *dharmasāla*\* there and requested Mataji to bless it by being present at the opening ceremony and staying in it together with her companions for at least one night. The *dharmasāla* was inaugurated as soon as Mataji reached Sitapur, at about midday of the 24th and everyone was accommodated there and lavishly entertained. Satsang proceeded in a pandal nearby until 1 a. m. On the 25th morning the Siva-Parvati-Hanuman temple of the *dharmasala* was consecrated in Mataji's presence and immediately after a procession taken out. In the early afternoon Mataji drove to Naimisharanya.

\* Resthouse for pilgrims.

Sri Prayag Narayan Saigal had built a new *dharmasāla* there as well and it was formally opened on that occasion. Mataji then paid a short visit to Swami Naradananda after which she proceeded to the grounds that have been acquired for our Ashram on the banks of the Gomati river on Hanuman Tila.

Naimisharanya is supposed to be the place where Rishi Vyasa composed all the 18 *Purāṇas*. When our 11th *Samyam Mahavrata* was held in Naimisharanya in November 1960, it was discovered that few of the *Purāṇas* were not to be found anywhere in Naimisharanya. Mataji then suggested that at least one person should daily read a portion from one of the *Purāṇas* in Naimisharanya. In this way all the 18 *Purāṇas* should, one after the other, be constantly read there. The reading was started then and there. The Anandamayec Sangha soon after acquired a piece of land at Hanuman Tila for the purpose of building a small *Purāṇa Mandir*, where a copy of each one of the *Purāṇas* may be preserved and read in rotation.

From Naimisharanya Mataji was taken by car to Lucknow that very evening. Sri Rameshwar Sahai, member of the Railway Board, Govt. of India, had earnestly requested Mataji to stay in his newly built house for at least a night with Her whole party, before he and his family occupied it. The devotees of Lucknow availed themselves in large numbers of this opportunity of Mataji's *darśana*. On the 26th morning Mataji went to the residence of Prof. P. K. Banerji in another locality of Lucknow and later met people in the pandal in Sri Sahai's compound. In the evening on way to the station she visited the house of Sri H. C. Banerji, Railway Engineer.

The next day, 27th February Mataji spent in Delhi, alighting in Vrindaban by car the same evening.

Since Sivaratri Mataji had been through an extremely crowded and strenuous programme. No sooner did she reach Vrindaban than preparations for the *Bhagavata saptah* began, which was held from 1st to 8th of March. The *saptah* proceeded very beautifully and harmoniously. Mataji's health being indifferent, she did not attend for long stretches, but came to the hall daily at least two or three times for short sittings. Towards the end of the week, more and more devotees arrived from far and near to be with Mataji during the Holi festival, which fell on March 10th and was celebrated by a wonderful and inspiring Kirtan in circumambulation round a circular altar for 30 hours, kept up with great vigour and enthusiasm throughout. Mataji was not in a mood to play Holi with wet colours and with the hilarity displayed on several former occasions. Only dry red powder was put on everyone's forehead and on Mataji's feet. All the same the festival was one of those that will ever remain unforgettable to all present.

Holi, or *dol purnima* is also the birthday of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and besides happens to be Sri Hari babaji's birthday. He was invited to hold his satsang in our hall on the eve of his birthday.

On the morning of the 10th a new very beautiful image of Gopal was consecrated and placed in the temple between the statues of Sri Gauranga and Sri Nitai. Exactly eight years ago, namely during Holi 1955, this temple had been consecrated.\* Dr. Pannalal had been responsible for pro-

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\* See Ananda Varta, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 37—38.

curing the images that were sculptured by the famous Bengali artist Sri Nitai Pal of Calcutta. These *vigrahas* are really extraordinarily beautiful and give the impression of being alive. Mataji had the *kheyāla* that it would be nice to place Gopal, the child Krishna, between the two statues. When in March 1954, a devotee informed Mataji that the then owner of the black image of Gopal ( now kept in the Varanasi Ashram ) wished to hand over Gopal to any of her Ashrams, the then newly inaugurated Vrindaban Ashram was thought of. But various difficulties arose and the matter was dropped. Much later we heard that the son of the *pūjāri* had dreamt that Gopal said : "Don't remove me from Benares !" When in August 1954, a couple of days before Her departure for Varanasi, Mataji was lying in Her bed in Dehradun, She had the *kheyāla* to say : "Well, Gopal, you have not come. How nice it would have been, if you could have sat on the swing ! *Jhulan*\* is starting in two days." As soon as Mataji arrived in Benares, a message reached her that the *Pūjāri* who owned Gopal, was now willing to part with the *vigraha* in favour of the Ashram. Mataji at once sent Brahmachari Raghunath Das Goswami in her own car to bring Gopal, although everyone was very doubtful that the *Pūjāri* would give away Gopal so suddenly. But behold, Gopal arrived and was duly installed in the Varanasi Ashram. Many strange incidents have since happened in connection with that *vigraha*. A few have been reported in the pages of this magazine.† However, Gopal, did not at that time come to our Vrindaban Ashram.

\* *Jhulan* is the swing festival. During one week, images of Krishna Radha are placed on a decorated swing every night for sometime.

† See Ānanda Vārtā, Vol, II, No. 3, pp. 283-285. Also pp. 39-40 of the current issue.



Sometime ago, an old Vaishnava devotee conceived the desire to present to the Ashram in Vrindaban a *vigraha* of Gopal in memory of his recently deceased wife. Swami Paramananda, who is in Calcutta at present, was deputed to select a suitable image. It was found that Sri Nitai Pal (who had modelled the statues of our Gouranga temple) had sculptured a beautiful image of Gopal in *ashtadhatu* (8 metals, including gold, silver, copper, etc.) which he had intended for our Ashram. But he died in between and the image remained in his studio. It was now chosen by Swami P. who thought it superior to all the other images offered to him by various artistes, and so Nitai Pal's wish has thus been fulfilled.

One evening before Holi, Mataji related to us much about the black Gopal of Varanasi, who, she said, was a '*jagrat murti*' and had deeply moved several people who were not at all interested in the worship of what they called idols. At the end of her narrative, Mataji remarked: "Gopal is one, now he has after all come to Vrindaban as well as to Varanasi."

On March 16th, Mataji followed the repeated invitations of the Maharani of Karauli (110 miles from Vrindaban in Rajasthan). Almost everyone present at the Vrindaban Ashram including 5 foreigners accompanied Mataji. Sri Haribabaji and the Raslila party had also been invited. Sat-sang and Raslila were held daily until Mataji's return to Vrindaban on March 21st. One evening, M. Desjardins delighted everyone by showing his new film of Mataji. Mataji visited the famous Madan Mohan temple at Karauli. Its *vigraha* is supposed to be *jagrat* (alive).

On March 25th Mataji left for Vindhyaachal, where she reached the next early morning. There she enjoyed for a few days a much needed rest before proceeding to Delhi for Didima's *sannyāsa utsava*. Her birthday will be celebrated in the Agarpara Ashram from May 3rd-12th.

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More and more seekers from foreign countries seem to be attracted to Mataji. In Modinagar four gentlemen hailing from France, Canada, Columbia and California shared a tent. Besides several Europeans came for a few hours each. In Hardwar some Americans kept vigil during Sivaratri, watching the Puja from the gallery of the hall, with deep emotion and admiring intensity of the Kirtan singers. When told that many who participated were high officials, teachers, business men etc who had to return the next morning to their secular occupations, a lady from south America exclaimed: "How wonderful the Indian people are! They spend their energy in search of God, while in my country they waste it on low types of amusements." Last winter, during Mataji's stay at Vrindaban, the German element was predominant and we reported then about the stirring old German religious songs we listened to every evening. This year, due to A. Desjardins' new book, the French were in the majority. An elderly lady from Paris told us: "For forty years I dreamt of going to India. When I saw Mataji's picture, I said: "Now I am going." However, the record of originality was surely beaten by a young Frenchman who came straight from Paris to Vrindaban in less than 20 hours. "I started my journey by aeroplane yesterday at 3 p. m. and I finished by tonga," he remarked. He did not know more than a dozen

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English words, but God evidently provides for those who have faith and a spirit of adventure. An Ashramite who knows both French and Hindi happened to be present and so the situation was saved. "Shall I be allowed to travel with Mataji?" asked the newcomer a few days later, "for I am not interested in seeing India, if I cannot remain with Mataji, I shall return to my country." The young man accompanied Mataji to Karauli and is at Vindhya-chal at present, together with five other foreign visitors.

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Mataji is completing Her 67th year in May. On this happy and auspicious occasion, all Her devotees unite in the fervent prayer that she may deign to remain in perfect health with us for many, many more years to come, for the benefit and enlightenment of all beings.

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